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**Talk Radio and Public Debate:  
A Case Study of Three Ugandan Radio Stations.**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts in  
Journalism and Media Studies.**

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

**By**

**Ogoso, Erich Opolot**

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**SUPERVISOR: Ms. JEANNE DU TOIT**

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## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my late father – Clement Tukei Opolot; for making me what I am and who should have been here to share the moment. To my mother, Mary and the rest of the family – my wife Idah, children Francis, Michael and Elizabeth, for their patience during the time of the study and to my friends who helped me “cut my professional teeth” in journalism - David Mukholi, Charles Onyango-Obbo, Samuel Sserwanga and Ikebesi Omoding. It is also dedicated to my colleague on the MA course at Rhodes, John Baptist Wasswa, for providing a shoulder to lean-on at Grahamstown.

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## ABSTRACT

This study is a comparative examination of approaches to talk radio as a genre on three Ugandan radio stations. The aim is to draw conclusions, from observations made about these stations, about the potential of talk radio to encourage public debate around social issues and improve democratic participation despite pertinent challenges in Uganda.

The study first outlines a theoretical framework, which is informed by Habermas's theory of the media as a 'public sphere'. This framework is applied to an exploration of traditions of talk radio that have emerged globally in order to assess the potential of these traditions to play a role in contributing to the establishment of such a 'public sphere'.

The study then goes on to discuss the historical development of radio in Uganda and the establishment of the current broadcast landscape. The focus is on the way in which this history has been defined by a struggle around public expression, in which government has repeatedly sought ways to control media as a vehicle for public expression. It is proposed that Ugandan talk radio has the potential to play an important role in ensuring broad participation in public expression.

It is against this background that the study then describes and analyses the development of the talk genre at three Ugandan radio stations (each one an example of, respectively, a commercial, community and public service station). It is explained that staff on all three stations emphasise the importance of talk radio in encouraging participation, by their audiences, in the public debate of social and political issues. It is argued that, because of limitations that exist within these stations, none of the talk show teams fully realize the potential of the genre for participation in such debate. The picture that emerges is one of unequal access, with those sections of radio audiences in positions of privilege being further empowered, while those on the margins remain excluded from public discussion.

The study finally recommends ways to improve public participation on Ugandan talk radio, noting the need to review government support, the problems of organizational culture within the stations, the need for more guidelines on practical arrangements around talk show production and the question of contradictions that exist at policy level.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

*Talk shows [are] electronic town hall meetings. They provide a bastion of free expression for ordinary citizens who, in this presumably more democratic setting, need no special credentials or experience to voice their opinion* (Boggs and Dirmann, 1999: p.68).

This study is a comparative exploration of approaches to the talk show genre on three Ugandan radio stations, namely Radio One (a commercial station that went on air in 1993), Mama FM (a community broadcaster started by women journalists in 2001) and Star FM (set up in 1998 as part of Radio Uganda). In this thesis I will discuss the implications of the different approaches to talk genre and the potential of talk radio to operate as a platform for public debate. The focus is on the way the genre is understood by staff directly involved in the production of talk shows and their motivations for using the format on their stations.

This chapter explains the importance of researching talk radio in Uganda. Section One clarifies the research problem. Section Two explains the context within which the research situates itself, both in terms of Ugandan broadcast history and contribution to existing literature. Section Three explains the research plan and Section Four sets out the thesis structure.

### **1.1 The research problem**

This research project is informed by a belief that talk radio can, potentially, make a crucial contribution to improving democratic participation in Uganda. If this potential is to be fulfilled, there is a need for research that sets guidelines to show how this can be done. It is with this goal in mind that this thesis scrutinizes Ugandan examples to demonstrate how they can be improved to fulfill the potential of the talk genre.

The study explores how staff, who are directly involved in the production of talk shows on three Ugandan radio stations, define the role that these programmes play on their stations. It examines the way they rationalize decisions made around the development of talk show genre on their stations' programming and the extent to which these motivations could be linked to a desire to encourage listeners' participation in democratic discussions of social and political issues.

In this study I look at whether talk show producers and hosts model public debate on the show formats. I examine the structure and format of the three talk shows, namely *Spectrum* on *Radio One*, *Katukyogereko* on *Mama FM* and *Ssekanyolya* on *Star FM*. This is to determine whether producers and hosts working at these three Ugandan stations impose limitations on participation by ordinary Ugandans. These two aspects are discussed in the context of the opinions expressed by station managers, producers and hosts on the three stations, who all argue that their talk show programmes give a voice to ordinary people.

There is a wealth of interesting approaches to talk radio that have developed all over the world. In order to ground this examination of Ugandan talk radio in current debates about this genre, the study takes a comparative approach by examining existing literature on talk shows in the United States of America, United Kingdom and in Africa, particularly in South Africa, and in East Africa.

The study explores the extent to which Ugandan talk shows on the three stations can be equated to “electronic town hall meetings” as suggested by Boggs and Dirmann (1999). “Electronic town hall meetings” refer to a means of interaction with public officials or a way of airing views to a larger audience by using electronic media (Scott, 1994). I argue that, in the case of Uganda, talk radio plays a key role as an agent of information and debate, thereby facilitating development and democracy. It also promotes accountability of Ugandan leaders. The study concludes that in the case of Uganda, the analogy by Boggs *et al.* (Ibid) that talk programmes can be “electronic town hall meetings” is debatable.

In this study, I examine the argument that talk shows provide citizens with an opportunity for free expression in a supposedly more democratic setting. I explore the criticism made by some researchers that access to talk programmes is generally limited and that show hosts tend to be opinionated and selective. The critics say the shows offer “...dumbed-down political infotainment” (McNair, Hibberd and Schlesinger, 2002. p.408). “Dumbed-down political infotainment” refers to a less intellectually sophisticated presentation of otherwise serious political discussion as information that is primarily intended to entertain (Butterfield, 2003).

## 1.2 The research context

### 1.2.1 The historical context

For the past seventeen years the Ugandan political arena has been characterized by the interplay of contradictory forces. These forces have involved increasing freedoms and ongoing restrictions (Onyango Obbo, 1998). There is a need for research that traces the connections between these forces and the emergence of talk radio in Uganda. A clearer understanding of this could, I believe, make for a more informed and strategic approach to the development of this genre. It is this belief that informs the research project discussed in this thesis. For example, from 1986-2002, Uganda held its first direct presidential elections, several local elections and a political referendum. The government also pursued economic liberalization policies, including liberalization of the media in 1993, which led to investment in commercial media, including radio stations, and in the communications sector such as in mobile telephone companies (Mukasa, Interview, 2003). Commercial and community broadcasters have mushroomed. A total of 60 new radio stations out of 77 licensed countrywide, were operational in 2002 (Steadman). Most of these stations currently broadcast talk shows. Some of these stations host the shows in public places by hooking up participants on phone to the radio studios. These shows have become known as “*ebimeeza*”<sup>1</sup>.

The rise of talk radio in Uganda is similar to the current global trend, where talks shows have evolved rapidly in many societies. Boggs and Dirmann (Ibid) have studied the evolution of talk radio and argue that the shows are the fastest growing medium of popular culture and the “last forum for the disenfranchised and powerless” (p. 67). An interesting aspect of the Ugandan situation is that while the media was liberalized in 1993, new laws were introduced to regulate it in 1995. The Electronic Media Statute and Press and Journalists Statute came into force at a time the country did not have a freedom of information act. Ugandan journalists who are unhappy with the legislation argue that the new laws constrain the very freedoms that liberalization aspired to bring. The journalists’ associations, such as the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (NIJU) are demanding that the Ugandan parliament urgently introduces a freedom of

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<sup>1</sup> The word “*ebimeeza*” is derived from “*emeeza*” meaning a table or platform in the dominant Luganda language. “*Ebimeeza*” is therefore meant to be a platform for debate or discussion

information act. According to the journalists, this would guarantee them access to the kind of relevant information that they need (www.niju.org, 2002).

The study explores the operations of Uganda's media in a liberalized but regulated environment. The government argues that the regulations are meant to ensure freedom of the press as well as enhance professionalism and responsibility. Critics say the regulations are "...riddled with contradictions that undermine press freedom" (Ssewanyana, 2000, p. 3). In August 2002, the government, quoting the new regulations, announced a ban on open-air radio talk shows hosted in restaurants, bars and other public places, which had come to be popularly known as *ebimeeza*. The ban prompted over 6,000 people from ten districts, including two members of parliament, to sign a 300-page petition asking the Minister of Information to lift the ban. The petitioners said the talk shows "...provided one of the most invaluable fora through which the people of Uganda had been channeling their concerns to the authorities" (New Vision, February 7, 2003, p. 4)<sup>2</sup>. The Minister insisted that the shows are illegal. He argued that Ugandan radio stations are allowed by law to operate only within their studios and not in bars. The managers of the radio stations argued that the law does not limit the broadcast venue. They said the laws were silent on the issue of outside broadcasting (Ibid).

Nassanga (cited in www.newvision.co.ug, February 15, 2003) contends that the *ebimeeza* do not actually breach media ethics. Rather the programmes encourage communication channels that allow public participation and allow for exchange of views between government and the public thus empowering both. Oloka Onyango (cited in New Vision, Ibid) argues that the Electronic Media Statute, which the Minister of Information used to as the basis to justify banning the programmes, is an "...anachronistic relic of an entirely different age", given the current technological developments like mobile phones and the Internet. He argues that it is impossible to exercise any real control over the airwaves.

The debates that took place around *ebimeeza* were, in fact, indicative of broader responses to Ugandan talk radio. Statements from Ugandan government officials indicate a growing feeling that some talk shows had become outlets for political opposition. The president warned radio stations against offering a platform to some of his opponents:

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<sup>2</sup> The petition was handed to the Minister for Information on 6 February, 2003.

The detractors are using our mushrooming radios and papers to preach that the Movement [read ruling party] is oppressive. Would they talk if the Movement was actually oppressive? (The New Vision, January 26, 2003, p. 2).<sup>3</sup>

In Chapter Four, I argue that it was a desire to manage the flow of information to the public, particularly about government policies, that compelled the Ugandan government to set up Star FM. It was intended to counter information emanating from what the Ugandan government perceived to be its opponents. Several government officials including the president, vice president and ministers participate in its talk show. The station manager asserts that Star FM's mandate was to counter opposition sentiments broadcast on the various private radio stations by providing government with a platform to voice its views (Mugambe, Interview, 2003)<sup>4</sup>.

Against this background, the study explores the power relations and agendas at play between the Ugandan government, ordinary citizens and producers of talk show programmes on the three radio stations. It explores the potential roles that the talk show programmes play in motivating public expression in Uganda.

The struggles around freedom of expression that were playing themselves out in the media sector were, in fact, a reflection of broader Ugandan political dynamics. Political party activities that were banned in 1986 remain in limbo. A no-party system of government under the National Resistance Movement, a mass political organization, to which all Uganda's 23 million people are supposed to belong, has existed for 17 years. There is no official opposition and all leaders are said to be elected on individual merit. Although under this system the country has witnessed significant peace, there is still no true political opposition.

In early 2003, the government announced it would consider opening up space to allow political parties to operate. The parties would, however, be required to register with the government. The traditional, but unofficial, opposition political parties said they would not register but the ruling National Resistance Movement countered that it was preparing to register itself as a political organization. A constitutional review process was underway in which a

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<sup>3</sup> President Yoweri Museveni, in the state-owned newspaper, The New Vision, January 26, 2003 criticized the radio programmes. The Minister of Information eventually said they were not banned, but rather being asked to broadcast from their studios in accordance with the law. The stations resisted this and the matter was due to be debated by a parliamentary committee.

<sup>4</sup>Stephen Mugambe, Station Manager, Star FM, argues that all the operations of the stations are guided by this mandate.

government appointed committee was soliciting views from the public on possible amendments to the constitution (Mukholi, Interview, 2003).

It is against this background that this thesis explores the potential roles of talk radio in Uganda. In attempting to demonstrate why many new stations prioritize the genre, the study shows a potential link between popular participation in the media and growth of democracy in Uganda.

### **1.2.2 The contribution of this research to existing literature**

Jjuuko (2002) asserts that few studies of Ugandan broadcasting go beyond the anecdotal. My efforts could not find much rigorous literature on Ugandan broadcasting. Firstly, there is very little material available therefore the contribution of this research at this level would be valuable. Secondly, the quality of existing discussions is problematic. For example, some of them make use of Habermas's theories, but do so without really exploiting the value of his theories of society for critical analysis. They are unable to fully explore the motivations that inform developments in the Ugandan radio sector.

This study is a response to the need for more rigorous analysis and exploration of Ugandan talk shows. It will, I believe, fill an important gap in the available literature, which speaks mainly of the rise of Ugandan talk show radio programs as a response to demand for citizen involvement in discussions of political decision-making processes.

Baguma, Lugalambi and Zawadi (1999) state that talk radio in Uganda provides important space for public debate. They base their argument on Habermas's (1971) theory of the media as "a public sphere". Mugeere (2002) likewise argues that Ugandan talk shows developed because the radio stations wanted to "... take radio to the people and give them a chance to debate topical issues" (*New Vision*, August 12, 2002, p. 12). The producers of talk programmes on the radio stations, as noted in Chapter Five, all claim the shows were started to "encourage citizen participation."

All the arguments above are interesting, but they need to be taken a step further to explain what has motivated most Ugandan stations, in only a few years, to start broadcasting talk programmes. Baguma *et al.*, and Mugeere do not employ the concept of the public sphere in a way that fully acknowledges its complexity. A greater awareness of this complexity could, I believe, lead to a more insightful analysis of Ugandan talk radio than is provided in this

literature. Habermas makes a distinction between what he perceives as a truly critical public sphere and what he perceives to have been staged by the powerful in society to manipulate the public. He argues that the principal democratic role of the media is to act as a “watchdog”. The media, even in democracies, are not accessible to all and offer information that is selected and presented within socially constructed frameworks of meaning. Audiences interpret media texts in diverse ways. They are “not empty vessels waiting to be filled by the media” (Curran *et al.*, 1995, p.124).

For the concept of the public sphere to operate most effectively as a tool for analysis in discussions of Ugandan radio, two aspects of Habermas’s theorization about this concept have to be foregrounded: his emphasis on the complexity of the relationship between audiences and media texts and his insistence on the need for the public sphere to open up spaces in which challenge to authority becomes possible.

The findings of this study should be of interest to media policy makers, regulatory authorities and staff involved in talk show programming and production. The study should contribute to existing knowledge about the growth of Ugandan media. I hope it will also contribute to broader knowledge about talk radio as an agent for democratization in Africa.

### **1.3 Research plan**

#### **1.3.1 Goals of this study:**

Based on a review of existing literature, the study sought to identify different traditions of talk radio as a base line for interviews that were conducted with staff on Radio One, Mama FM and Radio Uganda’s Star FM.

It establishes how staff directly involved in the production of talk shows on the three radio stations, such as producers or hosts, understood the roles that they would like talk radio to play on their stations and how they rationalized the decisions they made around the development of talk show programmes on their stations.

The study further sought to establish the approaches of staff on Radio One, Mama FM and Radio Uganda’s Star FM to talk radio. In doing so, the study intends to identify any significant differences in the approaches that exist on the three Ugandan stations. By comparing

the different approaches to the working definition, the study attempts to tease out the implications of the differences in approach and the motivations that informed these approaches.

It draws conclusions about the role that talk shows could potentially play on Ugandan radio stations to encourage listener participation in critical public debate and challenging authority.

### **1.3.2 The research design**

This qualitative study used a case study approach. Case studies, which are conducted to answer specific research questions, are essentially descriptive and inferential in character. Because this was an exploratory study, the open-ended nature of qualitative research offered the most appropriate methodology. As argued by Lindloff:

Qualitative research embarks on a voyage of discovery rather than verification and is likely to stimulate new leads and avenues that may be used as a basis for further research (1987: p.88).

Data was collected using interviews with key people involved in producing talk shows, observation of programme production processes and the scrutiny of documentary material. The interviews were the primary method of data collection.

I conducted in-depth interviews with at least two staff members at each of the three radio stations, including programme producers and hosts. I also conducted informal interviews with some people who had taken part in the talk shows and some regular listeners. This was not the main focus of the study, but the interviews provided useful insight into the organization and presentation of the shows.

Documentary data consisted of studies of Uganda media obtained from Steadman Research Services, an international media research firm, background documents from the stations and other existing academic literature in Ugandan and Rhodes University libraries, as well as on the Internet.

Programme content on the each of the three talk shows was recorded during December 2002. It is important to note that this data was not collected as an attempt at content analysis, but was used as a reference point in the interviews. It informed the design of questionnaires used in this study.

The decision to focus the study on three stations was informed by the development of a three-tier radio broadcasting system in Uganda since 1993. The study was located at Radio One FM station, Mama FM radio, and Radio Uganda's Star FM. The three stations broadcast talk shows daily on Monday to Friday from the capital city, Kampala and were thus accessible to the researcher.

Radio One broadcasts *Spectrum* from 7.00 pm - 8.00 pm and Mama FM airs *Katukyogereko* from 2.00 - 4.00 pm. Radio Uganda broadcasts *Ssekanyolya*<sup>5</sup> on its Star FM channel at 9.00 pm - 10.00 pm. The format, structure and topics of discussion on each of the three programmes are discussed in Section Five.

#### **1.4 Thesis outline.**

A general overview of the research has been provided in this chapter in which I explain why the study was done and summarize how the study was approached.

The second chapter provides a discussion of the theoretical basis for the study. It examines existing theories around the concept of talk radio and the public sphere, and reviews the relevant literature on these concepts.

The third chapter contextualises the study. It explains the growth of talk shows on Ugandan radio stations against the background of the country's political, social and economic development. It also traces the emergence of private radio broadcasting in the country.

The fourth chapter explains the methodology that informed the study and examines the merits and demerits of the research methods. It discusses the theoretical basis of these methods and shows how their use enabled the study to be successfully concluded. It also points out methodological issues that arose during the study.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the study. Here, I discuss in detail what the study reveals and analyze this to show trends in the evolution of Ugandan radio talk shows as a forum for public debate.

Chapter Five ties in with Chapter Six where I present some conclusions on the topic "Talk radio and public debate: A case study of three Ugandan radio stations" and

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<sup>5</sup> "*Katukyogereko*" is a Luganda word meaning "let us discuss". "*Ssekanyolya*" is a Luganda word for a type of bird that hunts snakes and rats with a sharp eye.

recommendations that could generally improve public participation on Ugandan talk radio programmes.

As mentioned at the start of this subsection, the next chapter explores the theoretical basis for the study, examining existing theories around the concept of talk radio and the public sphere, and takes a closer look at the relevant literature on these concepts.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

*By giving a floor to civil society and “the voiceless”, community radios...have a triple mission of educating, sensitizing and informing* (Samb, 2002, p. 15).

Chapter Two provides a theoretical framework for the analysis of approaches to talk radio in this study. It outlines the theoretical background that enabled me to assess in later chapters the potential role that talk radio can play in Uganda to encourage public debate. In the first part of the chapter, I will present an approach to analysis that incorporates Habermas’s theory of an ideal “public sphere” and demonstrate how these tools can be used to explore different approaches to talk radio. In so doing, I stress the importance of acknowledging the status of this concept as an ideal that one strives towards, rather than a realistically achievable goal. I will argue that this means that one has to acknowledge the complex power dynamics that are an inescapable part of any public sphere.

I also emphasize the need to acknowledge that a key characteristic of the ideal public sphere, as formulated by Habermas, is that it allows a place for individuals to challenge social authority. My discussion will illustrate the value of such an approach to Habermas’s theory of society for a discussion of talk radio in Uganda.

The chapter then identifies various approaches to the talk genre that have emerged globally, and explores the social contexts that gave rise to each. The assumption is that an awareness of the histories of talk radio in other countries is crucial to this research. With this awareness, it becomes necessary to assess the way in which Ugandan talk radio is informed by these histories and the kind of talk radio that they produced. It also becomes possible to trace similarities in the factors that motivated the emergence of talk radio in these countries, thus throwing light on the Ugandan examples.

## **2.1 The public sphere and its value as a critical tool**

### **2.1.1 The concept of the public sphere and its application to media studies**

Jurgen Habermas introduces the idea of the public sphere in his paper, "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" (1962 cited in 1971). This concept referred to what Habermas perceives to be a distinct "public sphere" that mediates between private interests of everyday life and the realm of power, thereby enabling the formation of public opinion that opposes state power and interests. He perceives the media as one sector that could operate as a public sphere and thereby play a critical role in building democracy (McQuail, 1994). He equates the media to other "public spheres" such as institutions of political discussion like parliaments (Ibid).

Habermas's model has become an important benchmark against which the potential roles of the media can be measured. It is generally assumed that the media offers a "public sphere" because it is a distinctly common area in which the exchange of ideas and popular engagement on major issues takes place. I will argue that for the concept of the public sphere to contribute at optimum level to the rigorous analysis of society, it needs to incorporate a sophisticated understanding of the operation of power relations in society. Media is intertwined with the state and the economy. It does not operate outside the actual socio-political systems in a society. Without a clear understanding of the operations of the media, the concept of the public sphere cannot really be used to address the complexity of power structures that exist in contemporary society. The concept does not, for example, allow for the higher level of complexity that has resulted from the diversification of public and private ownership structures within media sectors.

Critics like Kellner (1989), Horkheimer and Kluge (in Kellner, Ibid.) argue that Habermas did not adequately analyze the function of the media as a locus of political struggle and transformation in society:

Politics throughout the modern era have been subject to the play of interests and power as well as discussion and debate. It is probably only a few Western bourgeois societies that have developed any public sphere at all in Habermas's sense and while it is salutary to construct models of a good society that could help to realize agreed democratic and egalitarian values, it is a mistake to overly idealize and universalize any public sphere as in Habermas's account (Kellner, p.7).

Early formulations of the concept of the public sphere did, in fact, lack awareness of this complexity. As the critics above point out, the model unrealistically envisaged the possibility of establishing a space in society free from power relations.

Habermas (1992) took cognizance of this criticism and in a later version of his model he attempts to accommodate the idea of a public sphere that inevitably exists within power relations. He understood that privileged citizens had more power to influence public opinion and modified the older model by developing the concept of “the bourgeois public sphere” (Ibid). In his later model Habermas argues that the media has turned into a realm of mass cultural consumption dominated by corporations and elites through ownership, advertising or patronage. The public sphere, he observes, has consequently declined and citizens have become passive consumers (Ibid). Brett (2002, p.4) suggests that Habermas is in fact pessimistic about the ability of modern mass media to form a genuine public sphere in which critical deliberation can take place. This more sophisticated version of the public sphere is far more relevant to the kind of analysis that I am attempting in this thesis.

Another important criticism of Habermas’s earlier model is that it failed to recognize that the media excluded certain critical groups in society from the “public sphere”. These included poor people who are less privileged and women. Kellner (Ibid) argues that the public sphere was dominated by white, property owning males. The media, according to Horkheimer and Kluge (Ibid), could provide the idealized space that proponents of its public sphere function aspire to achieve, but, in more recent times, the development of capitalism has made the media even more differentiated, organized and pluralistic. Interest groups and radical professionals dominate the space, further edging out the less privileged. Because of this, the media has been transformed from an agent facilitating rational discourse and debate within society to shape it, to limiting discourse instead in order to serve the interests of the bourgeois class and big business.

The criticism above is a significant point of reference for this study. In Chapter Five, I discuss Mama FM, a radio station that was set up in attempt to promote those who were perceived by the Uganda Media Women’s Association (UMWA) to be marginalized by other Ugandan stations ([http://www.interconnection.org/umwa/community\\_radio.html](http://www.interconnection.org/umwa/community_radio.html)). UMWA conducted a situational analysis and found that despite the proliferation of media, women, especially in the rural areas, lagged behind in accessing information through radio. According to UMWA, the number of Ugandan women owning or having control over radio sets is low. The

question that I attempt to answer in this thesis is - to what extent has Mama FM, through its talk show, created space for the less privileged to participate in debate around issues that affect them?

### **2.1.2 Radio as a public sphere**

Habermas developed his earlier model when the print-media dominated society. The concept of the public sphere is, nevertheless, particularly suited to an analysis of radio. This medium, with its potential for accessibility and audience participation, holds exciting possibilities for contributing to the establishment of a public sphere. Radio expanded the media space, creating the potential to revitalize it and make it more democratic. Because it allows for live discussion, radio lends itself to operating as a public sphere.

This study is informed by McQuail (Ibid) who argues that to play a significant role in promoting democracy, the media needs to offer free access to, and open participation in, its programmes. The media also needs to promote freedom of expression and disregard for status during public debates on its programmes. Radio has the potential to operate as a public sphere in each of its traditional “tiers”, namely public, commercial and community broadcasting. It is the most easily accessible medium: it is easy to acquire, cheap to operate in several languages and is easily accessed by both illiterate and literate people. Buckley (2000) emphasizes this point and argues that popular participation in the media is closely linked to the existence or otherwise of a wider democracy. In many societies, radio has developed extensive networks of public, commercial and community stations that aspire to provide the ideals of a “public sphere” (Baguma *et al.*, Ibid). In this thesis, I argue that radio has assumed an important role in offering space for public participation and debate. Interactive programmes like talk shows provide one avenue for such participation.

Viewed in this general sense, in terms of the nature of the medium itself, one can see how radio has the potential to operate as a public sphere. Within specific social contexts, however, this potential will be enhanced or restricted by a range of factors. One factor that is particularly important is the ownership structures that define radio in a particular economic and historical situation. Radio stations that are commercially-owned and driven by advertising demands, for example, strive to deliver audiences to advertisers rather than programmes to audiences. On the other hand, public service broadcasters, which are publicly funded and operated, are often required by law to meet various informational needs for all citizens (McQuail, Ibid, and

McChesney, 1998). Such broadcasters are obliged to ensure the widest possible diversity in programming, but they are most prone to influence from the elite and politicians.

The relevance of the concept of the public sphere to talk radio has been recognized by critics and has been discussed in the context of Uganda. Jjuuko (2002), for example, observes that in Uganda, radio talk shows have played a critical role in expanding space for democratic participation by ordinary citizens in public debates. She notes that control structures, privileges and obligations that are imposed on Ugandan public broadcasters are cornerstones of their operations. In a study of Radio Uganda, Jjuuko observes that the government owned, financed and controlled the station. It employed the entire staff as civil servants appointed through the Uganda Public Service Commission. Nyamnjoh (1999) has studied a similar phenomenon in Zimbabwe. He observes that the integration of journalists working for the public media into the civil service permits a government to impose certain restrictions, hindering the effective practice of their profession. According to Nyamnjoh, this was part of the process of political socialization that the Zimbabwe government adopted in order to guarantee total loyalty and subservience from the state-employed journalists.

Given these factors, it should be clear that the potential of radio to operate as a true public sphere can only be realized if one deliberately enforces regulations that enable this. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA, 2001) argues that, if public service broadcasters aspire to serve the public, they need to be supervised by "...an independent board, avoid one sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender" ([www.misanet.org](http://www.misanet.org), 2002). MISA contends that the public service mandate of such broadcasters needs to be clearly defined, their editorial independence guaranteed and they need to be funded adequately to ensure protection from arbitrary budgetary interferences. MISA's expectations appear ambitious. To get public service broadcasters to serve the public in the best possible way, specific policies need to be in place to make the broadcaster accountable.

Achieving the ideals of the public sphere is not just an issue for public radio. Even though commercial radio is set up primarily for the purposes of profit, many people argue that it still has public service obligations. Within this sphere, however, the chances of attaining the ideals that proponents of the public sphere aspire for seem even more difficult than is the case for public radio. MISA criticizes private broadcasters for using what it says are limited public frequencies for commercial gain, yet broadcasting is a social and political activity. Within their

commercial environment, private broadcasters should still be able to fulfill public service obligations. Curran (Ibid), however, argues that the political elite and the market use a “carrot and stick” combination to control the private media – the use of both reward and punishment. Worse still, the economics of mass communications do not support diversity, encouraging instead less local programming and more readily made content. MISA takes this point further and observes that it is difficult to see how a media system dominated by private ownership can guarantee the diversity of information and argument required for the proper functioning of democracy.

Both public and private broadcasters encourage advertising to generate revenue. This has implications for their aspirations to operate as “public spheres”. Advertisers influence the roles that radio can play in promoting democratic participation, blurring the distinction between public service and private broadcasters.

The third tier of broadcasting – that of community radio, in its various manifestations - has been set up in different countries with the specific intent to realize some of the goals that public service broadcasters have not been able to achieve on their own. It does so at a localized level, in a way that public service radio generally does not have the capacity to do. Together these two tiers could, theoretically, work together for the establishment of a radio landscape that operates as a public sphere in the true sense of the phrase.

Community broadcasting is seen as more responsive to the immediate needs of the communities in which they exist. Ideally these stations are non-profit, owned and operated by communities. They emphasize collective participation and give priority to programme formats that highlight community ideals and address local inequalities. AMARC (2000) argues that such stations are the voice of the voiceless, the mouthpiece of oppressed people and a tool for development because they are about the community owning its own means of communication ([www.amarc.org](http://www.amarc.org)). MISA, which encourages the development of community radios in African countries, argues that public participation on community stations tends to encourage more open debate and democracy. Buckley (2000) takes the argument further and observes that community radio stations promote “communicative democracy” (p. 184) which has a low orientation to rules and gives high value to social change because citizens’ participation is extensive, communicative and interactive. He backs up his argument by quoting Vigil (1996):

Community radio stations are not looking for profit, but to provide service to society – a service that attempts to influence public opinion, create consensus, strengthen democracy and above all create a community – hence the name community radio (p.185)

In Africa, Moustapha Samb (2003) has studied community radios in Senegal. He observes, as highlighted in the quote at the top of this chapter, that by “giving a floor to civil society and ‘the voiceless’, community radios in Senegal have a triple mission of educating, sensitizing and informing” (cited in Panos, p.15). On these stations, he asserts, everybody “can be heard as long as he has something interesting to say”. The stations, according to him, consequently favor the democratization of expression, encourage development and manage to reach 70 percent of the people in Senegal since the majority speak the local Wolof language.

Community radio stations aspire to achieve many ideals. Samb (cited in Panos, p.10), however, found that community stations in Senegal have significant financial weaknesses, technological inadequacies and administrative bottlenecks. These negatively affect the operations of the stations (Ibid).

It should be clear from the above that in order to assess the extent to which a radio sector in any given country operates as a “public sphere”, one has to consider the specific structures of ownership that exist, including the legislation and policies that are put in place to regulate such ownership. It should also be clear that in assessing a given radio sector, one has to look at all players. It is with this in mind that I have chosen, in my discussion of the Ugandan example, to focus on the potential partnership that could be created by public service, private and commercial broadcasters to build a democratic “public sphere”.

## **2.2 Talk radio and the public sphere**

### **2.2.1 Defining talk**

“Talk radio” is often used to refer to programmes that contain a live phone-in component. Used in this sense, the genre is specifically defined as one involving direct audience participation. This is why the format lends itself to so well to the realization of “the public sphere”. The programmes, though not necessarily ideal, create opportunity for public debate. Across the world, there seems to be a growth of talk shows: people talk about their participatory potential (Barker and Knight, 2000).

Despite this growth, a lack of universality in defining talk radio exists, reflecting historical differences in tradition and approach that emerge in different situations. Barker and Knight (Ibid) define talk radio shows that encourage political debate as "...call-in shows that emphasize discussion of politicians, elections and public policy issues" (p.151). In the United States, McNair *et al* (2002) refer to the shows as "talk radio". They refer to similar programmes in the United Kingdom as "phone-in radio debates". As can be seen from the diversity of views presented above, it is difficult to formulate a working definition of talk radio.

Talk radio in the United States developed on commercial radios, mainly from music programmes. In the United Kingdom, it has its roots in public radio from news programmes. In the next section, I explore the evolution of the genre in the United States and the United Kingdom to demonstrate which approaches inform Ugandan models of talk radio. I then narrow down the argument to the African situation and examine the growth of the genre in South Africa. Here I attempt to show the difficulties in applying non-African traditions to African cultural situations. I demonstrate that while the United States approach is aggressive, respect for authority in African cultures creates unique challenges in the use of this approach. Towards the end of the chapter, I look at other potential roles that talk radio in Africa can play. I show that it can, for example, play an important role in conflict resolution, which is a significant challenge in African countries like Uganda.

### **2.2.2 The American approach to talk radio**

There seem to be several important defining factors in American talk radio. Its "golden age" in the 1930s was followed by the development of satellite and digital telephone technology in the 1980s (Talkers, 2002). Satellite and digital telephones made it easier to call into a radio station, enabled the stations to produce more powerful signals at a cheaper cost and made radio broadcasting more efficient.

The second factor was the changing economic conditions in the country. Boggs *et al.* (1999) argue that talk radio blossomed in response to pressures of competition. Too many stations emerged in an economy that had showed a slower growth during the Reagan years. The struggle amongst the stations for audiences and revenue in the market intensified, prompting the stations to shift to less expensive programming formats.

Boggs *et al.* (Ibid) also argue that the repeal of the American “fairness doctrine” in 1987 encouraged the rise of opinionated political talk shows, which made the genre even more popular. The doctrine, enforced since 1949, required broadcasters to cover issues that were considered controversial, but important to the public, inform the electorate on public issues and ensure balanced coverage on their programmes. It required broadcasters to obtain a license every year. In 1987, the US government felt the doctrine no longer served the public interest. Rather, the interest of the public would be better served by a multiplicity of voices in the market and freedom of broadcasters. Freed from the demands of the doctrine, the number of call-in stations in America tripled from 238 in 1987 to 1,200 in 1996 (Ibid).

The fourth factor had to do with the rise of talk from music radio. Music radio is personality driven and heavily opinionated. Hosts therefore play a critical role. O’Donnell (in Kiesewetter, 2001) argues that “...the power of persuasion resides in the listener believing that the talk show host is a credible source” ([http://inquirer.com/editions/2001/05/06/loc\\_talkPg\\_radio\\_voice\\_of.html](http://inquirer.com/editions/2001/05/06/loc_talkPg_radio_voice_of.html)). Hoyt (1992) similarly observes, “...the fact that ordinary people get into the loop on talk radio doesn’t guarantee democratic dialogue, of course. That is up to the hosts”:

The entire flavor of the programs is determined by the ideology and commercial prerequisites of the host. Some are demagogues, some are serious, and some are clowns. If they have a democratic disposition, you get a democratic dialectic; if they are demagogues, you don’t. ([www.cjr.org/year/92/6/talkradio.asp](http://www.cjr.org/year/92/6/talkradio.asp))

Ill-prepared hosts can steer a show on a collision course with other cultures and authorities. Kiesewetter (Ibid) points out that talk radio formats run a risk of shifting “...from subdued discussion of public affairs to a raucous exchange of opinions and feelings”. He argues that should this happen, critics would say talk radio “has become an irresponsible barrage of exaggeration, veiled threats and half-truths shrewdly manipulated by hosts” (Ibid).

The fourth factor that led to the growth of American talk radio was a demand for public debate. Hoyt (Ibid) argues that talk genre in America thrives on socio-political ideals and the demand to publicly talk about “gut” social issues such as taxes, crime, abortion and race. He states that America is a “...world where front-porch, front-stoop conversation is disappearing and people yearn to connect”. The two-way talk radio, he argues, is “...a great vent for political

frustration of which there is no shortage” (Ibid). It tends to be provocative, aggressive in nature and “...thrives on controversy, outlandish behavior, emotional outbursts that seem more genuine and immediate” (p. 68). According to Hoyt, the disenfranchised in American society exploit “people power” on the talk shows. Anyone can pick up a phone, call a radio host, vent their anger and feel a sense of catharsis after hanging up. The anger is more often than not directed against the “big guys” or “elites” in government, thus making talk programmes the last forum for the disenfranchised and the powerless (Ibid).

Talk radio in the US was once viewed primarily as a form of entertainment, especially for the lonely, the less affluent and the less educated (Lee and Capella, 2001). In the 1980s, it emerged as a major source of political information and, in some cases, a determinant of public opinion and political behavior (Ibid). Hoyt (1992) argues that talk radio in the US has grown so phenomenally that it can now “... go anywhere and it does. Its number one topic, not surprisingly, is politics and the mediums can elevate or degrade political discussion faster than you can dial an 800 number” ([www.cjr.org/year/92/6/talkradio.asp](http://www.cjr.org/year/92/6/talkradio.asp)).

Talk genre in the US can be traced back to the 1920s when stations hosted round table discussions about politics, economics and agriculture. Researchers, however, did not take particular interest, until it became evident that talk radio programmes had begun to influence public opinion (Kesiewetter, 2001). Talk genre quickly gained so much prominence in the United States that in 1994 President Bill Clinton invited talk hosts to the White House to unveil his health care plan. The sex scandals that surrounded the Clinton Presidency in 1998 further fueled the shows, giving them an even greater prominence (Hoyt, Ibid).

Boggs (Ibid) argues that talk genre on American radio stations has become so significant that it actually has the potential to encourage “talk show democracy”. He explains his argument with a rhetorical question: “Could it be that talk radio has begun to perform functions associated with more traditional institutions such as political parties, unions, civic groups, college debating forums and – yes - town meetings?” (p.69).

Talk radio, it would seem, plays a positive role in American society in enabling more people to participate in public debates. As such it could be said to be operating very successfully as a “public sphere”. It is important, however, to look more closely at the actual operation of talk radio, in order to assess the extent to which it achieves the ideals of the concept of the public sphere. Barker and Knight (2000) argue that proponents of talk radio assume that the call-in

format of talk radio allows for free expression of opinion. The reality, according to Barker and Knight, is different. Callers into talk programmes are heavily screened and are sometimes scheduled in advance by the producer. Hutchby (2001) observed the same phenomenon:

Talk radio does not simply offer a space into which callers may project their opinions. Rather the host invites their opinions and they are open to a whole range of responses from the host (p.43).

Critics of the Rush Limbaugh talk show in the US, for example, say that his talk shows provide mediated access that falls short of “real politics” and obscures the line between politics and entertainment. This is the reason that McNair *et al.* (Ibid) refer to talk radio as “political infotainment” – a mix of information and entertainment. Barker *et al.* (2000) argue that Rush Limbaugh, whose show is broadcast by over 500 stations in America, has become “an opinion leader for his devoted followers and makes no secret that political persuasion is his intention”.

Proponents of talk radio note the genre nevertheless breaks down the rigid structure of media discourse, permitting easier access and participation (Lee and Capella, Ibid.) Talk shows simulate a conversation, can easily be adapted to rapidly changing events and create a space in which an ordinary person with access to a telephone can intervene and voice an opinion. In this way, talk shows encourage democratic participation by ordinary people.

### **2.2.3 The United Kingdom approach**

Just as in the US, several factors seem to have been responsible for the growth of talk radio genre in the UK. Some of these factors are similar, such as the global changes in technology that led to the introduction of mobile phones and more efficient broadcast systems in recent years. They had a similar influence in the UK to that in the US, which has been discussed above.

The other key factor had to do with the public service mandate of UK radio. Talk shows in the UK evolved in response to radio’s public service mandate to “sustain a healthy public sphere and play a key role in the UK’s political life” (McNair, 2002, p. 408). The origins of the genre on UK radio stations can be traced back to a live panel discussion started by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1948. The programme, “*Any Questions*”, provided a live forum for leading British public figures to discuss issues on BBC 4 radio, on location every Friday night. The programme became so popular that to accommodate a demand for feedback from the audience, the BBC later introduced a follow-up programme on Saturday night - “*Any*

*Answers*". The BBC argues that the follow-up programme provides a chance for its audiences to put across their views on the topics raised on "*Any Questions*" (cited in McNair, *Ibid*).

BBC programming decisions appear to be informed by a rigid division between the audience and those who are expert on the topics discussed. Buckley (2000) observes that the BBC model of broadcasting is paternalistic, serving to unify nation-states and their citizens. McNair *et al.* take his argument further and observe that talk shows in the UK are generally organized mainly to give voice to ordinary people and interrogate the political elite, thereby enhancing public accountability. In so doing, the radio stations play a key role in mobilizing public involvement in the political process. According to McNair *et al.*, talk shows have become a favourite of UK politicians who are eager to explain themselves to the British public:

Politicians are under increasing pressure to appear on these programmes, not least because their competitors are doing so...mediated access is perceived to be an important democratic resource by both the producers and audiences in the United Kingdom. It provides a unique cultural space for the public discussion of political affairs [and] politicians recognize the democratic value of public participation (p. 412).

The third factor was the rise of commercial radio. Brian (in McNair *et al.*, 2002, p. 410) argues that commercial channels are under pressure to make programmes that are not only political in content, but also successful in achieving high ratings. Commercial radio is profit-motivated and strives to turn in greater revenues. This is the motivation for the proliferation of talk genre across British commercial channels.

McNair *et al.* (*Ibid*) identify three talk formats that generally occur on UK broadcast channels. These include phone-in debates, the studio-debates where audiences are drawn from the public at large and invited to put questions on topical issues to a panel of experts and the single-issue debates where experts in the studio analyze one topical issue.

The UK model was primarily a tool for establishing citizen participation, unlike the US model that developed in a sector dominated by commercial radio. The UK model developed where public service radio played a key role. The US model was entertainment-driven, encouraging provocative discussion. Within the UK model, there is a parallel between the growth of talk radio and the demands for commercialization of radio. It would be interesting to determine whether commercial agendas are taking over public service agendas on talk radio formats. On the other hand, the US models developed out of music radio where disc jockeys

became increasingly interested in using the airspace to comment on and discuss issues such as political developments in their society.

#### **2.2.4 African talk radio: diverse traditions**

In various African countries there appears to be a tremendous growth in talk radio. The emerging talk radio shows in Africa have borrowed examples of approaches and formats from US and Europe. In borrowing these approaches, it is important to be sensitive to local conditions, otherwise the potential of talk radio to operate as a public sphere may not be realized. In this section I will explain what I mean by such sensitivity.

In South Africa, talk radio has grown more recently with the new non-racial government encouraging the proliferation of radio broadcasting to allow public discussion of important issues. The establishment of community radio, for example, according to Buckley (2000) was seen as “a tool to empower the disadvantaged majority, who continued to be excluded from the apartheid regime in the South African Broadcasting Corporation” (p. 183).

The growth of talk genre in South Africa is interesting to explore because it shows how cultures can clash through talk shows. Barnett (2000) argues that radio in South Africa was historically used during the apartheid era to foster division and fragmentation of the society. The post-apartheid government sought to develop the media as a forum for national unification and democratic participation. By May 2000, South Africa had over 180 new radio stations. Out of the top 11 stations, five were news and/or talk stations. Radio 702, which started talk radio shows in 1990, had 425,000 listeners (Business Day, 2000).

In post-apartheid South Africa, radio talk hosts seem to have played a critical role in maintaining the balance between the expectations of listeners and sensitivities of the new majority government. Where they have copied approaches that emphasize provocative debate like the United States approach, without adapting them to local sensitivities, they have, however, risked a clash of cultures. The example of John Robbie of Radio 702 demonstrates this well. During a live debate on the South African government’s controversial HIV/AIDS policy in 2000, he told the Minister of Health she was talking “rubbish” and asked her to leave his show. The government reacted by demanding his immediate resignation or dismissal. According to the government, Robbie had used his position as talk show host “as a license to insult” and had exposed the Minister to “shabby, despicable treatment and disrespect”. South African editors

argued that the host had done nothing wrong except emphasize a point as moderator of a popular show, but Radio 702 announced Robbie was taking a few days off “to mull over a few things in his head” (AFP, 2000). In designing his talk programme, Robbie needed to take into account the sensitivities surrounding public debates on HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

A second aspect of the need to be sensitive to local conditions becomes apparent when one considers the role that media can play in many African countries in covering social conflict. In Africa where political conflicts exist in many countries, this is an important consideration. Eileen Dzik (2003) has noted this potential and points out that “...many nations around the world are discovering the potential of talk programmes to rebuild trust in regions of almost unimaginable violence.” This is important in countries like South Africa, which experienced tensions between different sections of its society over the years of apartheid rule. This potential could also be important in Uganda, which has witnessed an 18-year long conflict in the northern part of the country by a tribal rebel group fighting the government.

The example of Burundi, where talk show hosts are playing a role in conflict resolution, is worth mentioning. It demonstrates a need for further critical thinking on other potential roles that talk radio could play in societies. Dzik cites the example of Rwanda, where hate radio is believed to have fuelled genocide in a society that was caught up in violent ethnic conflict for decades. Writing for a non-governmental media organization, Search for Common Ground, she observes that:

The language of dialogue is gaining a foothold....Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria and Burundi are using the talk-show format to create a culture more conducive to democratic values (www.scg.org)

Based on the Rwanda experience, Studio Ijambo Radio in Burundi (the name *Ijambo* means “Wise Words” in Kirundi) has created talk programmes to promote healing across ethnic lines. The station was set up in 1995 by Search for Common Ground. It employs local talk hosts from the main tribes to “preach peace” to their audiences.

One of its most popular programmes is “Pillars of Humanity”, a talk show devoted to stories of Hutu tribal people who saved lives of Tutsi tribal people and vice versa at the height of intertribal conflict in the 1990s. A study of the station by Radio Netherlands (2002) found that:

There was clearly an urgent need for balanced and anti-inflammatory broadcasts. Considering that radio was the most productive and cost-effective means for delivering information on the Great Lakes region where an estimated 85 percent of the population had access to radios, SCG established Studio Ijambo...It is to produce high quality programmes dedicated to peace and national reconciliation and credible programmes that promote dialogue among polarized groups ([www.rnw.nl/realradio/dossiers/html/burundi-p.html](http://www.rnw.nl/realradio/dossiers/html/burundi-p.html)”).

The argument by Radio Netherlands, however, assumes that participation in talk programmes, even among the 85 percent of the population who have access to radio, is universal. In reality, this is not likely (Boggs *et al*, Ibid).

The third aspect to keep in mind to ensure that one remains sensitive to local conditions is the important contribution that media has to make towards social development. Samb (cited in Panos, Ibid) argues that in Senegal community radio facilitates communication amongst farmers and acts as an instrument of communication, administration and to energize the community. He asserts that the target audience for the community radios in Senegal is composed of herdsmen, fishermen and farmers, but the stations also give special attention to women and children. This has a bearing on development:

Development cannot be achieved without taking into account those concerned and without their participation in internally generated development...there is no better vehicle than the mass media to achieve this high level of awareness...community radio provides a good example of decentralized communication (Panos, no.33, p.14)

Panos (2001) found that in the West African state of Mali, where community radio has expanded rapidly over the last few years, 70 percent of the population could not read or write, but 100 percent of them listened to the radio. Adjovi (cited in Panos, Ibid) notes the importance of radio to Malian communities:

The radio provides the people with an opportunity to speak and have their messages relayed back to them. The target population is clearly defined, the dialogue direct and the discourse tailored to local concerns. In grassroots communities, the community radio has broadened the scope of the village meeting (p. 3).

From the example above it appears that talk radio plays critical roles in socio-political development of society. This chapter demonstrates that, apart from providing a “public sphere”

which is critical for the functioning of democracy, talk radio facilitates two-way communication in societies as diverse as the US, the UK, South Africa and Burundi. In these situations, media practitioners aspire to achieve the ideals that Habermas's concept of the public sphere espouses. The concept itself has become an important benchmark for measuring the potential roles that the media plays. The question this raises and which I try to answer in this study is - what potential roles of the media do the three Ugandan stations that I focus on in this study play, in the socio-political development of Ugandan society?

The next chapter explains the growth of talk shows on Ugandan radio stations against the background of the country's political, social and economic development and traces the emergence of private radio broadcasting in the country.

### CHAPTER THREE

## HISTORY OF UGANDAN RADIO AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

*A country's media system is a product of its political and economic history (McQuail, 1994. p.82)*

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, talk radio as a genre is often defined in terms of its potential for providing opportunities for public participation in debates about social issues. In order to make sense of the way programming staff working at Ugandan radio stations currently understand the potential of this genre for such participation, it is important to take note of certain trends and patterns in the history of Ugandan broadcasting. This chapter shows that this history is powerfully defined by the way various stakeholders view the role that radio should play in facilitating public participation. I argue that at each stage of the development of Ugandan broadcasting, radio did not operate purely as a tool of oppression or as a vehicle for democratization, but rather as a site of struggle in which both forces of oppression and liberalization existed. Furthermore, the argument put forward in this thesis is that, given this history, talk radio currently has an ambiguous role in relation to public participation.

The first part of the chapter is a brief description of this history, illustrating the contradictory role played by radio at each stage in terms of both oppressing and encouraging public participation. I will show that although both forces of control and empowerment are present, the balance has always been towards the former. I argue, however, that due to recent changes in the broader context within which Ugandan broadcasting operates, there are currently opportunities to shift this balance, establishing an approach to radio which is primarily geared towards empowerment. The second half of the chapter concentrates on the current situation, exploring in greater detail how the radio sector is organizing itself in order to allow freedoms, but also ensure control. This section starts to explore how the resulting broadcasting environment informs programming choices made by individual stations.

## 3.1 Ugandan broadcasting history

### 3.1.1 The pre-independence period

As quoted at the start of this chapter, McQuail (1994) rightly asserts that the political and economic history of a country greatly influences that country's media system. Uganda's media have indeed been shaped by political and economic events since pre-independence times. An examination of the early period of Ugandan broadcasting history illustrates this point.

Radio has played a key role in the development of the Ugandan media sector since the middle of the twentieth century. By 1954, the British colonial authorities in Uganda had realized the value of establishing a state broadcaster and they set up the Ugandan Broadcast Service, which later became Radio Uganda. At face value this appeared to be a move to encourage development and make administration easier. Balikudembe (cited in Jjuuko, 2002) observes, for example, that the aim of setting up the service was to link citizens with the colonial administration and to foster confidence and social advancement. Indeed, throughout the pre-independence period, radio broadcasts were the main means by which the colonial administration reached both the African masses and its own officials scattered throughout the Uganda protectorate.

A closer look suggests that Radio Uganda was, however, at least partly a response by the British colonial administration to growing nationalism through which indigenous Ugandans, led by nationalist politicians, had started making demands for independence from colonialism. The administration wanted to control the growing movement of pro-independence agitators and reaffirm colonial rule (Oketch, 1994). Significantly, Radio Uganda was established at the moment when the print media in Uganda had become an arena for political battles and an instrument of anti-colonialist nationalism. Newspapers like *Uganda Post*, *Uganda Express* and *Uganda Eyogera*, which were published by pro-independence activists, had been suspended by the colonial government in 1953 and 1954 for supporting rising agitation against British colonial rule. At the same time, the colonial administration expanded the circulation of its own newsheets to popularize its activities. The media had become a forum for national political debate where each side – the colonialists and the 'nationalists' -- tried to out-do each other in swaying public opinion (Ibid). It could be argued that the establishment of Radio Uganda was deliberately timed to provide the colonialists with a medium that they could control more

effectively than the print sector, thus strengthening their ability to direct and restrict public debate. Balikudembe (Ibid) argues along these lines that, "...the broadcaster was launched to secure the cooperation of ordinary Ugandans, kill rumors and combat subversive propaganda aimed at frustrating government measures". Matovu (1990) explores this argument further, observing that the colonialists may have developed the broadcasting service as an instrument of advanced administration, but its real functions included propaganda through the use of programmes that explained government motives (Ibid).

The government's utilization of radio cannot, however, be described purely in terms of strategies for control. Matovu (Ibid) explores this argument further and notes that it is illustrated in the 1958 government report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Organization, Policy and Operation of the Government Information Service. Significantly, the report criticized the broadcasting service at the time for "lack of a more comprehensive news service, low standards and lack of diversity of views on political affairs" (p.4). One could argue that the report shows that there were voices within government who were serious about making radio a tool for empowerment. It is certainly true that Ugandan radio did not operate purely as a force for oppression. The colonial administrators even started to utilize radio to open up space for public discussion by hosting panels of experts to talk about critical social issues. By hosting panels of "experts", this form of talk does appear to have been a distinctly top-down model where radio was used to "inform" a passive audience rather than engaging them in debate. In this sense, Radio Uganda, at the time, could be said to be similar to other United Kingdom models of paternalistic, "educational", public service radio. As such, the way this is supposed to "open-up" space for public debate is framed, in a sense, to reconfirm unequal power relations. Mugambe (2003, Interview) argues that these programmes, on which "experts" were hosted, were the earliest examples of Ugandan talk shows and that the roots of contemporary Ugandan talk shows can actually be traced to these programmes.

A scrutiny of the actual operation of radio at this time reveals, in fact, that in many respects, it operated in a way that encouraged public debate. For example, radio broadcasts could be heard in several of the country's main languages, which in itself is a form of empowerment<sup>6</sup>. A useful comparative example here can be found in Adjovi's (2002) comments on the use of

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<sup>6</sup> Through the use of local languages, the radio reaches 70 percent of Uganda's 23 million people (Steadman, 2002)

local languages on radio stations in Mali, West Africa. He explains that people are "...proud to hear their languages and voices spoken on air". One could argue that the same is true in the case of Radio Uganda, both in the past and at present.

### **3.1.2 Radio since the post-independence period**

The patterns seen in the early days of Ugandan radio repeat themselves in the years after independence, showing that radio remained both a tool for propaganda and a site of resistance. For three decades after independence (1962-93), Radio Uganda remained the sole broadcaster in the country. By 1968 it was broadcasting 170 hours a week to about two million listeners (Matovu, Ibid). It aired topics ranging from health programmes to agriculture and educational programmes that were broadcast to at least 1,000 schools. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) notes that the crucial role played by the broadcast sector was widely recognized by stakeholders:

Broadcasting and other government information services were powerful weapons in the economic and social development of the country. The broadcasting system was a catalyst in the implementation of development projects...a considerable amount of capital investment was therefore set aside for expanding and improving it (UNESCO, 1976).

Critics such as Jjuuko (2002), Nelson (1996) and Matovu (1990) argue, however, that by the late 1960's Ugandan broadcasting sector was becoming "elitist" in its orientation. Nelson (Ibid) observes that the Ugandan government was putting increasing pressure on Radio Uganda to give priority to reports of government activities and to do so in an uncritical manner. As a result, radio news became "entirely minister-oriented" with a concentration on reports about government officials and their trips and formal meetings. Indeed, government expectations of the broadcaster were, and are to some extent still, those of control. Jjuuko (Ibid) argues that the reporters on the station actually perceive Radio Uganda as "...a public radio where they are expected to serve the government." She quotes a senior reporter thus: "...if a Minister is implicated in a scandal, we have to wait for a press release from the government before we get such a story on air" (2002, p. 93). It seems to be the case that officials, happy with coverage that highlighted uncritically what their government was doing, have always been quick to encourage journalists to toe the line. For example, a government spokesman in an address to journalists at the Kampala Press Club in

1969 urged them to support “the revolution” that the socialist government of Apollo Milton Obote had introduced into the country:

Never lose sight of and never prostitute the nature of the service, which the press is there to perform. Secondly educate your listeners to understand the nature of the revolution. (Akena Adoko, cited in Matovu, p. 5).

To the government spokesman, the journalists were there to promote the “revolution”. After 1971 there was a shift in the way Ugandan media operated. This was the year that General Idi Amin led the army to overthrow the civilian government of Apollo Milton Obote, who was in Singapore attending a Commonwealth summit. Obote later went to live in exile in Tanzania. The military unleashed dramatic political changes, but radio still operated in similar ways to the colonial times, with a more explicit exploitation for oppressive purposes. Significantly, Radio Uganda was one of the first institutions to be seized by the soldiers in order to announce that they had taken control of the government in the country’s first *coup d’etat*<sup>7</sup>. It is notable that, while Idi Amin’s government did great damage to the country’s social and economic infrastructure during the next few years, the communication systems on which Radio Uganda depended remained intact. In fact, in 1976, Idi Amin’s government set up four high power transmitters in the east, north and central region to boost the reception of the broadcaster’s programmes. Medium wave transmission was added to extend the reach of the state broadcaster. The move to upgrade the country’s broadcast infrastructure was hailed by UNESCO, as a valuable contribution to social development:

Medium wave radio-broadcasting gives considerable and reliable radio signals on simple inexpensive radio receivers throughout the broadcasting period, thus bringing the service within the purchasing power of low income earners, the majority of whom live in rural areas (UNESCO, in Matovu. 1990).

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<sup>7</sup> In Uganda’s numerous subsequent successful and attempted coups, the Radio Uganda building has always been a first target. As soldiers shot their way into power, a military spokesman would head for the radio station and announce that the government had been toppled. Mugambe (Ibid) observes that military officers would even drive to the homes of producers and newsreaders to bring them to the station to show the soldiers how to make an announcement on air.

Nevertheless, it would appear that Idi Amin recognized the powerful role that radio could play in ensuring social control. Mugambe (Interview, 2003), a long service journalist who worked for the state broadcaster at the time, contends that Idi Amin actually invested in radio so that his government could exploit it to propagate its dictatorial policies and activities. He argues that the regime ruthlessly used radio to control information to which the population had access. This analysis seems sound, given that some of the journalists who failed to publicize the government position to the satisfaction of the regime lost their jobs and several actually lost their lives (Ibid). As in the early days of broadcasting, we again see an ambiguity in the role played by radio in society, both as a tool of oppression and as an empowering presence for Ugandan citizens. For example, Radio Uganda gave priority to news highlighting government policies and programmes, but at the same time continued educational broadcasts, like farmers' programmes, which were broadcast in several local languages to thousands of listeners across the country (Jjuuko, 2002).

The socio-economic and political anarchy that characterized General Amin's rule continued in subsequent years with the interim governments of the late seventies and early eighties, including the government of Apollo Milton Obote, after he returned from exile to become president for the second time in 1981-85, and a military government in 1986. These governments continued to use the state broadcaster the same way that Idi Amin's government did. It was only when the current government of Yoweri Museveni took power in the same year after fighting a five-year guerrilla war that Uganda began to emerge from this political turmoil. With the new government, important changes started to take place in the struggles around radio as a space for public participation in debate.

It can be argued that two policy decisions made by the Museveni government led to important shifts in the significance attached to the media within Ugandan society as a space for public debate. The first of these concerns the decision to liberalize the Ugandan media sector in 1993. It is important to note that external forces, at least to some extent, initiated such liberalization. Mukholi (Interview, 2002) points out that the increasing availability of free information from other sources such as international radio stations and cable television – and more recently the Internet - was an important factor compelling the Ugandan government to open up space to the private media. This is significant in the context of increasing globalization of the media. Ultimately, it has become more difficult to hide information. Another important

external pressure is represented by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that were imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Uganda in 1987. These two institutions believe that, in order to ensure the recovery of Uganda's economy, the SAPs were needed to introduce competition into markets that had been dominated by single inefficient, loss-making players (Ibid). This included the broadcast market given that Radio Uganda had enjoyed a monopoly for almost 40 years. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund recognize that the media plays a crucial role in development. The two financial institutions argue that state ownership and monopoly are detrimental to the roles they believe the media can play to boost economic, political and social development. For this reason, both institutions demand that countries in which they operate should have an independent, free media (World Bank, 2003). Djankov, McLiesh, Nenova and Schleifer in a study for the World Bank (2001) observe a strong correlation between media ownership and governance:

Countries with more prevalent state ownership of the media have less free press, fewer political rights for citizens, inferior governance, less developed markets, and strikingly inferior outcomes in education and health...Government media monopolies are associated with particularly poor outcomes, especially when we have to focus on social outcomes, but we also saw some evidence that various outcomes deteriorate more generally as state ownership increases (p. 31).

The Ugandan government accepted the SAPs as a deliberate strategy to rebuild the country's devastated economic, social and political sectors. Today the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (World Bank, 2003) cite Uganda as an economic success story, arguing that these policies have created significant economic growth. The World Bank also argues that since 1986 the country has enjoyed a more tolerant political climate and relatively greater freedoms, including that of the press, than it did in the past. These factors have proved attractive to entrepreneurs, including investors who have established many new radio stations, pushing the number of licensed stations in the country by 2003 to over 100 (Chibita, in Nassanga, ed., 2003).

Critics argue, however, that externally driven liberalization of the media has implications for the survival of the local cultural industries and for diversity. Murdock (1994) notes that liberalization policies are indeed designed to introduce competition into markets that were previously served solely by public enterprise, but the same policies shift the media away from the defense of the public interest towards the promotion of corporate interests. Kupe (2000)

argues that while SAPs encourage free media by creating societies where free market forces operate, they do not necessarily ensure a pluralistic and diverse media. The market, he points out, often creates a skewed media system, which only caters for those with high purchasing power, ignoring the large majority. Chibita (Ibid) asserts that, in the case of Uganda, one now hears more from media stakeholders about entrepreneurship than about public service broadcasting.

The second policy position that directly affects the significance of the media sector as a space for public debate has to do with restrictions on full political party activity. As pointed out in Chapter One, political party activity in Uganda has been banned since 1986, with the ruling “National Resistance Movement” being the only political organization allowed to operate. Since the early 1990’s, however, there have been increasing calls for full political party activity to be restored to create platforms for alternative views and enhance democracy. Mwesigye (in Nassanga, ed., 2003) and Kyazze (in Nassanga, Ibid) both argue that in the absence of a legal opposition, the Ugandan media has found itself providing the main alternative forum to government propaganda. It has had to respond to a rising demand for space to debate national issues and found itself as the main outlet for expression of frustration at the government.

For the last 10 years, political party activity in Uganda has been limited to the “no party” system of government in which President Museveni’s supporters dominate all aspects of political, social and economic life to the exclusion of those who think otherwise...in the absence of organized political activity in Uganda, the media have taken on the role of the opposition (Kyazze, p. 155)

Whether one agrees with Kyazze’s suggestion that the media can operate as a platform for political opposition or not, his comment does highlight the fact that the Ugandan media sector has become an increasingly important site of struggle for control over public expression of political opinion. One could argue that although Museveni’s economic policies show no evidence that the decision to liberalize the media was primarily driven by a belief in the empowerment of the masses, there are forces at work within Ugandan society that are appropriating liberalization policies for empowerment purposes. Just as the nationalist groups in the pre-independence colonial period used the media as a site for resistance, Ugandans are again turning to the media to vent frustration at the government of the day

## 3.2 Ugandan media today

### 3.2.1 Emergence of a complex media landscape

Forces of oppression and of empowerment have always been present within the Ugandan broadcast sector, arguably with more emphasis on the former. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, it is the position of this thesis that given the liberalization of the media sector over the past few years, there are currently opportunities to shift this balance, establishing an approach to radio that is primarily geared towards empowerment. The interviews that were conducted with the staff of three radio stations as part of this study demonstrate that opinion is still divided as to whether the attempt being made by Ugandans to claim radio as a true public sphere, just as they did with the press in the early days, is bearing fruit. This section looks more closely at the current media landscape, identifying opportunities for change.

In the current Ugandan media sector, radio remains a key player. Onyango-Obbo (Ibid) observes: "...radio, perhaps the only real mass medium in the country, remains a principal means of political control and government communications [read propaganda] with the masses over the years." Steadman (2002), estimates that a quarter of all Ugandan homesteads own a radio set. In the capital city, Kampala, 92 percent of the 1.2 million residents listen to the radio on a particular day compared to 50 percent who read a newspaper in the same period of time. The current coverage of short wave, medium wave and FM transmissions extends all over Uganda, providing both government and a large part of the Ugandan public with potential space for exchange of views<sup>8</sup>.

It is important to understand, however, that radio now operates within very different relations of ownership and power from those that existed in the past. There are a greater variety of players within the current radio landscape, all with very different agendas. One important change has been the emergence of a commercial radio sector. On commercial radio stations, like Radio One, business interests dominate. Advertisers actively seek information on radio ownership and audiences before spending their money sponsoring programmes or paying for advertising (Steadman, Ibid). Jjuuko (in Nassanga, 2003. ed) argues that many people who have started new radio stations in Uganda have done so because they want to make a profit. This has

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix A on p.97 is a map of Uganda showing the coverage of FM stations in the country in 2002. As the map shows, Radio Uganda which includes Star FM, covers much of the central region, east, north, southwestern and the north. FM coverage is concentrated in the central region, the western and the east.

introduced tight competition for audiences and advertising revenue. The growing influence of commercialization also affects programming, even on the public radio stations. Jjuuko, for example, notes that the growth of the talk radio format on Radio Uganda is linked to the growth of commercial competition. Ultimately, the government plans to create a separate broadcasting agency to manage Radio Uganda and government's other media outlets, like Uganda Television, on a purely commercial basis (Baguma *et al.*, 2000).

The widespread establishment of the community radio movement in Uganda signifies another important change. These stations are licensed by the government to be owned and managed by people in the communities that the stations serve. Such stations are intended to serve the community's expressed needs and priorities and are accountable to community structures. The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, 2003) argues that community radio is a service, which strives to influence public opinion, create consensus, strengthen democracy and "create a community" ([www.amarc.org](http://www.amarc.org)). It is, however, argued that in the case of Uganda, these stations are largely run and managed on the basis of commercial and political imperatives (Jjuuko, 2002).

Emerging from these changes is a radio sector defined by at least three sets of agendas: those of government, commercial and public/community interests. It can be argued that the government is primarily interested in using radio to promote its political activities and publicize programmes that the leaders want the general public to know about. The owners of private stations, on the other hand, could be said to be primarily interested in using radio for commercial interests. One may assume that local communities, again, are necessarily interested in the role that the media can play in providing them with access to information and to participation in public debate.

These different agendas are at play - and in conflict with each other - in all three of Uganda's tiers of broadcasting: state, commercial and community radio. Within the state broadcaster, for example, a key conflict is between government agendas, commercial interests and public service obligations. Matovu (Ibid) argues that from the British colonial period and through Uganda's post-independence governments, political agendas have been forced on state-owned media. In the post-independence period, Radio Uganda has continued to operate as a state broadcaster disseminating state policies and information to the masses, giving priority to what the government wants the masses to know, rather than what is classically known of a public

broadcaster (which enjoys independence from government and commercial interests, and represents the rights of citizens) (Ibid). Its status was confirmed by the Uganda government's decision to retain Radio Uganda as a department within the Office of the President after liberalizing the media in 1993. The President appoints a minister to oversee Radio Uganda's operations and the Minister in turn names its top officials. As such, Radio Uganda falls short of the complete independence for public broadcasters that media pressure groups like the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) advocate (in [www.misa.org](http://www.misa.org)). Radio Uganda also finds itself juggling commercial agendas and considerations with those of the public service and/or of the state. It does so while still attempting to give priority to the political agendas of the government. Jjuuko (2002) has studied the clash between the commercial demands on Radio Uganda, public service obligations and government interests. She found that Radio Uganda was, in fact, in the first place "...never mandated to broadcast commercial programmes". With the emergence of liberalization, however, government has left the station's departments to finance their operations and existence through commercialization of programmes. She quotes the Chief Commercial Manager who states that the station "...is now ready to allocate as much time as advertisers can take". This, Jjuuko argues, has significantly diverted the station from its public service mandate. At the same time, however, Jjuuko's study found that "...whilst there are no government restrictions on programme content, producers and reporters are expected to self-censor, to avoid those stories which contradict the 'good' intentions of the government" (p.72).

Similarly, within the community radio sector, one can identify conflicts between different agendas, in particular commercial and government interests. Despite the fact that there are broad global agreements within structures such as AMARC about what community radio should be, the realities that play themselves out within the community radio sector in any given country often look different. In the case of Uganda, Nassanga (2003) found that some stations are actually owned by or represent the powerful in society, such as politicians and businessmen. A significant portion of the content on such radio stations is dominated by political events as a result of the influence exerted by the owners on programming decisions made by staff (Ibid):

Directly or indirectly, politicians tend to use community media for their own ends. What is of concern is that the misuse of community media diverts from the major principle of being all-exclusive and to serve all community numbers. This ultimately affects the information value of community media (p. 199).

The increasing complexity of the Ugandan radio sector is an important backdrop against which to understand the emergence of talk radio in Uganda and its potential role in promoting participation in public debate. This complexity has, certainly, impacted on broad trends within programming. Chibita (2002) explores the impact that, for example, increasing competition has made on programming, arguing that it has led to a far greater reception of content by audiences:

In a truly competitive environment, broadcasters find they must come up with programming that captures as much of their audience as possible from their rivals. This means, among other things, that they must select and package programmes so that for the average member of the audience, they do not take too much sophistication to appreciate (p. 20).

A critical examination of the programming reveals, however, that much of that content is made up of foreign programmes that are cheaper to broadcast than homegrown material. Mwesigye (in Nassanga, *Ibid*) argues that globalisation has led to the worldwide spread of the practices and ideologies of the western communications industry, especially American, leading to a convergence in media systems. In a study of Ugandan journalists, he found that an overwhelming number listen to international radio stations (93 percent to BBC and 32 percent to VOA) and rate western journalistic functions highly (*Ibid*). Critics like Kasoma (1995), however, call this scenario the tragedy facing African journalism:

The tragedy facing African journalism of the 1990s...is the continent's journalists have closely imitated the professional norms of the (West), which they see as the epitome of good journalism. Consequently, the African mass media's philosophical foundations, their aims and objectives have been blueprints of the media in the industrialized societies, (p.95).

It is however argued that the reason for this is different. It is that most of the new Ugandan radio stations actually lack the resources and the capacity to produce many local programmes (Chibita, *Ibid*).

### **3.2.2 Regulating the new media landscape**

The growing complexity of Uganda's radio sector demands a sophisticated regulatory system in order to ensure an equitable environment for all interest groups. In order to better understand the

impact of conflicting agendas on the approaches to programming on Ugandan radio stations, it is useful to consider the systems that have been developed to play this role. The pattern that emerges is not just one of increasing freedoms, but also of repeated insistence on controls by the government.

The Electronic Media Statute of 1996 provides for the creation of a national Broadcasting Council "... to coordinate and exercise control over and to supervise broadcasting activities." The Council is responsible for the "standardization, planning and management" of the frequency spectrum available for broadcasting and to "...allocate such spectrum resources in such a manner as to ensure the widest possible variety on programming and optimal utilization of those resources." (Media Council Statute, 1995). To achieve this, the Council is mandated to grant annual licenses to radio stations and enforce "minimum standards". Before granting a license to a station, the Council demands that at least 50 percent of shareholding must belong to a holder of Ugandan citizenship and considers the "location of situation and geographical area to which broadcasts are to be made, and the political, social, cultural and economic value" of the station (Ibid).

Critics argue that the Council is prone to government influence. Kemigisha and Mukholi (in Kemigisha. ed. 1998.) point out that the Council has the potential to hinder the work of Ugandan journalists, especially given that despite a press friendly environment, laws of libel, defamation and sedition still exist. The Council is, however, yet to commence operations. As Emmanuel Nkurunsiza, Acting Commissioner of Uganda Television, observes, since the Statute was passed by Parliament in 1996, activities of the Council have remained "...at a virtual standstill due to lack of funding and other support" (Nkurunsiza, Interview. 2003).

Even if the council is not yet really functional, the distinction between the tiers of broadcasting has been achieved. As indicated earlier, Ugandan media regulations currently categorize broadcasters according to a three-tier system, distinguishing between commercial, community and public broadcasters. Such a system is said to serve the local as well as national needs of a country's citizens, promoting local democracy and cultural diversity (MISA, 2002).

A White Paper on the media, developed in 2000 by the Ministry of Information, is similarly, an attempt to establish regulations ensuring the freedom of the media. Baguma *et al.* (2002) summarize the objectives of the new policy thus:

To ensure that the provision of information ...should be so designed that it reaches its targeted recipients in the forms best adapted to their needs and the circumstances of reception...with the intention of making available the material needed for regular and well-informed public discussion and decision-making. (p. 2)

The White Paper makes an important distinction between profit driven ventures and community owned initiatives, thus acknowledging the need to enshrine a space for the latter category within the free-market system. The White Paper would like Ugandan commercial stations to continue being licensed primarily for profit, while community stations would be owned and controlled by the communities they serve. The public broadcaster would remain bound by legal obligations to inform, educate, mobilize and entertain all citizens (Ibid). The paper insists on all three tiers of broadcasting having a public service mandate. At the same time, the emphasis is heavily on commercialization, which appears to contradict some of the moves to safeguard community interests. The interviews conducted with programming staff, for this study, were done in an attempt to assess the extent to which they acknowledge these policies and guidelines as a legitimate and important framework within which they make programming decisions.

The proposed regulatory system has implications for decisions around broadcast programming on Ugandan stations. The stations will be required to ensure that at least 60 percent of their broadcasts consist of local content. Chibita (2002) argues that this quota system is essential for promoting genuine diversity and ultimately supporting democratic participation on the programmes by the majority of people in Uganda. It is, however, necessary to define exactly what local content means in the context of the advent of globalization and technological modernization, as well as increasing interconnectivity among cultural production. According to Chibita such local content should be "...content or programming that is produced under the creative control of nationals of the country" (in [www.niju.org](http://www.niju.org)). She contends that such content should cater for the public interest, but admits that the public interest is actually made up of many interests. The policy statement does acknowledge that its proposals risk undermining the priority that the media gives to programmes that should interest the Ugandan public. The White Paper notes, however: "...provision will be made to ensure the availability of a unified national network for programmes of general or national interest to strengthen national identity" (cited in Baguma et al., Ibid). Overall, the paper re-asserts many of the restrictions created by earlier laws, but allows for expansion of media opportunities.

Within this regulatory space, opportunities do exist for establishing radio as a tool for empowering people. For example, the commitments made by the government in the White Paper constitute such an opportunity, even though the proposals contain contradictory messages including the stringent regulation of radio in a liberalized environment. On balance, the Ugandan media landscape tends to tilt more towards empowerment. One could argue that there is now more commitment to empowerment through the media within the government itself, as evidenced by the regulations that are being put in place. What this framework will mean in practice, however, is still in balance, given the contradictions identified in this chapter. The demands that are being made by ordinary Ugandans for appropriating radio as a public sphere could help to swing the balance, but their ability to do so will very much depend on what happens on those stations, particularly in terms of attitudes adopted by programming staff. The case study described in the next chapters explores this question, focusing on the attitudes of such staff to the role of talk radio in creating opportunities for public participation.

This study attempts to determine how programming staff at three Ugandan radio stations - Radio One, Mama FM and Radio Uganda's Star FM - are positioning themselves in relation to these dynamics today. I chose the three talk shows in part because they represent an attempt by the stations to produce their own programmes that actually try to give an in-depth treatment to topical issues that are important to ordinary Ugandans. This study examines whether the staff see themselves facilitating access for the masses and, thereby, as part of a pressure group working towards greater democratization, or whether they see themselves as simply promoting commercial or state imperatives on their stations, paying lip service to the principles of democracy.

The next chapter explains the methodology that informed the study and examines the merits and demerits of the research methods. It discusses the theoretical basis of these methods and points out methodological issues that arose during the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*"Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them," (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2)*

As explained in Chapter One, this study is a comparative exploration of approaches to the talk show genre on three Ugandan radio stations. The focus is on the way the genre is understood by staff directly involved in the production of talk shows and their motivations for using the format on their stations. The study teases out the implications of these approaches for the potential of talk radio to operate as a platform for public debate on these stations. This exploration, which focuses on Radio One (a commercial station), Mama FM (a community station) and Star FM (set up in 1998 as part of the state broadcaster), is presented in Chapter Five.

This chapter describes the research design that was developed in order to guide my research into these three stations. It describes the rationale behind the selection of the stations as case studies, the design of the interviews with programming staff and the methods of data collection and analysis. It explains how the methods that formed part of this plan were intended to achieve the aims of the research. The last section of the chapter outlines some limitations that I faced in executing this research plan and discusses the attempts made to overcome them.

#### **4.1 The use of the case study as a model of research**

##### **4.1.1 The value of case studies**

In designing this project, I opted for the use of a case study format because it offers a qualitative approach to research. As pointed out in the quote at the top of this chapter, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The method is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within real life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomena and context are not clearly evident (Yin, cited in Myers, 2000). It helps the researcher to understand people and the social or cultural contexts in which they work. As Gilham (2000) argues, case study research attempts to answer specific research questions on the basis of a range of evidence that can be collected and

analyzed by the researcher. It illuminates issues, discovers possible explanations and is therefore a search for meaning. In this study, the method helps to create a useful understanding of the approach that programming staff have to the talk genre holistically, by being sensitive to the specific context in which the talk shows are situated. This demands a detailed exploration of the situation at a particular station, rather than a general survey approach. Selecting a station from each of the three tiers of broadcasting allowed me to explore and compare very different contexts.

#### **4.1.2 The selection of stations for the case study**

All the three of the stations in this study are located within Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The decision to focus on stations based in the capital was, to some extent, inevitable. Most media activities including newspaper printing, television broadcasting and the majority of radio stations are based here.

The selection of these particular stations was also a matter of convenience. Radio One and Star FM studios are located within the city center, while Mama FM studios are located in Kisaasi hill, about eight kilometers from the city center, off Bukoto-Ntinda road, but still within easy reach by car. The process of visiting the studios to observe production processes and interview the primary informants in this study was, therefore, simple. Library and Internet facilities were also more easily accessible in Kampala. Easier access reduced the costs of the study.

My decision to focus on these stations was not guided by the principles of probability sampling. The stations rather represent a purposive selection of cases, guided by the aims of the research. All three stations were, in one way or another, typical of the three tiers of broadcasting of which they are members. Radio One was, for example, selected as a good example of a commercial station, being Uganda's third private FM station to be licensed. As with other commercial radio stations in Uganda, this station was established only recently, starting its operations on September 11, 1997 on FM 90.0 MHz. True to the aims of commercial radio, the station targets the upper-income groups, the A and B urban class who it says "tend to be settled, are planning for the future, think about their kids and aspire for positions of leadership," (Ssekandi. Interview, 2003). Unlike community stations like Mama FM and the state broadcaster, Radio One's programmes are mainly broadcast in the official English language,

although the region within which it broadcasts has a multiplicity of language groups. According to Ssekandi, the use of the English language is a deliberate decision to reach out to the upper-income groups, who tend to be educated and therefore have a good command of the language of instruction in Ugandan schools. This study attempts to demonstrate the extent to which the choice of languages on the three Ugandan stations influences public participation on programmes.

Radio One broadcasts over a 400 km radius. Compared to the state broadcaster, it broadcasts to a smaller geographic area. Kampala is, however, the most densely populated area of Uganda, with over 1.2 million people living in the city, so the station has a big impact. In fact, Steadman (2000) found that the station reaches 21 percent of listeners in Kampala weekly, compared to Star FM that reaches 10 percent of the city dwellers and Mama FM that reaches two percent. Its talk show, *Spectrum*, attracts peak listenership between 7.00-8.00 pm on weekdays (Ibid). This was another reason that influenced the decision to select this station for this study.

Mama FM was selected as a typical example of a community radio station. It was set up by Ugandan women journalists in 2001, is owned by the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) and funded by donors. As with Radio One, it has the capacity to cover a radius of 400 km, but the resemblance ends here. The station targets women aged 15-45 and aims "...to address the plight of the underprivileged and the minority". UMWA argues that a 1997 situational analysis found that underprivileged people in communities in Uganda lag behind in development due to limited access to and lack of basic information. Women, for example, own fewer radio sets and their voices are poorly represented on the air. The number of women speaking through radio, compared to men is as low as 15:100 (UMWA, Ibid). The findings by UMWA are typical of trends worldwide, which show that the media tends to exclude certain critical groups in society, like the less privileged and women, from the "public sphere" as defined by Habermas (1991). As pointed out in Chapter Two, critics argue that the media is actually dominated by interest groups and radical professionals and cannot provide the ideal "public sphere" (Kellner, Ibid. Horkheimer and Kluge, Ibid). This study was interested to discover how Mama FM, which was set up to try and empower marginalized communities, particularly "poor" women, promotes their concerns and increases their participation in debates about local and national development programmes. The station exemplifies the principles of the

community radio movement worldwide and offers a useful context in which to explore approaches to talk radio within the current radio landscape in Uganda.

According to Mugambe (Interview, 2002), the government set up Star FM in October 1998, broadcasting on 100 MHz, to counter its opponents who were using other stations to speak out against government policies. Thus, the choice of this station is of particular relevance within the context of this research project. Star FM covers a radius of only 200 km around Kampala but, unlike the other two stations, it is linked to a network of ten other transmitters installed by government around the country to boost the reception of state-owned radio. Because of this, Star FM has an almost nationwide coverage. Its target audience includes policy makers and the general public (Steadman, Ibid). Given this target audience, one can expect to find very different answers here to questions about public participation than in the case of Radio One and Mama FM.

#### **4.1.3 The selection of talk programmes for the study**

Within each station I focused on one programme and was guided in this selection by the relevance of these programmes to discussion of the potential of talk radio. In the case of Radio One, the focus is on *Spectrum*, a programme that is broadcast daily from 7.00 pm - 8.00 pm. The show was one of the first talk programmes that emerged after the liberalization of the media in 1993. Steadman (2002) rates it highly. Having participated as a panelist on the show several times in 1999, I was intrigued at the way it attempted to encourage public participation in debates about national issues and how the show hosts attempted to structure the programme to suit public debate. I wondered if the recent initiation of a follow-up programme "*Talk-Back*", which is broadcast the following morning, was a further attempt to respond to a growing demand for talk radio, as happened in the case of BBC 4 radio. At the same time, I was conscious that in its format and structure, *Spectrum* only targets a limited audience. I was therefore interested in comparing the way it encourages public debate to what happens on the other talk shows such as *Katukyogereko* and *Ssekanyolya*.

Mama FM airs *Katukyogereko* from 2.00 - 4.00 pm daily. Unlike *Spectrum*, which lasts one hour, *Katukyogereko*, lasts two hours. According to Agnes Tiisa, Station Manager at Mama FM, (Interview, Ibid.) the programme was started in September 2001 as a "show that deals with social issues". As mentioned above, Mama FM is a typical community radio station. I was

interested in studying a community station because the realities that play themselves out within the community radio sector vary. As pointed out in Chapter Three, Nassanga (Ibid) found that some of Uganda's community stations are actually owned by or represent the powerful in society such as politicians. In the case of Mama FM, UMWA observes that it was started as a response to a study that found a need to set up such a station. This study therefore attempts to explore the extent to which the station encourages participation in public debate by poor women and other under-privileged people.

Radio Uganda broadcasts *Ssekanyolya* on its Star FM channel at 9.00 pm - 10.00 pm during weekdays. Mugambe (Interview, Ibid) argues that although the programme is political it encourages participation by ordinary people. I was interested in comparing this show with others because it is broadcast on a government station. As pointed out in Chapter Three, since its inception the station has operated as a medium for both control of public debate and empowerment. Government functionaries such as Ministers, Members of Parliament and other officials participate on *Ssekanyolya* alongside ordinary Ugandans (Mugambe, Ibid). A study of this show therefore provides for an interesting exploration of the power relations and agendas at play between the Uganda government, ordinary citizens and hosts or producers on talk shows broadcast on a state-owned radio station. It demonstrates how staff on a government radio station rationalize the decisions they make around talk genre on a station that was set up primarily by Uganda's colonial administrators to restrict public debate, but which now actually serves as well to empower society.

#### **4.1.4 The selection of interview subjects for the study**

As explained in Chapters One and Two, I focused on the way talk genre is understood by staff directly involved in the production of talk radio show programmes on the three stations. In selecting such staff for interviews, I was guided by my own knowledge of the Ugandan radio sector. I had worked for eight years as a journalist in Uganda and felt familiar with the media scenario in the country. As mentioned above, my interest in studying Ugandan talk shows was partly aroused during 1999 when I used to participate as a panelist on *Spectrum*. Based on this knowledge, purposive sampling was used to deliberately select respondents for this study.

The respondents selected for the study, as shown in the list in Appendix B on page 99, included one host from each of the three talk shows, one producer from each of the three, two

listeners and two government information officers. The hosts and producers were chosen because they are responsible for all aspects of programming on the talk shows. They plan, prepare and manage the shows. They are the key to the success of the programmes and are significant respondents in a study that seeks perceptions of staff directly involved in the production of the talk shows. The hosts and producers were, therefore, the natural starting point. The other respondents were selected to bring different perspectives into the study. The government officers provide an insight into the policy aspects of talk radio and public debate in Uganda, while the two other listeners provide an outsiders view.

Given the complex media scenario described in Chapter Three in which the media is liberalized but regulated, it was important to seek the perspectives of respondents familiar with the evolution of this media scenario, but not directly involved in the production of talk shows. The main criterion for selecting this sample was that it consisted of respondents who were familiar with the Ugandan media and talk show programmes. Secondary interviews were also conducted with a researcher at Steadman Associates and one panelist each on the three talk shows. Steadman Associates are specialized in media research in Uganda and so is a useful source of background information. The interviews with panelists did not constitute the main source of data, but were useful in providing an understanding of the structure and organization of the talk shows. Instead, the main source of data was interviews with the talk show hosts and producers. Overall, the main criterion in selecting the respondents was that they were familiar with the three talk shows.

## **4.2. The use of qualitative research methods**

### **4.2.1 The value of qualitative research for this study**

This study of talk programmes on Ugandan radio stations focused on perceptions and experiences of talk show hosts and producers. The decision to chose a qualitative approach to the study was influenced by arguments that the method involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin and Lincoln, *Ibid.*). Bryman (1988) similarly contends that qualitative research deals at every level with the interests, often competing, of various stakeholders. Qualitative study is said to demonstrate a commitment to viewing events, actions, norms and values from the perspective of the people being studied (Lindloff, 1995). In a study

that seeks to tease out the implications of different approaches to talk radio and motivations that inform these approaches, a qualitative approach was most appropriate because such a study: "...embarks on a voyage of discovery, rather than one of verification and is likely to stimulate new leads and avenues that may be used as a basis for further research (Lindloff, Ibid).

#### **4.2.2 Developing the research instrument**

Semi-structured in-depth interviews using an open-ended interview guide were the main method of data collection in this study. The decision to use this approach is informed by Bryman (Ibid) who suggests that many qualitative interviews are based solely on interview data.

Interviews are a face-to-face conversation between an interviewer and a respondent for the sake of getting information. Nigel (cited in Gilbert, 1993) observes that semi-structured, in-depth interviews allow adaptability and have the same essence as "guided conversations". He cites Lofland (1971) that such interviews elicit responses that are useful in a qualitative study:

The objective of the non-structured interview is to elicit rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis. Its objective is to find out what kind of things are happening rather than to determine the frequency of predetermined things that the researcher believes can happen. (p.76)

Interviewing elicits responses irrespective of language or illiteracy. It allows for sensitivity and can easily accommodate adjustments or fine-tuning even in the course of the interview. However, it does require the researcher to be skilled in questioning, to be able to probe carefully when seeking information and to use words during questioning that can generate the most appropriate responses for purposes of the study. The use of interviews in this study was informed by Bryman (Ibid) who notes that a researcher interviews people in order to understand their perspectives, retrieve past experiences, gain expert insight or information, obtain descriptions of events or scenes, understand sensitive or intimate relationships or analyze certain types of discourse (p.5). An interview guide to steer the interview and control the conversation was used.

To develop the interview guide, I examined documents listed in Appendix D on page 101, which include programme schedules and lists of participants. This was necessary because the background generated from document analysis informed the questions that I asked during the interviews. The programme schedules and lists of participants gave me an insight into issues that

are prioritized by the stations, the kinds of participants who are invited to participate, the way the programmes are structured by the hosts and the way “public participation” occurs on the programmes. The primary documents that I analyzed in the study included background reports about broadcasting policies in Uganda and the three stations in particular, their programme schedules, lists of topics on the talk shows and participants lists.

The interview guide was developed as a research instrument designed to gather qualitative information to answer the research question and achieve the research objectives outlined in Chapter One. It was particularly structured to elicit responses that would locate the potential roles that the media in Uganda plays, as perceived by hosts and producers on the three stations, in providing a “public sphere” for debate of social issues. As pointed out in Chapter Two, talk radio, apart from providing a “public sphere” which is critical for the functioning of democracy, facilitates two-way communication in diverse societies. Habermas, in his theory of the “public sphere” demonstrates clearly that such a space is important because it allows for individuals to challenge social authority. This study attempts to illustrate the value of Habermas’s theory to discussion of talk radio in Uganda. The theoretical discussions in Chapter Two enabled me to ground the study and put the research questions into operation within the context of appropriate bodies of theory.

Fielding (1993) argues that an interview is a guided conversation and is suitable when the researcher already has an idea of whatever he is studying. As a former journalist in Uganda, I had some idea of the media in the country and was able to think over the phenomenon of talk radio in Uganda and the “puzzlements” or problematic areas therein, as recommended by Lofland (cited in Gilbert, *Ibid*).

In developing the interview guide, I was informed by background theoretical knowledge on talk shows obtained from libraries in Uganda and at Rhodes University, the Internet and at the three radio stations that the study focused on. The format and content of the interview guide was exhaustively discussed with my supervisor before the interviews were conducted. The interview guide, which is attached as Appendix C on Page 99, contains 17 questions. The first questions were more general, seeking background information on the talk shows, the hosts and producers. The more generalized questions helped to make the respondents more comfortable. Halfway through the interview, the questions became more concrete, relating to the shows, the specific roles that hosts and producers play on the shows, as well the limitations that the staff directly

involved in production of talk shows face in their day-to-day work. The more concrete questions sought to tease out the perceptions of interviewees on the concept of talk radio. Such an approach is suggested by Fielding (Ibid) who observes that interviews can be impeded by rationalization and fear on the part of respondents. In both these situations, respondents withhold evaluative reason and give answers that they anticipate the interviewer wants to hear. According to Fielding, the researcher must overcome these impediments by being relaxed, personalizing the discussion, probing and prompting. In this study, there was a risk that respondents on Star FM, being civil servants, could demonstrate the “fear of being shown” (Ibid) – the fear of being found to have given an interview contrary to an oath of secrecy that Ugandan civil servants take upon accepting their job. Actually this did not happen.

#### **4.2.3 Gathering the research material**

The study started with the gathering of background reports on the three stations. Then I visited each of the stations at least twice between December 2002, and January 2003 to observe production processes. Deacon *et al.* (1999), argue that observation requires no relationship between the observer, the process and the people being observed. It allows independent, on the spot assessment of phenomena and what those being observed understand by what they are doing. It also allows for immediacy and flexibility during the study. The researcher can make modifications in his study as he goes along. They observe that “...there is a great deal of phenomena which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or reading documents” (Ibid). It is, however, important to point out that the observations were conducted for reference purposes.

I also recorded all the talk show programmes on the three stations between December 9 – 21, 2002. This was done primarily to inform the formulation of the interview questionnaire. It also helped to explore the talk show format and draw up lists of topics and participants on the talk shows during that period. These are discussed in detail in Chapter Five to demonstrate the level of “public participation” on the three talk shows as well as show the extent to which the topics discussed address democratic issues and other political developments in Uganda.

The main interest during the visits to the stations was to understand how decisions around the talk shows were made and the processes involved in the production of the programmes. I also made arrangements for subsequent interview appointments during these visits.

To gain access to the stations, I had to negotiate with “gate keepers” such as receptionists. Deacon *et al.* (Ibid) note that “gate keepers” exert an element of control over the research process. A further problem is that when access is negotiated, it may cause those to be observed to “play to the gallery”. Yet what the researcher sees is what he observes. I overcame these hurdles by explaining exactly what I was looking for and structuring the interviews to elicit as much relevant information as possible from the respondents.

The interviews were the most significant part of the study. They were conducted more as a conversation than a rigid question-answer session in accordance with Fielding (1993) who suggests that: “...questioning [during an interview] should be as open-ended as possible in order to gain spontaneous information about attitudes and actions...and the questioning technique should encourage respondents to communicate their underlying beliefs and values rather than glib or easy answers” (p.155). The average interview lasted 45 minutes, with each question and answer lasting about three minutes. This time was just enough for the researcher to elicit answers and the respondents to spare for the interviews.

### **4.3. Executing the research plan**

#### **4.3.1 Establishing relationships with the research subjects**

In each of the three cases, I had to negotiate for access by requesting several appointments with station managers. A letter of introduction written by my supervisor at Rhodes University helped to ease access. I was able to obtain appointments with all the respondents. Being a Ugandan journalist and former panelist on *Spectrum* was useful because some of the primary respondents in the study were producers and hosts who I already knew quite well.

#### **4.3.2 Conducting the interviews**

In consultation with my supervisor, I set up appointments with each of the respondents. The actual interviews with the producers and hosts were conducted over several weeks, both outside and during my observation of production processes in the stations. The respondents were all very helpful and provided the programme schedules and lists of topics and participants. To get an accurate record I tape-recorded each interview. This later required transcribing the recordings and categorising the findings for analysis.

The in-depth interviews with the 11 respondents, who are listed in Appendix B on p.98, sought a definition of talk genre from each of the respondents and to explore their individual understanding of the phenomena of talk radio. The interviews also sought the respondents' opinions on differences in approaches to talk radio among the three stations.

The study was generally successful. Its main limitation was that some of the respondents, especially those working for the state-controlled broadcaster, were not very comfortable with the interview. This was understandable because they are civil servants, bound by strict codes of behavior. I had to explain very carefully what the study was all about and make them understand the contents of my questionnaire. A second limitation was covering fuel expenses necessitated by shuttling between the stations, which I overcame from personal savings.

#### **4.3.3 Analyzing the interview data**

I first transcribed the interviews from tape before deciding how to code the data. I then developed a list of the main themes on each talk show and coded the data according to these main themes. These included politics, health, gender issues, religious issues, farming, social issues and others. By comparing the frequency of particular themes, I was able to determine which issues dominated the three Ugandan talk shows during the period of the study. I did this so as to be able to present a narrative assessment of the potential role that the three talks shows play in Uganda's democratic development.

From the transcribed interviews, I was able to select significant quotes to illustrate the key points identified in the study and illustrate major findings.

Using the lists of participants obtained from all the stations, I categorized these according to what type of employment the person was engaged in. I listed these as politicians, peasants, youths, religious leaders, social workers, journalists and others. This enabled me to understand what types of people dominate the three talk shows. In so doing, I was able to explore the extent to which the shows encourage "public" participation in debates on the radios. The data collected is used to demonstrate the issues the three programmes prioritize, the way show hosts structure the programmes and how "the debate" occurs on each of the stations.

The study of various documents, including research reports from Steadman, helped me to ground my study in contemporary debates that surround the role of talk radio programmes in society.

In the next chapter, I discuss the detailed findings of this study in the context of the objectives outlined in Chapter One and then assess the three case studies that form part of this thesis.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESEARCH FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND ANALYSIS

*Ugandan news people... seem to have embraced a conceptualisation of independent journalism at the core of which is information, entertainment, analysis and interpretation as well as giving ordinary people a voice (Mwesigye, 2003, p.223).*

As explained in previous chapters, the three stations selected for this case study - Radio One, Mama FM and Star FM - are, respectively, a commercial broadcaster, a community station and a state-owned public broadcaster. As such, they represent the three-tier broadcasting system that has emerged in Uganda since the media was liberalized in 1993. It should be clear from the historical contextualisation provided in Chapter Three that these three stations operate in an increasingly complex media scenario where commercial, community, government and public agendas all play a role in defining their functions. This chapter focuses on the impact of this complex environment on the way the talk genre is understood by staff directly involved in the production of talk shows on these three stations.

The programming and production of the talk shows on each of the three stations are, when viewed at face value, informed by very similar guidelines. A crucial similarity here, in the context of the focus of this study, is that staff at all the three stations speak of the importance of public participation in debate about issues that affect society and of the role that the talk shows can play in this. The three teams also correspond in their adherence to what I referred to, in Chapter Two, as the 'commercial' tradition in talk radio. I argue, however, that the producers' and hosts' interpretation and execution of the principles of public participation and their utilization of the commercial tradition of talk radio for this purpose are very different in each case. I will argue, further, that these differences can be traced to the way in which each of the stations is positioned as commercial, community and government stations within the Ugandan broadcast sector.

The first section of this chapter provides a background to the evolution and organisation of the three stations and discusses how each station – and consequently the talk shows that they host - is located within the recent evolution of the Ugandan broadcasting landscape. This section outlines the history, aims and aspirations of each of the three stations. Section Two and Three

focus on the approaches taken in the planning and execution of each of the talk shows that this study investigates, namely *Spectrum*, *Katukyogereko* and *Ssekanyolya*. By examining the long-term design of the shows as well as their production and presentation from day to day, I illustrate that, although each of these shows are informed by similar guidelines about talk radio, staff interpret and execute these guidelines in very different ways. This section then goes on to explore the implications of these differences for the role played by these shows in the encouragement of public participation. Section Four traces connections between the way the three stations are positioned within the Ugandan broadcast sector and the differences in approach adopted by staff of the three shows. It draws conclusions, finally, about the implications of these differences for the role that each of these stations can, potentially, play in encouraging public debate.

## **5.1 Position of the three stations in the Kampala radio landscape**

### **5.1.2 The influence of different agendas on each station**

As already noted above, staff at each of the three stations expressed a belief that talk radio has an important contribution to make to public participation. Stephen Mugambe, the producer of Radio One's show talks of providing space for public discourse. On the other hand, Anne Lydia Sekandi, the producer on Star FM's talk show sees that contribution in terms of building democracy. Similarly, Agnes Tiisa, the producer on Mama FM talks of this contribution, but sees it in the context of encouraging participation by marginalized groups, especially ordinary women. At the same time, as I will show, the complex nature of the environment in which the stations have to survive seems to mean that each of these stations has very different ways of implementing the principle of public participation.

The establishment of each of the three stations was powerfully informed by different agendas. Radio One was Uganda's third private FM station to be licensed and, as such, is unambiguously positioned as a commercial venture. As explained in Chapter Four, the station targets the A and B urban class in Ugandan society who are salaried professionals who "... tend to be settled, are planning for the future, think about their kids and aspire for positions of leadership," (Ssekandi, Interview, 2003).

The establishment of Mama FM was sparked off by another set of agendas – those of grass-roots interests. In Chapter Four I explained that the radio station, set up by Ugandan women journalists in 2001, targets ordinary women aged 15-45 and aims to “...address the plight of the under-privileged and the minority” (Tiisa, Interview. 2003). The station was started following a 1997 study by Ugandan women journalists, which found that “...under privileged people in communities in Uganda lagged behind in development due to limited access to and lack of basic information” (UMWA, 2002). The study noted that women, in particular, “own fewer radio sets and their voices are poorly represented on the air”. It found, further, that the ratio of women speaking through radio compared to men was 15:100 (Ibid). As Tiisa (Ibid) observes:

This station contributes to the empowerment of women and promotes their concerns. It tries to balance between entertainment and other serious issues that affect women such as health, education... whereas other radio stations deal with politics because it sells, Mama FM dwells on social issues because the lives of people are not all about politics (Ibid.)

Nassanga (1997), in an earlier study of press images of women in Ugandan newspapers observes that the newspapers, in relation to economic or political issues, rarely portray women, especially ordinary rural women, positively. It should be clear that Mama FM’s establishment was powerfully informed by the need to provide an alternative approach to the representation and involvement of women in Ugandan media.

There is no doubt on the other hand, that Star FM was established because of government agendas. According to Star FM’s Station Manager, Stephen Mugambe, who is also the producer of its talk show, (Interview, 2003), the station was set up in the post-liberalization era because the government felt it needed to create an outlet for it to explain itself to the Ugandan public:

Government felt it had no mouthpiece. Star FM was given liberty [created] because Radio Uganda could no longer compete with private radio stations in presenting government positions on controversial issues (Ibid).

Mugambe (Ibid) argues that the government set up this station “...to counter its opponents who were using other stations to speak out against government policies”.

Because of the different agendas that informed the establishment of each of these stations, each of them has a very different target audience. Each also understands its relationship to that audience in a very different way, including the participation of that audience in its on-air programming. As noted in Chapter Four, Radio One targets the upper income groups (Ssekandi, *Ibid*). It would seem, as is suggested later, that the station clearly believes that it is important to provide its audience with a public platform, which allows them to take part in public debate despite seeing its role as the delivery of this audience to advertisers. Mama FM's target audience, on the other hand, consists of a unique group – which the station defines as 'ordinary people' (Tiisa, *Ibid*). The priority audience here is women, but the station also includes students and other disadvantaged people in society like orphans, widows and the disabled in its target group (*Ibid*). As I show in Chapter Two, Mama FM is primarily interested in addressing the marginalisation of ordinary people, especially women, bringing their voices into the mainstream of public debate. Star FM, being a public broadcaster as explained in Chapter One, is mandated to target all citizens (Mugambe, *Ibid*). The station tends to operate like a typical state broadcaster, taking its audience for granted and giving priority to its mandate to provide "a mouthpiece" for the government. It would seem however, as I will show later, that the station is at the same time encouraging its audience to participate on its programmes.

It would be erroneous to argue, however, that it is only Radio One whose approach to public participation is compromised by its relationship with advertisers. There is no doubt that despite distinctions between commercial, community and state interests, all three stations are powerfully defined by commercial imperatives. Certainly, Radio One's position in relation to economic factors is less ambiguous, given that it positions itself as a commercial station with few restrictions on its ability to build a strong niche within the market. The other two stations hold more complex and ambiguous positions in relation to commercial interests. Mama FM accepts sponsorship of some its programmes and, as such, the station finds itself confronted by advertisers' demands. Star FM, although it is a state broadcaster, actually follows a hybrid of the commercial and the public service broadcaster models, even if government clearly heavily influences it.

It is their position in relation to these commercial imperatives that finally determines the extent to which these three stations are successful both in building their audiences and in establishing a participatory relationship with them. It is also because of its unambiguous

position in relation to commercial imperatives that Radio One has the highest listenership figures of the three stations and the most audience participation. A study conducted by Steadman Associates (2002) to determine how many people the various radio stations reach within the capital city, Kampala, shows that Radio One reaches 21 percent of the city's radio listeners. The same study, whose findings are presented in tables on p.124-126, show that Star FM reaches 10 percent and Mama FM two percent. Another study conducted by the same group to find out how many randomly selected respondents know some radio stations in Kampala, found that 50 percent of the respondents were aware of the existence of Radio One, compared to 23 percent for Star FM and six percent for Mama FM (Steadman, 2001).

In the sections that follow, when I discuss the three talk shows that this study focuses on, I will attempt to explain this success and put it in perspective. One can, however, already begin to offer explanations from a more general perusal of the stations. It is, for example, useful to look at the approach of each of these stations to the issue of audience research. In this respect, Radio One stands out as the only station that regularly conducts audience studies. As such it positions itself as a more strategic player in Kampala's radio landscape than the other two stations. This is, in fact, typical of commercial broadcasters, which tend to be quicker to acknowledge the importance of up-to-date information about the markets they serve given the business imperatives that define them (Stavistky, 1993). One example of such research is the audience and market studies conducted as part of Radio One's needs assessment for setting up the station. It is interesting to note that this research points to an increasing demand within the target audience of the station, for radio to operate as a space for public debate in the face of a restrictive and complex political environment. It is no wonder, then, that Radio One understands its mission not only as the delivery of audiences to advertisers, but also in terms of answering this need for a public platform.

### **5.1.3 Minimising the influence of external forces**

Commercial imperatives expose the three radio stations to market pressures and this has a direct impact on their ability to build relationships appropriate to their particular agendas with their audiences. It was, however, apparent from interviews with staff at these stations that they were conscious of the importance of limiting this impact.

It is common knowledge that advertisers tend to pay for space on programmes that attract the biggest audiences (Steadman, Ibid). The income category of this audience is of equal importance to advertisers and it has been argued that their level of active participation in the station's programming is a third criterion (Ibid). It is therefore no wonder that Radio One, in particular, is rated highly by advertisers, given that its programmes attract the biggest listenership figures and the highest level of on-air participation and that these listeners tend to fall into the upper income groups. As discussed in Chapter Two, this can become a point of concern for a station in terms of its ability to realise its own aims, since sponsors of radio programmes, especially on purely profit-driven and advert-supported media systems, can significantly influence programme content (MISA, 2000; McChesney, 1997).

Ssekandi (Ibid) argues that Radio One, although it is a commercial broadcaster, has a policy barring advertisers and sponsors from influencing programmes. Talemwa (Interview, 2003), who hosts the *Spectrum* talk show, observes that the programme actually experiences "no influence whatsoever from its sponsors". During the period of study -- December 9-21, 2002 -- there appeared to be no deliberate effort on the part of the South African-owned beer company, Nile Breweries, that sponsors the programme, to influence its content. Chibita (2002), however, observes that the station actually prioritises programmes that attract advertising rather than those that do not. She quotes Radio One's proprietor, Maria Kiwanuka: "...the station encourages entertainment [programmes] because without it there would be no audiences to warrant investing in the expensive business of private radio". On this station the most significant external factors that might compromise the station's vision appear to be commercial imperatives.

In the case of Mama FM, Tiisa (Ibid) observes that attempts by sponsors to influence the programmes are a reality that has to be confronted in the station's day-to-day operations.

Sponsors want to influence what you do on the programme. If it is sponsored, we would like to discuss before with the sponsors so they do not try to influence the content. We would like to have some sort of middle ground (Interview, 2003).

Suuna (Ibid), the host of the *Katukyogereko* talk show on Mama FM, notes that while sponsors do not actively influence the content, they "...come back after the programme to ask what was discussed". This, according to Suuna, affects the presentation of the programme because the host is conscious that the sponsor of the programme believes that he or she "is the owner of the

programme since he or she sponsored it". It would seem, however, that while commercial imperatives are a factor on Mama FM's talk show, the main external influences that might affect the stations programming, as we shall see later, are more to do with resources.

On Star FM, the most significant commercial influence over programming comes from districts which, when they pay for airtime, tend to exert influence over what is discussed by ensuring their officials participate on the talk show panels (Mugambe, Ibid). Stephen Mugambe, producer of *Ssekanyolya* (Ibid), concedes that the station has little control in such a situation, preferring to let "the lower government explain itself". The station does not actively compete for advertising and, unlike Radio One and to an extent Mama FM, it is government's influence rather than commercial pressures that seems to be the main issue. I argue in this thesis that in fact commercial factors are of less importance than government interference on the station's programming.

This section has shown how each of the three stations is caught between different agendas. Each of the stations is conscious of the demand among its target audience for public participation and committed to the idea of providing it with opportunities for this, and each is involved in an ongoing attempt to balance this commitment with other demands, such as those of commercial imperatives and government expectations. In the next section, I will show how each of the three stations negotiates these contradictory requirements in the context of the particular talk show that they are hosting. Given that, in all the three cases, the onus of acting as a gatekeeper against influence by external forces falls directly on the talk show host and producer, the discussion concerns itself specifically with their perspectives on this issue.

## **5.2 The talk show plans**

### **5.2.1 How producers and hosts of the three shows understand talk radio**

In order to understand the way in which each of the stations developed plans for its show, it is useful to first look at the approach of staff, in each case, to the talk genre itself. It is possible to identify very different understandings of what 'talk radio' means to staff on each of the three stations. Some of the different perceptions of the genre are clearly a result of the different traditions and approaches that have emerged in the different historical situations within which the stations have evolved.

Anne Ssekandi, Radio One's station manager, who is also the talk show producer for *Spectrum*, says she understands a talk show to be "...a live, interactive news and current affairs radio programme that gives an opportunity for public discourse" (Interview, 2003). The station's talk show host, Moses Talemwa, believes such shows allow the public to challenge the views of interviewees:

Talk shows give people the opportunity to expound what they think are important issues and discuss solutions. Listeners expect the interviewer to pose questions that they would pose. Once people hear other people's views, they too call in to give their own views (Interview, 2003.)

Although both Ssekandi and Talemwa are involved in producing a talk show on a purely commercial station, the above statements indicate an understanding of talk radio that prioritises more than just interest in delivering their audience to advertisers. Their concern with involving their listeners in public debate seems, in fact, closer to concerns that are, traditionally, associated with public service radio.

Agnes Tiisa, Station Manager at Mama FM and talk show producer for *Katukyogereko*, and Charles Suuna, who is the host of this talk show, see the benefits of talk radio as to do primarily with the opportunity to talk about social issues that affect the public. Tiisa (Ibid) explains that the station sees itself as serving the disadvantaged in society, such as poor women, and so tailors its programmes to address issues affecting its target groups. She defines talk shows as:

Programmes that give people a chance to talk about issues that concern them rather than just entertain them...shows that deal with social issues and balance entertainment with more serious issues (Interview, 2003).

While Tiisa brings in the element of entertainment versus "more serious issues", arguing that talk shows also have an element of entertainment, Suuna sees talk radio more as allowing for people with different beliefs to discuss issues that are important to them:

A talk show programme is a discussion programme that is two-way and allows for exchange of ideas...that allows each person to contribute and brainstorm. It is a show where the host brings in his opinion, resource people bring in theirs and the callers bring in theirs, (Interview, 2003).

I would argue that Tiisa's and Suuna's observations are informed by the fact that Mama FM, as a community station, forms part of a grass-roots media movement and the station is thus motivated by community service agendas. In the case of this station, the members of the talk show team see their programme as an opportunity for two-way communication, clearly on the opposite end of the spectrum from Star FM with its paternalistic emphasis on a one-way flow of information to its audience. Their approach is, in fact, more comparable to the position of the Radio One staff – although these two stations are clearly interested in two-way communication for very different reasons. As has been shown in the previous section, whereas Radio One is interested in involving upper income groups, Mama FM is primarily motivated by the need to involve ordinary people.

Star FM Station Manager and producer of the talk show, Stephen Mugambe, and the show host, Matovu Sseruga, consider a talk show to provide an opportunity for political discussions that build democracy. Matovu argues that *Ssekanyolya*, in particular, is a “political” talk show that brings together people of different political views to explain issues to the public. Similarly, Sseruga argues that the critical role the show plays is “...to enhance Uganda's democratisation process”:

The show is a liberated political programme that cuts cross all spheres of the public. It aims to show Ugandans where the country came from, where we are, where we are going. It therefore plays a big role in Uganda's democratisation process (Interview, 2003).

At face value, Mugambe and Sseruga each appear to say that *Ssekanyolya* is about public participation. When one looks closely at what they say, however, one can see how their perspective on the issue of participation is bound up in a paternalistic agenda – one in which they are primarily concerned with telling people what they want them to know. Mugambe (Ibid) for example, notes that the station plays the voices of Uganda's past leaders like Idi Amin who, as noted in Chapter Two, was the country's worst dictator, once a week to “...remind Ugandans where we came from, where we are and where we are going because it is important to remember the country's history” (Ibid). This paternalism is, I would argue, no coincidence and can be traced to Star FM's position as a government radio station and to its status as a “mouthpiece” for the government. In the discussion below, it is suggested that the paternalistic approach directly influences the talk show team's decisions with regards to the content of the show, the guests they bring on air, the way the show is planned and its eventual execution.

### 5.2.2 The aims of the three talk shows

The patterns in the way that each talk show team interprets principles relating to the talk show genre, are repeated in their articulation of the show aims. In addition, their positions as commercial, community and state broadcasters colour their approach to the genre. Each station, in its own way, finds itself caught between different pressures with regard to the role that they should be playing in providing space for public debate.

The Radio One talk show team explains that *Spectrum* was set up in response to market research which identified a “hunger for public discourse” amongst its target audience (Ssekandi, Interview, 2003) They describe *Spectrum* as “...a live interactive news and current affairs radio programme that gives opportunity for public discourse” (Ssekandi, Ibid). As *Spectrum*'s producer, she argues that the show “...gives people an opportunity to interact and discuss current affairs...to expound what they think are the important issues”. It comes as no surprise, however, that this team also emphasizes sensitivities that would affect their station's market position. For example, it is significant that Ssekandi (Ibid) points out that the station does not want to use words on the show that would be offensive to the A and B groups – its target audience. The emphasis by this talk show team is on “interaction by the public”, but they clearly understand the extent to which this occurs within the context of Radio One's commercial imperatives. I would predict that, should it actually come down to it, they would prioritise the growth of their high-income target audience over the need for discussing controversial subjects on their talk show programmes.

Mama FM, as discussed earlier, approaches public discourse from the point of view of “...community interaction”, focusing on social, economic and community issues that affect ordinary people. The talk show team responsible for *Katukyogereko* is, clearly, committed to implementing these aims and helping the station to operate like a “true community radio station”. The show was started, in fact, in response to the findings of the UMWA study quoted earlier in this chapter. According to Tiisa (Interview, Ibid), it was intended as a “show that deals with social issues” by providing an interactive, accessible medium for the under-privileged, particularly women in rural and semi-urban communities. This emphasis on “social issues” points to an important distinction between the aims of this talk show team and that of Radio One. She explains that the show aims to highlight family issues like domestic violence. Such content is understood by the talk team to be distinct from national political debates. Tiisa (Ibid) explains

that the conceptualisation of *Katukyogereko* must be understood in the context of the fact that the station encourages mass community participation in its programmes and gives priority to “everyday community issues”. As with the other talk show teams, however, it is possible to identify ways in which the team’s clarity of vision with regards to their show’s aims are put under pressure by external influences. In this case, the pressure appears to come from its own audience, who make demands on the kind of content carried by the show. Tiisa (Ibid) notes that the station found that a demand for more ‘political’ talk topics exists amongst its target audience. According to Suuna (Ibid), the demand was identified when it became apparent that responses from some callers to several panelists on *Katukyogereko* were highly political. To address this expectation, Mama FM plans to start a new talk show titled: “*Oluwombo lwa obufuzi*”, which will aim to deal specifically with political topics.

Members of *Ssekanyolya*’s team talk about the role of the show in contributing to ‘democratic process’. A closer examination of what they have to say about the show’s aims illustrates, however, that they expect the democratic process they talk about to be controlled and defined by government voices. Indeed, these aims allow for politicians to influence what happens on *Ssekanyolya*, for example, by making sure government voices take the lead during discussions on the talk shows. Mugambe (Ibid) admits that the fact that the programme gives priority to politics, as noted in Section 5.1.2 above, actually impacts on the way it attempts to satisfy the expectations of its audience. It would seem that the programming staff on the talk show are caught between trying to satisfy the government agenda while at the same time trying to cater for public participation on its programmes like *Ssekanyolya*. Given that Star FM is a government station, the talk show producer and host have found themselves leaning more towards satisfying the government agendas than towards any other consideration (Mugambe, Seruga. Interviews, 2003). Mugambe and Seruga see themselves as playing a role to support government. However, they aspire to be part of the “pressure group” and Mugambe (Ibid) somewhat ironically asserts, “...*Ssekanyolya* tries to be like *Spectrum*”.

### 5.2.3 Programming guidelines

#### 5.2.3.1 The structure of the three shows

The structure of the three shows is extremely similar. *Spectrum* lasts one hour from 7.00- - 8.00 pm daily during the week. The hour is always divided into clearly discernible sections. In the introductory section, the host introduces the panellists (usually two) and presents a synopsis of the topic under discussion. The panellists are then invited by the host to discuss the topic for ten to twenty minutes before callers are allowed to join in the discussion in the final section of the show. As Moses Talemwa (Interview, 2003), the show host, explains, the talk show staff “... bring in someone, ask him his views and let the listeners challenge that.”

Like *Spectrum*, *Ssekanyolya* runs for an hour at 8.00-9.00 pm, and it is similar in structure. The host begins by explaining the topic of the day before inviting the day's guests to present their views. Then the telephone lines are opened up to callers. *Katukyogereko*, unlike the other two shows, runs for two hours from 2.00 - 4.00 pm each weekday, but it is basically structured in the same way. The only difference is that the producer and host design a five-question cue sheet which functions like an open-ended questionnaire, guiding the host during a given show. Through this, the station aspires to ensure that the host maintains a focus during the show.

This correspondence in structure points to a similar approach by each of the three talk show teams, to the way the voices of the talk show host, guests and callers are framed during the course of a given broadcast. As shown above, all three show teams choose to start with an introduction, by the host, of the panelists, who set the terms of the debate, followed by opening the phone lines to their audience. The key difference appears to be the choices made by each show with regard to the kind of voices included as both panelists and callers.

#### 5.2.3.2 Policy about content

It is when one starts looking at the way each of the three teams develops guidelines around content that the differences between the shows start to become visible. What becomes particularly apparent is that Radio One has a far more strategic approach to content choices than the other two stations. It has already been noted, in Section 5.1, that this station prioritises information about its target audience and therefore makes strategic use of audience research to

inform its organisational development. This responsiveness to audience finds its equivalent in the way that the *Spectrum* team approaches the general development of policy for this show and the day-to-day implementation of this policy. It was apparent from interviews with the team that the members are always looking for fresh information about their audience in order to make programming decisions.

Mama FM, on the other hand, is venturing into a very complex area dealing with ordinary people and appears to be overwhelmed by the challenges involved. A closer examination, however, shows that this station clearly prioritises the need to make decisions on information about their audience. Interviews with the station's talk show producer and host show that they are both guided by one mission more than anything else – to give a voice to the disadvantaged. The host, Charles Suuna, for example, observes that the station “does not invite big people, like ministers, to its talk show, *Katukyogereko*.” As shown in Chapter Three, the station approaches its audiences from this perspective. It remains committed to trying to provide a platform for groups like poor women. For example, it brings onto its talk show widows, housewives and local women leaders. These women discuss issues that affect themselves in their homes or communities, giving Mama FM's talk show a uniquely grass-roots dimension. During the period in which the show was monitored for this study, as an example of its attention to social issues, the programme on December 12, 2002, hosted a discussion by women on the topic: “Say no to cultures that say yes to domestic violence.”

The picture on *Spectrum* is very different from the one that emerges in the case of the Star FM's talk show, *Ssekanyolya*. A close examination of this team's discussion of its editorial policies reveals that it tends to base these on general assumptions about its audience rather than any up-to-date and detailed information drawn from qualitative research. For example, once a week, the team brings together a panel of journalists and asks them to discuss what they think are the topical issues of the week. There seems to be no attempt to decide what is important to the audience; rather the panelists are left to shape the discussion. The assumption made by the talk show producer seems to be that the audience will find anything that the panelists decide to discuss useful. I argue in this thesis that this approach is a logical extension of the tendency within this station, noted earlier in this chapter, towards a paternalistic relationship with its audience. The paternalistic attitude stems from the civil service culture that exists in the station. The staff members, who are recruited as civil servants, as shown in Chapter Three, are

conditioned by this status to do things according to an established formula, rather than push the envelope, find fresh angles and think strategically.

When one looks at the content of each team's editorial policy, similar patterns can be identified in terms of the way they relate to their audiences. Ssekandi (Ibid) argues that decisions about content on Radio One are taken on the basis of "what people are talking about", except when major events are expected, like an election. In that case the producer and host prepare in advance:

I look around at what is making the news... what people are talking about. The topics are not necessarily political, but also social. It really depends on the season. We also prepare for breaking news and major events (Interview, Ibid).

This show's editorial guidelines clearly demand a daily responsiveness to the concerns of its target audience.

In the case of *Ssekanyolya*'s editorial guidelines, there seems to be little prioritisation of the need for such responsiveness. The topics of discussion on this show are structured thematically. On Mondays, the show discusses Uganda's past leaders. It starts by playing voice recording of speeches by past leaders like Idi Amin. On Tuesdays the programme hosts a panel of journalists from other media to a debate what they think are topical issues. On Wednesdays, it focuses on social issues and on Thursdays and Fridays on what the producer and host believe are the "big issues of the day".

*Katukyogereko* on Mama FM also works with themes. Like *Ssekanyolya*, the host and the producer plan the topics for discussion on the programme according to generic aspects such as family matters, religion, education and moral values. The programme, unlike the other two, has recruited regular "experts" who come in on schedule to discuss topics within their areas of expertise. These include a university professor who discusses moral issues once a month, a crime prevention expert who comes in every fortnight and weekly "experts" including a youth leader, a women leader and a local politician. The selection of these "experts" seems again to be motivated by a deliberate desire to give priority to issues the station considers important to the community. It is in terms of this last issue that there is an important difference between the themes with which *Ssekanyolya* and *Katukyogereko* frame their programmes. According to Tiisa (Ibid), *Katukyogereko* "does not focus on politics like the other shows because the lives of

people are not all about politics.” Suuna (Ibid) also argues that, unlike the other shows, the programme “does not discriminate and hosts anybody”.

One may, of course, challenge this claim and the discussion in Section Three explores whether the team responsible for *Ssekanyolya* is in fact successful in achieving its editorial goals. Nevertheless, at the level of policy, the contrast between these two shows remains stark: a commitment to the empowerment of ordinary people, versus a desire to achieve one-way communication with a passive audience.

### **5.2.3.3 Language use on the three shows**

When one looks at language policy, one again sees evidence of the way each of the three shows is positioned in relation to its audience. I would argue that the choice of language on each of the three Ugandan stations is essentially a strategic attempt to reach specific target audiences.

Ssekandi (Interview, 2003) argues that although the region within which it is broadcast has a multiplicity of language groups, *Spectrum* mainly broadcasts in the English language in order to cater for “the class it aims to reach - the A and B”. It would appear that the station, true to its commercial roots, deliberately targets these higher income listeners who have more education and therefore more fluency in the official English language. Radio One operates strategically and the choice of this language seems to reinforce its programming strategy to focus on contemporary issues in a manner that can be understood by Uganda’s elite.

Mama FM’s talk show, *Katukyogereko*, is broadcast in the dominant *Luganda* language in an attempt to encourage participation on the show by ordinary people from the main language group within the region where it broadcasts (Suuna, Interview, 2003). It could be interesting to explore further, in another study, how the differences in targeted language choices influence format and even content of talk shows. Mama FM clearly uses this language because it is spoken or understood by most of its target audience. It does so in the belief that this is the best way to reach its target audience.

*Ssekanyolya*, on the other hand, is broadcast in a mixture of English and *Luganda*. The use of English language seems to be an attempt to reach the up-market audience and also provide a platform for officials who can best express themselves in English. Mugambe (Interview, 2003), however, explains that because *Luganda* is the dominant language in the central region, the

station uses it to reach out to a large number of both ordinary people and government officials who can understand it and to counter anti-government broadcasts from other radio stations:

Government felt left out [by the media]. It had no mouthpiece but wanted to fight it out with opponents through the media. It particularly wanted to target the *Luganda* speaking community because they are the majority and to counter chaos caused by other *Luganda* radios, (Interview, Ibid).

In order to fully understand the language choices on these talk shows, especially in the case of Star FM, it would be important to take cognisance of other Ugandan stations, beyond those that form part of this case study, that have chosen to broadcast in *Luganda*. One could, in fact, interpret their language policy as another illustration of the desire by this station to control public debate and, more specifically, to centralise public debate within government.

#### **5.2.4 Production guidelines**

When one looks at the way each talk team approaches the work that goes on behind the scenes, one again sees evidence of the differences between the way the three stations position themselves. At each of these levels there are clear similarities and differences between the approaches taken by the three stations. These similarities and differences influence the way the stations position voices of participants on their programmes. The discussion below deals with the impact of each show's management systems on three kinds of relationships. Firstly, there is the relationship between the producer and host within the production team and the implications of this for daily decision-making. Secondly, there is the relationship established between the anchor or host and studio guests and the implication of this for the resulting on-air discussions. Thirdly, there is the relationship with callers, which is discussed below within the specific context of screening systems.

##### **5.2.4.1 The relationship between the producer and host**

All three teams consist of a producer and a host. In each team hosts have the primary responsibility of driving the show while it is on air. When it comes to the behind-the-scenes preparation that happens before a show, all three teams claim, in interviews, that the producer and host work together as equal partners. For example, each team describes its members as working together on deciding what angle a show should take, what kind of opening questions the

host should ask and how the callers should be handled. At the same time, all three talk show producers interviewed in this study insist that as producers they "...keep in the background and let the hosts be the stars of their programmes." It is, perhaps, possible to identify a contradiction: on the one hand the claim that the producer and host share the decision-making and, on the other, that the producer adopts a 'background' position. This contradiction may be resolved if the background role can be understood to apply only to what happens on air and not to the preparation of the show. Interpreted in this way, the producers' positioning of themselves can be understood as an adherence to the style of commercial talk radio presentation that, as shown in Chapter Two, places a heavy emphasis on the "stardom" of the host. However, a closer examination of the way that each of the three station's respective team members work together reveals a more complex situation in which different kinds of relationships emerge. Although, while on the air all three hosts seem to enjoy the freedom to conduct their show as they want, they are actually monitored closely by the show producers, to ensure that the hosts adhere to standards that their stations aspire to uphold. It is in terms of this last point that we begin to see the differences in the way that the hosts and producers relate to each other.

On *Spectrum*, more than any of the other two shows, a struggle seems to exist between the host and producer. It appears, however, to be a healthy struggle in which the two-team members keep challenging each other to come up with better ways of producing the show. As such, this struggle appears to be part of their provocative, professional approach to talk shows. It is significant that Ssekandi (Ibid) observes that Radio One's talk hosts are at all times judged to be "...only as good as their last shows". The station's culture – and that of the *Spectrum* team – is not one of complacency:

Some want to become bigger than the show...yet people's views matter more than anything else. As producer, my job is to ensure the host is doing just his job. Sometimes I have to direct the host even during the show (Interview, 2003).

One could argue that this struggle is because, in this case, the producer does have a significant degree of authority within the decision-making process of the talk show team and as such has the power to contradict the host's ideas. This helps to ensure that the host has a support base to fall back on in difficult situations. Ssekandi (Ibid) explains, for example, that when a show is "likely

to be explosive”, the producer prepares notes for the host and often directs the discussion by passing notes to the host during the show.

Tiisa and Mugambe explain that on *Katukyogereko* and *Ssekanyolya* respectively, the hosts are given more leeway to determine how to run their shows “...as long as they are sensitive to the demands of the station”. In the case of Mama FM, the demands include gender sensitivity in line with the policies governing the station while on Star FM, they have to do with sensitivity to the political demands of government.

#### **5.2.4.2 The relationship with studio guests**

As discussed above, at the start of each of the three programmes, the host introduces the guests then presents a synopsis of the topic under discussion. The guests are then invited to discuss the topic for ten to twenty minutes before callers are allowed to join in the discussion. Each of the three shows usually has two panellists participating as “experts”. This seems to point to significant similarities between the treatment of guests on each show. However, a behind-the-scenes examination reveals important differences. At each station, the guests arrive at the station some minutes before the show and review how the show will be presented. Significantly, in the case of *Katukyogereko* and *Ssekanyolya*, this conversation involves the host rather than the producer, whereas in the case of *Spectrum*, both the producer and host often prepare panellist together. Here, again, we see that the producer of *Spectrum* plays a more significant role in the management of the talk show.

A closer look at the lay out of the broadcast studio also reveals important differences. In the case of *Spectrum*, the show is hosted around a circular table with the host sharing the table with the panellists. In contrast, the both Mama FM and Star FM, place the panellists in a separate room with the host sitting on either side of a glass separation and talking through a microphone. The talk show hosts on these two stations – who say their production studios are too small to accommodate the panellists - argue that this barrier between hosts and guests does not impact significantly on the content of on-air discussions. It would be possible to argue, however, that the difference in the lay out of the three studios mirrors the way in which each team understands the nature of the relationship between host and guest. We have already seen, above, that the Star FM team tends to operate within a ‘civil servant’ culture, where the members work according to a given formula, with set content themes for each day of the week. Here the barrier between the

host and guests could be said to deepen the static nature of this team's programming. It has already been shown that the *Spectrum* team has a dynamic approach to planning its show, always looking for new information about its audience to shape programming content from day to day, and allowing for a challenging relationship between the producer and host. In this context, the circular table could be said to reaffirm the dynamic approach of this team to the content of its shows, allowing for a more spontaneous relationship between the host and guests. It is interesting to note, in this context, that the host on *Spectrum* referred to the advantages of being seated with guests around a table, explaining that the close proximity generates "...a better team spirit, a closeness that builds confidence" during the talk show. In the case of Mama FM, the barrier between host and guests is more difficult to interpret. Suuna (Ibid), who hosts the station's talk show, believes it does not have great significance because "...I can still see my panellists sitting across very easily and talk to them like we are in one room." It would appear more like the concept of round-table discussion was not an imperative during the design of the studios, again reaffirming the fact that the station's talk show are new programmes that are attempting to venture into new ground.

#### **5.2.4.3 Relationship with callers: approaches to screening**

Two different approaches can be seen in the way the three stations approach the screening of callers, which relates specifically to the extent to which they emphasise the need to control who speaks on air. The callers number from up to 40 on a single show on *Spectrum*, down to about 20 callers per show on *Katukyogereko* and to less than 15 callers on *Ssekanyolya*.

Callers to *Spectrum* are screened at two levels – when their calls reach the reception and secondly when the call is transferred to the studio. The producer of the talk show, Anne Ssekandi (Ibid) argues that Radio One "...actively screens callers because the A and B class are very sensitive to what is said on the show". For example, she contends the station's listeners do not like hearing "bad words", such as adult language, on the programme. On shows that are deemed to be "explosive" the screening is more intense. There is, then, no doubt that *Spectrum* places a strong emphasis on controlling who gets to speak on air and how they express themselves.

*Katukyogereko* on Mama FM does not make a general rule of screening callers (Suuna, Ibid). Tiisa (Interview, 2003) argues that apart from setting controls in place to ensure gender sensitivity "in all ways", the show "has no form of censorship" and therefore encourages more

public debate of social issues. Screening is therefore viewed as a form of censorship – an exclusion of ordinary people’s voices. Given that the station attempts to empower a specific target group, ordinary women, the fact that it does not ‘censor’ programmes in this way is an attempt to encourage participation on its programmes by that target group. However, the policy has exceptions. According to Suuna, the show does not restrict participation, except for highly placed politicians like “...government ministers, who are not ordinary people”. Here, again, there is an acknowledgement that the screening of callers is not necessarily a form of censorship, but can in fact operate to make the programme more accessible to callers.

*Ssekanyolya* on Star FM also does not screen callers. Mugambe (Ibid), however, argues that the programme blocks “some usual callers”, who are actually government operatives who are tasked to explain the government position as the programme goes on. The “regular caller” phenomenon is a typical one on all radio stations, commercial, community and public. In this case, however, the staff on Star FM’s talk show, say they actually block the regular callers in order to allow others who would want to call in, to do so. Mugambe (Ibid) argues that the regular callers clog the lines, even if they are government supporters. Here, one begins to see how the blocking of calls on a radio programme can actually operate to make the phone lines more open to others who are trying to get through and participate on a talk show.

Considering the above, it could seem, at first glance, that of all three stations, *Spectrum* places the greatest emphasis on controlling access by callers and that both *Katukyogereko* and *Ssekanyolya*, in contrast, demonstrate a greater commitment to empowering their audience to come on air and be part of discussions. However, for both *Katukyogereko* and *Ssekanyolya*, the policy against screening callers is not consistent. They tend, in fact, to make exceptions to this rule. It could be argued that the practice of not screening callers, if used strategically, operates as a way of opening up the phone lines rather than limiting access – and that, of these stations, it is *Spectrum*, with its open prioritisation of screening as a method of control that is most likely to achieve a high level of public participation on its programme.

The picture that emerges is that although each of the talk show teams makes use of very similar models of talk radio, their interpretations of these models lead to very different approaches to programming policy and production systems. How the producers and hosts of talk shows on the three stations define talk shows, the aims they set for their shows and the policies and content of the shows, demonstrates key differences between the talk show teams and their

approaches to talk radio. Likewise the behind-the-scenes systems, such as the planning, production and execution of the shows, again indicate marked differences. *Spectrum* on Radio One tends to have a dynamic, exciting approach to talk radio. The show producer and host demonstrate that the station is clearly open to changes, conducts studies to gauge the opinions of its target audience and is sensitive to the demands of its target class. On the other hand, as shown earlier in this chapter, Star FM's *Ssekanyolya*, is strongly rooted in its civil-servant culture. The producer and host of the station's talk show operate according to established tradition, preferring not to rock the boat. They produce the show basically as a mouthpiece for the Uganda government. The station's talk show is at the opposite end of the spectrum and clearly exists because the government wants it to exist. Mama FM, on the hand, seems committed to the idea of openness and change, but faces enormous challenges. The producer and host of its talk show, *Katukyogereko*, have taken on a docket that is probably the most difficult to manage, yet lack adequate levels of sophistication, capacity and resources. Nevertheless, the station shows a strong commitment to its grassroots ambitions.

The final section of this chapter deals with the results of these plans, focussing on the shows produced by each of the three teams during the monitored period. As a result of the differences in approach to talk radio described above, very different kinds of shows have emerged from each of these stations.

### **5.3 Putting plans into practice**

#### **5.3.1 Topics discussed on the three shows**

An examination of the topics discussed on *Spectrum* during the period covered by this study, shows that politics, which here refers to issues to do with governing a country, such as government policies and plans and competition for power among interested parties, dominated the talk show. As shown in Table 1 on p.94, which shows topics planned and discussed on Radio One, three out of the ten shows that were broadcast during this period focussed on government-related, political issues. Ssekandi, as discussed in Section 5.2, however argues that the topics discussed on *Spectrum* are not necessarily political; rather choices about show content are guided by "what people are talking about". If this is the case, one can only assume that what people talk about primarily concerns political issues, because, as pointed out above, such topics dominated

the shows observed for this study. Topics mostly included government related politics, ranging from the merits and demerits of the movement system of government and demands by the central Buganda region to federate from the rest of the country, to demands by multiparty advocates for the country to return to full political party activity. Within the limitations of this study it is difficult to tell whether the trend observed during the monitoring period holds true in general. I would predict that, given the demand for spaces in which to discuss political issues identified by Radio One in its audience research, it does. One could argue that, in terms of its choice of content, *Spectrum* is addressing this demand.

Talemwa, who hosts Radio One's talk show, observes that political topics on the show attract the greatest interest from ordinary people, government and the opposition. Some guests on such shows tend to want to "talk and talk":

Political issues attract the greatest passion. The government used to complain that we hosted the opposition too much. Now ministers call in. In fact the government has cadres whose mandate it is to monitor the talk shows and react to criticism (Interview, 2003).

Ssekandi (Ibid) argues that the station started its talk show programme, *Spectrum*, to "give people an opportunity to interact and discuss current affairs". She argues that as proof that there was indeed a hunger for public discourse, *Spectrum* generated such an overwhelming interest that the station was prompted to start another programme, *Talk Back*, as a follow-up to *Spectrum*. Talemwa (Ibid), argues that the interest that the show generates results from an approach that emphasises interaction between the show host and the audience.

The talk show asks people how they look at current affairs and lets the public challenge the views of interviewees. It gives the people the opportunity to expound what they think are important issues and discuss solutions. Listeners expect the interviewee to answer questions they pose. They listen to each other's views or call in to give their own views (Talemwa, Interview, 2003).

What is particularly striking about *Spectrum*'s treatment of these topics is the tendency to provide controversial angles. When one looks at the topics planned during the period monitored for this study, which are attached as part of Appendix E on p.102, one notices that the many of these topics are framed in a way that is likely to generate controversy. One example of this can

be found in the show entitled: “Is Uganda ripe for war? The controversial Besigye document on war in Uganda”. The discussion, here, of a call to war by an exiled political leader considered by government to be a dissident, clearly lends itself to heated debate. Similarly contentious is a second example; a show entitled: “Issues of succession and related political intricacies (as seen by the UPC Youth League)”. Given the complex political scenario in Uganda at the moment, described in Chapter One, discussion on a radio station of succession by a political party, which is not allowed to operate legally, is bound to inflame the opinions of government.

Talemwa (Ibid) argues that *Spectrum* has had such a big impact that some of the suggestions raised on the show have been incorporated into government policy. He cites a suggestion raised on local elections expressed on *Spectrum* by an opposition politician and an ordinary caller into the programme, which was quickly adopted by the Ugandan electoral commission.

The Electoral Commission had wanted civilians to vote separately from security personnel in Local Council Five elections. We discussed the issue and it was suggested on our programme that that would be unfair. Next day, the Commission changed its position. We believe the change was influenced by the discussion on our programme (Ibid).

Talemwa (Ibid) explains that *Spectrum* used to receive many complaints from government for hosting members of the political opposition. The programme producers, he says, always responded by encouraging government officials to instead come on the show to give their side of the story.

By encouraging public challenge of the government, the station seems to play an important role in building democracy in Uganda. Radio One, by encouraging discussion of issues that impinge on democracy and challenge of authority in Uganda, seems to operate so that its talk show producers and hosts do not just promote commercial imperatives, but have positioned themselves as part of a pressure group towards greater democratisation in Uganda. Indeed, when one looks more critically at the topics that the station encourages, they all tend to encourage controversy. For example between December 9-21, 2002, the station featured two issues on its talk show that are clearly intended to press government for a decision. One was on the demands for federal status by the central Buganda region and the other was over demands by landowners for amendments to the law to allow for the regulation of ownership of land in the country. Both issues are still being debated within Ugandan society.

The content of the talk show on Star FM demonstrates a similar tendency to prioritise politics. Unlike *Spectrum*, however, a comparison of the issues discussed during the period monitored for this study, as shown in Table 2 on p.94, which presents topics discussed on Star FM's talk show over the period of this study, demonstrates that both social and political issues dominated the show. It would seem that while the programme was started as a political talk show, as shown in Chapter Three, structuring it thematically also allows for discussion of other issues, such as social issues. However, Mugambe (Ibid), who argues that the show aims to build democracy in Uganda more than anything else, observes that even the social issues are discussed with a political bias. During the period the show was monitored, one discussion focused on the delivery of social services by Kampala City Council. The discussion, however, digressed to apportion blame for poor delivery of services on the Mayor because "he is from the multiparty camp." In actual fact, the Mayor was not elected on the platform of one of the "banned" political parties, the Democratic Party, for which he is an official, but rather under the individual merit system of the ruling movement. To take the position that his failure to deliver social services within the city is necessarily because of his political affiliation, would seem to politicise even the non-political problems of the capital city's council. It would seem that the idea was to show that the "anti-government" Mayor had failed in his duties.

A close look at the other topics that went on air during this period shows they were clearly one-sided. They were about control, ranging from the merits of the ruling movement system of government, with a government minister explaining what the government was doing to "move the country to the path of democracy", to two members of parliament from the central region explaining what they had done to for the benefit of the people of their constituencies. The station also later hosted some "progressive" councillors from the Kampala City Council to explain how they were trying to "modernise" the city after it was "neglected by past regimes" and despite the "bad administration at the top."

At Mama FM, a very different picture emerges. Unlike the commercial station and the government station, the focus, here, is not on politics. A comparison of issues discussed on Mama FM's *Katukyogereko* shows that topics aired on the programme during the period monitored for this study as shown on Table 3 on p.95, featured a mixed bag of issues, but were dominated by family issues such as domestic violence. The other topics discussed included

education, culture, labour and employment and politics. Suuna (Ibid) argues that the talk show actually expands the opportunity available for debate of social issues:

I am flexible. Our show deals with social issues from the past, present and future, mainly affecting people aged 15-35. When we talk politics, we approach it from a development perspective (Interview, 2003).

The approach that the *Katukyogereko* talk show adopts, from Suuna's assertion above, seems to be solution-directed, looking for ways to change the society for the better. The station focuses on important social issues. During the period when it was monitored for this study, for example, it discussed the challenges that face herbalists (traditional medicine men and women), people with disabilities, students and family issues. The station clearly performs an important function here, complementing the other two stations. It gives priority to issues that the other stations ignore and therefore has an important constituency, despite the demanding nature of dealing with these kinds of topics.

While Mama FM's talk show targets ordinary women, the reality, however, is that ordinary women have not taken advantage of this situation (Suuna, Ibid). It would seem that the very fact that the station does not screen callers, actually puts the ordinary women at a disadvantage because they have to openly compete for airtime with other "advantaged people". Indeed, the women who actually participate on the talk show, as demonstrated in Section Two below, tend not to be the ordinary women, but rather professionals, including women politicians.

It has been argued above, that of the three programmes, it is *Spectrum*, the show on the commercial station, which is most successful at producing a professional sounding, dynamic product that is likely to engage its audience. At the same time, it was argued that it is *Katukyogereko*, the show on the community station that has taken on the most ambitious task with regards to its choice of content, dealing with the broader social issues that affect ordinary people. It is also argued that *Ssekanyolya*, the show on the public broadcaster, seems to deal with issues, or topics of discussion, that fall between those prioritised by the other two shows. In the next section, an examination of the kind of people who choose to participate on each of the stations, and the challenges faced in each case by the talk teams in involving the kind of voices they want, indicates it is possible to make similar assessments regarding the role played by each show in providing opportunities for public participation.

### 5.3.2 The choice of guests

Participation on the three Ugandan talk shows depends to a large extent on the staff directly responsible for the programme. The talk show producers and hosts select participants to take part on the show as panellists, except on Star FM where the government sometimes influences participation. For example, the first show hosted Uganda's vice president and subsequent shows have hosted the president, ministers and parliamentarians. A list of the types of panellists on the three talk shows in the period monitored for this study, which is shown in Table 4 on p.96, indicates that there were a substantial number of politicians among the panellists on the two of the shows. It could be argued that the public space on the programme is “owned” by politicians and not ordinary people, which would be bound to interfere with its appeal for ordinary people and with its ability to encourage public debate in a fully participatory fashion.

Out of 10 panellists on *Spectrum*, four were politicians – and, more specifically, members of parliament. Radio One seems to be guided more by its commercial imperatives, giving priority to panellists who would appeal to audiences because, more than anything else, they are knowledgeable about contemporary, controversial political issues. Members of parliament tend to “be in the eye of the storm” and bringing them onto a show should generate interest, and perhaps participation, from listeners.

On *Ssekanyolya*, out of 10 panellists, eight were politicians. These included Ministers and pro-government members of parliament who discussed government programmes. The talk show programme was clearly dominated by politicians, significantly more than *Spectrum*. By giving priority to politicians, Star FM’s talk show demonstrates, yet again, that the station was set up to “give voice” to government officials. Mugambe (Ibid) admits that when there is a “burning issues”, then the station is obliged to provide space for “government to explain its position.”

There was, however, a significant difference in the case of *Katukyogereko*. Out of 10 panellists, three were lawyers and two women activists. The others included one politician – again a member of parliament -- one youth leader and a university lecturer. In this pattern there is an echo of the trend identified in the choice of content discussed in the previous section. There is a broader prioritisation of panellists to discuss social issues on *Katukyogereko*. Mama FM, clearly, is focused on its community agenda and brings in a wide range of panellists to examine grass-roots issues.

One could argue that, on each show, the choice of content and its treatment has led to very different relationships with audiences. This relationship can be understood in terms of the sense of ownership that each audience feels over these shows as public spaces in which they can participate. For *Spectrum*, the strong sense of ownership seems to be limited to the A and B class, who, as explained in Section 1.1, are essentially salaried professionals. Ssekandi (Ibid) argues that the station encourages only people “who have a view” to participate on its programmes. People who lack a view are taken to be those outside the A and B class. It is a contradiction that while the station manager claims that they target the “public”, the staff actually screen out most of that “public”, selecting panellists only from the A and B class. In effect it would appear that by screening out people who “do not have a view”, the talk show, true to the ideals of Radio One, strives to reach out to only its target audience.

*Ssekanyolya* shows a similar tendency to exclude marginalized and poorer people and include only the elite. In this case, this is more problematic than in the case of *Spectrum*, given the status of this station as a public broadcaster. Such broadcasters, as shown in Chapter Two and Three, are mandated to target all citizens, which is clearly not happening in this case. Given what is presented in Section Two with regard to this show’s aims, one would assume that *Ssekanyolya*’s production team aspires to provide space for public debate to as many Ugandans within the range of their broadcasts as possible. Such an aspiration is, however, not realised in practice on this show. This may relate to what I have referred to in the previous section as the “civil servant culture” that exists at this station. Given this background, it is not surprising that most of the guests on this show are government bureaucrats who are paid to expound government positions.

It could be argued that *Katukyogereko*’s team, significantly, seems to do better than the others in encouraging participation by women. Over the same period, *Spectrum* had only nine women participate compared to seventeen men, while *Ssekanyolya* hosted five women compared to twenty one men. *Katukyogereko*, on the other hand, had twelve women take part on the programme compared to fourteen men. These included one woman who was a member of parliament and ten professional women. The fact, however, that the majority of women who participate as panellists on the programme are not ordinary women confirms Suuna’s (Ibid) assertions that participation by ordinary women on the programme is still limited. It could be

argued that *Katukyogereko*'s team fails to achieve the ideals articulated in its aims; i.e. that of attracting 'ordinary women' to participate on its programmes. Suuna (Ibid) concedes:

It is puzzling. We try to bring in ordinary women, but they stay away. These women fear studios and fear speaking out. Others cannot express themselves. Others simply fear having their voices recorded (Suuna, Interview, 2003)

*Katukyogereko*'s show team is, of course, facing enormous challenges in achieving its ideals. Its members are attempting to involve a group of people who are not used to participating in public fora. The talk show host, Charles Suuna, argues that such women also "...do not have access to a telephone line or cannot afford to make a call from a public phone, others are shy" (Interview, Ibid). From this it is evident that, while *Spectrum* and *Ssekanyolya* are targeting people who already feel a sense of ownership over public spaces and are articulate and confident in their use of such spaces, *Katukyogereko* is doing something far more challenging in working with people who do not have this kind of confidence or sense of ownership.

It could be argued that the fact that the host on the programme is a man means the show is framed by a male voice, even if it targets women. This would seem to affect any sense of ownership that the women would have towards the show as a public space – partly explaining why a limited number of women generally call into the show. *Katukyogereko*'s policy of not screening participants, it seems, adds to the exclusion of ordinary women from its talk show. I would suggest that this show's team needs to take more initiative, working out concrete strategies for encouraging ordinary women to participate and, as part of this, screening would help. At the same time, there were instances during the period covered by this study in which *Katukyogereko* made use of a strategy, which could, potentially, provide the programme with the key to broad participation by its target audience. One example of this can be found in a programme in which the main guest, a widow, discussed how she was coping after the death of her husband. A caller urged the widow to accept that she should now marry one of her late husband's relatives – a common practice in some traditional Ugandan families. The host, Charles Suuna, steered the programme towards a discussion of the risks of HIV/AIDs that could be associated with widow inheritance and did this in a manner that was sensitive to the fact that some cultures would dictate that the widow be married off anyway. He observes:

When we have vulnerable people on the show, we try to discuss their problems and solutions in a very sensitive way because more than anything else, we bring them in to talk about how they can be helped (Interview, 2003).

The picture that emerges from the assessment in this section of the way that each of the three shows put their plans and guidelines into practice, is that each is attempting to contribute in a different way to creating opportunities for participation in public debate. However, there seem to be strengths and weaknesses in each approach. *Spectrum* is quite good at well-produced, interesting radio. *Ssekanyolya* is playing a role that is important to government – that of providing space for it to expound its policies. *Katukyogereko*, on the other hand, is taking on an important job of targeting ordinary people. *Spectrum*, however, excludes a significant number of voices by restricting its audience to the A and B class, while *Ssekanyolya*'s desire to “give a voice to government” limits the range of issues that the show can tackle to those that consider the sensitivities of government. *Katukyogereko*'s approach, as we saw earlier, is constrained by resources, planning and execution of the show.

#### 5.4 Conclusions

It is evident, from the analysis of the three shows in this chapter, that each of the three teams is attempting to address a need for access to public debate, within its target audience. As shown in Section 5.3, each show has approached this task in very different ways, with different levels of success. The way the shows are approached seems to be influenced by the fact that the three stations on which these shows are hosted represent the three different tiers that have emerged in the Ugandan broadcasting scenario, namely commercial broadcasters, the state-owned radio station and the community stations. The approach to the task of contributing to public participation taken by each show is, in other words, clearly influenced by their position within these tiers of broadcasting. *Spectrum*'s production is heavily informed by the fact that it is broadcast on a commercial station. At the same time, however, the show seems to be as strongly informed by a commitment to offering its target audience a public space to discuss important issues. It seems to be able to balance these two aims successfully. My feeling is, however that, in assessing the role played by *Spectrum* in contributing to public debate, one needs to consider what is happening elsewhere within the radio landscape of Kampala. In particular, the approach taken by *Spectrum* would, I believe, be acceptable if, within that radio landscape, it were

possible to identify the presence of other talk shows that address the needs of the people who are excluded from *Spectrum*. This does not seem to be the case. In its present format, Star FM operates the same way that radio has operated in Uganda since colonial times – basically to link the government to the citizens. Indeed Mugambe (Ibid) argues that the station is based on earlier Radio Uganda models, with the “...same planning, but more technology and more humour.” Its talk show, *Ssekanyolya*, seems to be torn between its responsibility to provide space for public debate to all citizens and its desire to operate as a mouthpiece for government officials. As such it is constrained in its ability to provide space for participation in public debate by as many ordinary voices as possible. On the other hand, *Katukyogereko* on Mama FM, is doing crucial work in its attempt to address and involve ordinary people, and explore the issues that affect them directly. Clearly the struggle to involve disadvantaged groups in public debate is important because they are a constituency that the other two talk shows do not deliberately target. *Katukyogereko* is however caught up between the desire to achieve its objectives and resource constraints. Like *Ssekanyolya*, it is also not completely successful in achieving its goals. Given this scenario, the sum of the three talk shows’ contributions to the radio landscape in Kampala does not add up to the creation of a space for public debate to which everyone has access.

All three talk shows operate strongly in terms of the personality driven, “controversy” focused, infotainment model of talk radio discussed in Chapter Two and have borrowed various aspects from the approaches to talk radio that are discussed in that chapter. At the same time, they all seem genuinely committed to the goal of providing their audiences with access to public debate, and thus go beyond the limitations of the commercial tradition of talk. However, it appears that the three stations do not provide an all-embracing platform for public debate. Instead, as shown in this chapter, a complex process of exclusion and inclusion exists. I would argue that this is partly due to the scarcity of resources. The show on Mama FM, unlike Radio One and Star FM, is particularly hurt by lack of resources despite the challenge of venturing into a relatively more difficult aspect of talk radio. The station is totally dependant on donors for all its financial needs. This seems to put the station and its programming at a bigger disadvantage, compared to the other two, which generate some income by taking advertisements and accepting sponsorships of their programmes. Indeed Tiisa (Interview, 2003) concedes that the station is actually looking for advertisers to sponsor some of its programmes because the donor funding is inadequate for it to operate at full capacity.

The process of exclusion and inclusion is also partly due to varying levels of strategy. Unless a station has a good strategy, it finds itself merely joining the dots. Radio One's programming seems to operate more strategically than is the case on the other two stations. *Spectrum*, has a more elaborate organizational culture and the team that produces the show appears to take the planning and execution of its talk shows more seriously. Mama FM's *Katukyogereko* clearly needs better planning and execution, especially given the resource constraints that it faces. Star FM's talk show, *Ssekanyolya*, on the hand, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three and earlier in this chapter, is produced in a traditional, civil service culture, where the planning and execution of the show should not rock the boat.

The next chapter presents some conclusions from this study and recommendations that could, I believe, generally improve public participation on Ugandan talk radio programmes.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

*During the time when Ugandans could only listen to Radio Uganda, there was no feedback from the audiences. [They] needed radio stations that enabled listeners to participate in programmes. (Bahemuka. 2002).*

In his description, above, of the Ugandan radio landscape before the 1990's, Bahemuka draws attention to one of the most important implications of the arrival of commercial and community broadcasters in this country. As he goes on to argue, Ugandans need radio stations that allow for debate in which the general public, social critics and analysts can all explore issues of national importance. It is such debate that, in Chapter Two, I argue for in my proposal that the key principle of Habermas's theorization of the ideal space for public deliberation, can be found in his insistence on the need to allow for challenges to authority. In Chapter Three, this ideal of a critical public sphere informs the discussion about the current broadcast landscape in Uganda. I argue in that chapter that producers of Ugandan talk radio have taken it upon themselves to attempt the establishment of such a critical public sphere, one which aims to involve the public directly, through audience participation, in political debate that calls the government to account. It was suggested, further, that the emergence of Ugandan talk shows could potentially enable public officials, professionals and experts to address and debate key issues while at the same time allowing listeners to respond or raise pertinent issues and questions. In so doing, the shows could potentially enable dialogue between ordinary people and those in positions of power, such as politicians in key decision-making positions. In Chapter Five, I investigate the success of talk radio programmes on three Ugandan stations in realizing this potential. It became clear that the extent to which each of these programmes was able to contribute to the realization of a public sphere was heavily informed by the position of their host stations as community, public and commercial broadcasters. In this final chapter of this thesis, I draw some conclusions with regards to the general implications of this case study for the future of talk radio within the Ugandan radio sector.

## 6.1 Ugandan broadcasters and public participation

If what is happening on the three stations on which this study focuses, namely Radio One, Star FM and Mama FM, is repeating itself within the broader Ugandan broadcasting sector, then it would appear that Ugandan talk radio is not realizing its full potential to encourage public participation on talk programmes. It is possible, in fact, that these three stations are examples of a more general tension existing within the Ugandan radio sector between, on the one hand, the opening up of access to audiences and, on the other, the placing of limitations on such access.

For each of the three talk radio shows discussed in Chapter Five, this push and pull between access and exclusion operate in different ways, which can be related to the positions of the host stations as commercial, community and state-owned broadcasters. I submit that the different ways in which tensions between access and exclusion express themselves in the three programmes find their equivalents within talk radio throughout the three tiers of the Ugandan radio landscape. It is very possible that, like in the case of Radio One, there is a convergence within Ugandan commercial talk radio generally between approaches associated with commercial broadcasters and public broadcasters. This could mean that within such talk shows generally, the same tendency exists as identified in the case of *Spectrum* on Radio One – that is, that they position themselves as part of a pressure group working towards greater democratisation in Uganda, while at the same time doing so exclusively in the context of the more privileged classes. Similarly, it is possible that *Ssekanyolya* (on Star FM) is not the only example of a talk show on a state-owned station that continues to give priority to government voices, despite the fact that its talk-show production staff aspires to be “part of the pressure group” for greater public participation in debate of pertinent issues. Again, within the community radio movement there are likely to be many examples of shows such as *Katukyogereko* on Mama FM which are exploring innovative approaches to talk radio and focus on an important constituency (the less privileged) but, because of inadequate resources, are hampered in their mission to create space for this group to participate in public debate.

The picture that is likely to emerge is one of unequal access throughout the Ugandan radio landscape in which those in positions of privilege are being further empowered, while those who are on the margins remain powerless. It could be argued that the Ugandan media generally falls short of contributing to the establishment of a true public sphere.

## 6.2 Improving public participation on Ugandan talk programmes

Based on the historical analysis presented in Chapter Three and the examination of case studies in Chapter Five, it is possible to develop recommendations, which could improve the extent to which Ugandan talk radio realizes its potential. I propose that such improvements can be achieved using at least three distinct strategies. Firstly, they can be addressed by considering the distribution of resources within the three tiers of the Ugandan radio landscape. I submit that a case could be made for the government to reconsider resource division between the three radio sectors, given that it is really the most under-resourced sector (community radio) that is addressing the most important group of people. Commercial stations like Radio One generate revenue, for example, through advertising. As I show in Chapter Five, state-owned stations like Star FM accept some advertising and are also supported by the government: for example, the Ugandan government pays salaries of Star FM staff who are civil servants, while community stations rely entirely on donors for money. Government subsidizing community radio would, most likely, raise serious concerns about the extent to which such stations can guard against state interference in communities. Nevertheless, I suggest it is only with such support that this sector of Ugandan radio would be able to realize their potential to serve local communities. However, it would be important to put in place safeguards that would ensure that such financial assistance does not threaten the need for such communities to be owned and controlled by the communities that they target.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the organisational culture within each sector of Uganda's three-tier broadcasting system. As demonstrated by the three radio stations in this study, talk radio's degree of success is affected by the organizational culture within the sectors of which host stations form part. In this study I argue that staff in commercial stations like Radio One tend to plan their talk programmes more rigorously and strategically than the staff in the state or community stations. For example, Radio One regularly conducts audience studies to seek feedback on its talk show and such feedback informs the planning of the talk show. On the other hand, state owned stations like Star FM are limited by the civil-service culture in which they operate. I have argued that it is significant that Star FM does not conduct regular audience studies and tends, instead, to make programming decisions in a fairly arbitrary manner. Also, community stations like Mama FM generally lack adequate capacity to execute talk shows in the

manner that the commercial stations do. One aspect of organizational culture that would need particular attention relates to the approach of staff to the prioritization of editorial autonomy. There is a need to establish environments in which both government and industry are restricted from influencing the content of talk shows. I show in Chapter Five, for example, that Ugandan government officials do instruct the talk show producers on Star FM on what to say on the show. While the owners of commercial and community stations do not directly dictate the show content, the talk hosts and producers need to be absolutely free to plan and execute talk programmes as they see fit if talk radio is to achieve its potential to encourage wider public participation. They should, for example, have total freedom to choose topics, angles and participants on their programmes. The only restriction is the need to cater for local cultural, social and political sensitivities to avoid the kind of clashes that I demonstrate in Chapter Two.

There is also a need for more guidelines to be developed with regards to practical arrangements that take place around the production of talk radio programmes. For example, it would be valuable for talk show staff to have access to criteria with which to assess the design of broadcasting studios and the implications of these designs for interaction between the talk host and panelists. As I show in Chapter Five, Radio One seats both the panelists and host around one table, unlike Star FM and Mama FM that separate the two parties in different rooms. Seating placed around a single table creates an atmosphere of closer proximity and therefore a better interaction. Other Ugandan stations that might be using similar studio arrangements to Star and Mama FM, need to review this aspect of their studio design.

Another area in which such practical guidelines would be advantageous would be in the screening of callers. As I show in Chapter Five, the commercial broadcaster, Radio One, limits participation to only those “who have a view”. The other two stations claim they do not limit participation, but, in fact, Star FM cuts off its “usual callers”. Mama FM, on the other hand does not screen callers, but given that it is dealing with a marginalized group, it runs the risk of the more empowered dominating its talk show and shutting out its target audience. If the various scenarios that I draw attention to in this study actually occur on other stations, then these stations would benefit from developing appropriate criteria against which to assess their strategies for screening callers.

At policy level, the regulatory environment within which radio exists in Uganda does not fully serve to nurture the kind of talk radio that I argue for in this thesis. As I show in Chapter

Three, laws, such as those against publishing false news, sedition and defamation that have the potential to scuttle wider public participation in public debate on radio talk shows, still exist. The government needs to review the various statutes that regulate Uganda's complex broadcasting sector. As I show in Chapter Three, the proposals contained in the government White Paper on broadcasting are positive, but more could be done to broaden opportunities for increased public participation on talk programmes. Rather than emphasizing regulation, the government needs to encourage public interest to be at the fore of encouraging the proliferation of the broadcasting sector. To aid this, the laws that relate to publishing false news, sedition and defamation should be scrapped.

Ugandan talk radio has taken critical steps towards opening up space for greater public participation in debates on issues important to Ugandan society. It has created platforms on which ordinary citizens can openly challenge authority. While, in doing so, Ugandan talk radio assumes a very important role in all the three-tiers of the country's broadcasting sector, it will fall short of the ideals of the Habermasian public sphere unless the areas outlined above are addressed. Hopefully, this thesis will make a small contribution to the process of review and planning that will be necessary to achieve this goal.

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Table 1: A comparison of topics planned on *Spectrum* and actually discussed the talk show on December 9-21, 2002.

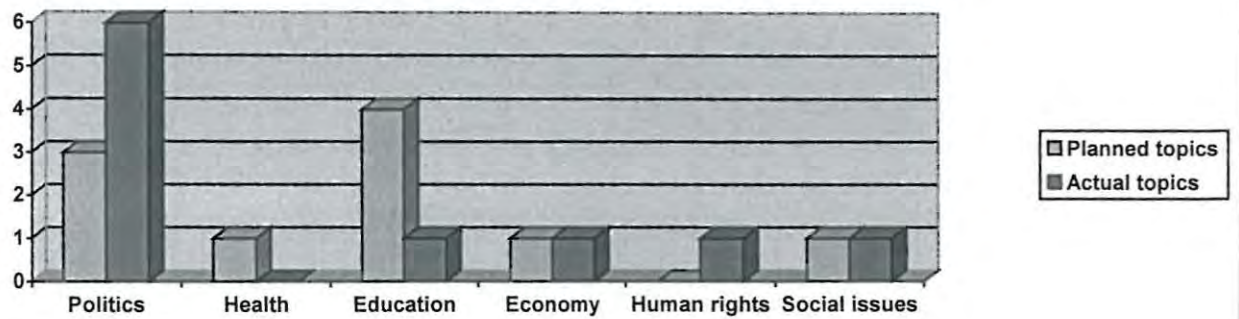


Table 2: Topics discussed on *Ssekanyolya* from December 9-21, 2002.

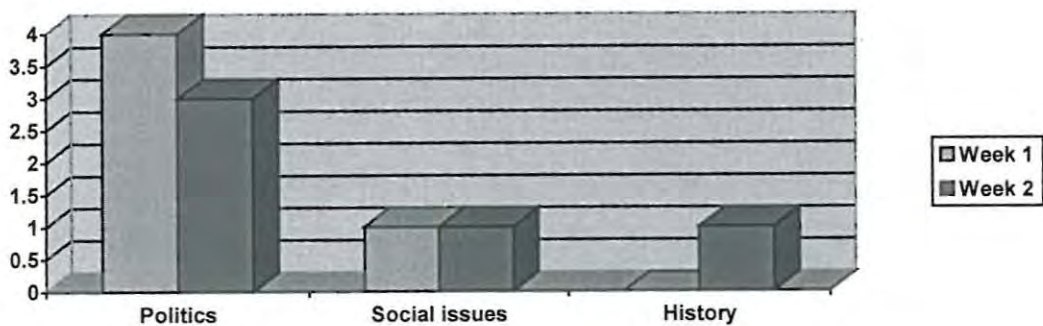
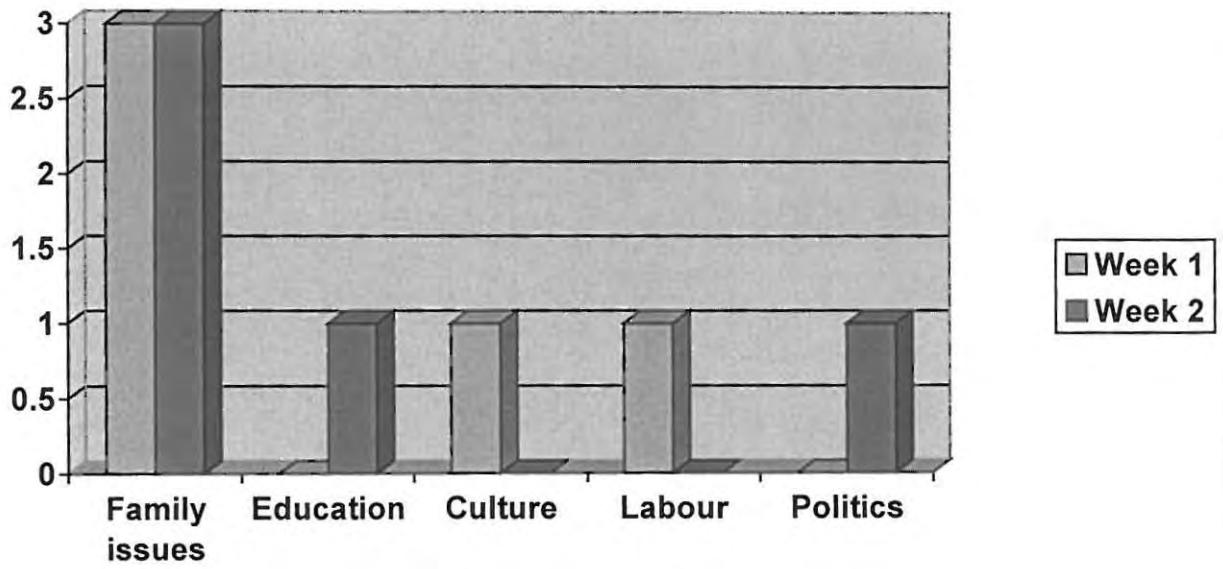


Table 3. Topics discussed on *Katukyogereko* on December 9-21, 2002.



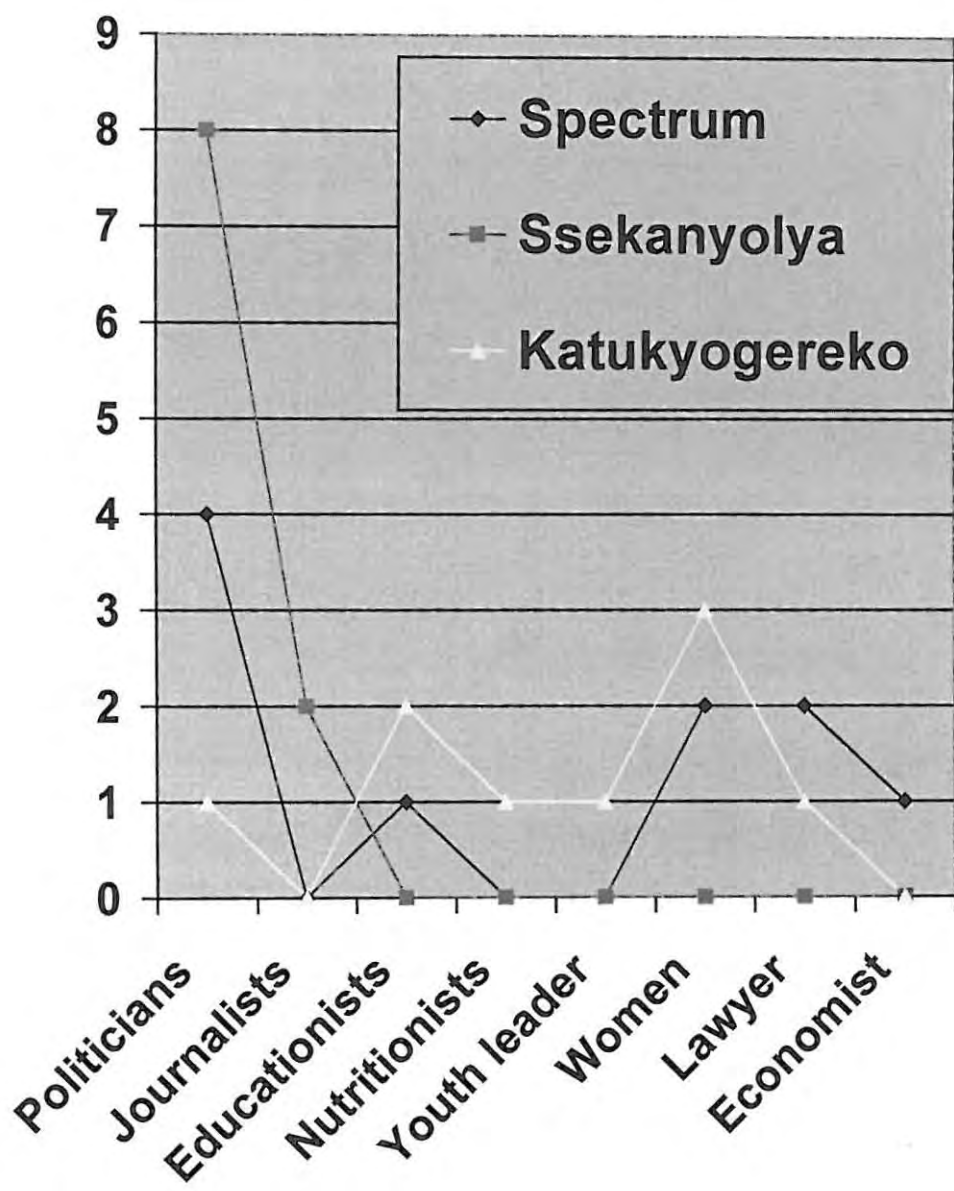
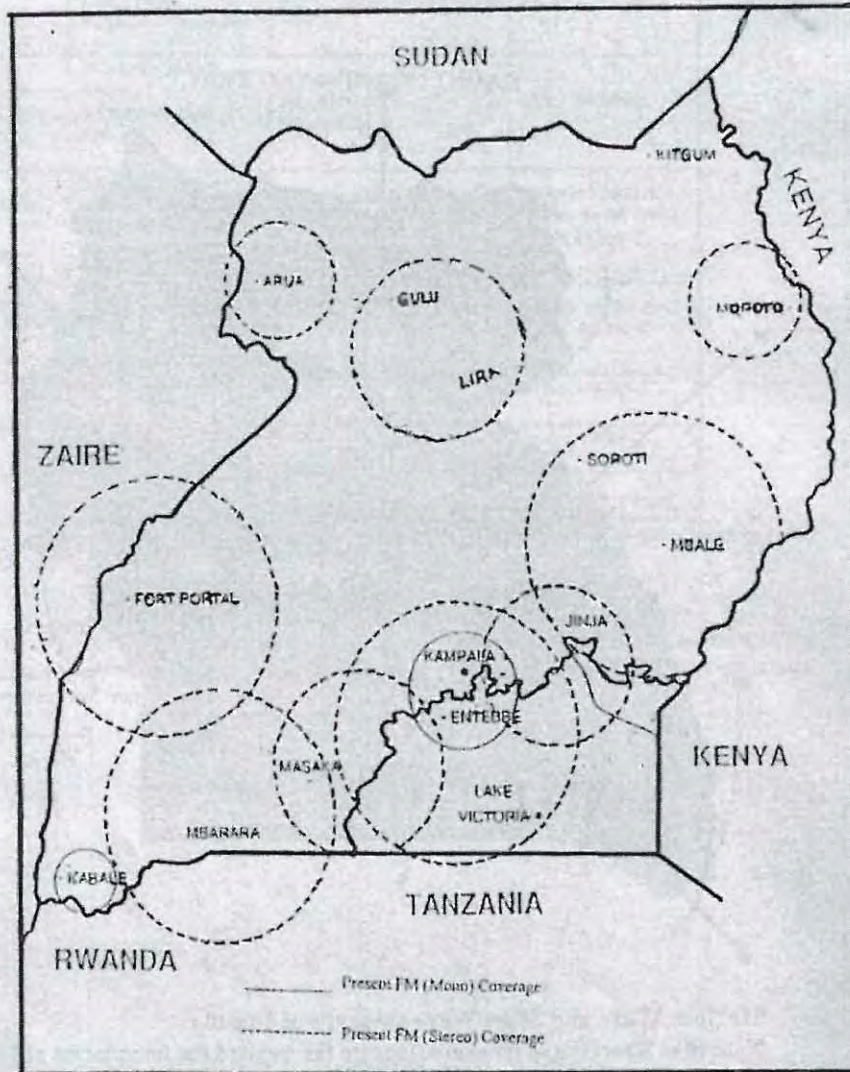


Table 4: Categories of panelists that took part in the three talk shows on December 9-21, 2002.

**RADIO UGANDA FM STATIONS AND COVERAGE**

RADIO UGANDA FM STATIONS AND COVERAGE



Steadman & Associates sharpen your competitive edge

## Appendix B

### List of respondents in the study:

- Ann Ssekandi, Head of News/Producer *Spectrum*
- Stephen Mugambe, Station Manager/Producer *Ssekanyolya*
- Agnes Tiisa, Station Manager/Producer, Mama FM
- Moses Talemwa, Host *Spectrum*
- Seruga Matovu, Host, *Ssekanyolya*
- Charles Suuna, Host *Katukyogereko*
- David Mukholi, Talk show listener
- Emmanuel Mukanga, Talk show listener
- Maggie Ireri, Researcher, Steadman Research Services
- Emmanuel Nkurunziza, Information Officer, Ministry of Information
- Paul Mukasa, Information Officer, Ministry of Information

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Explain to the respondent that this interview is only for the M.A. research purposes, not any other use.

### **General questions**

1. Do you play a role in talk show production? If so, what is your designation and what role do you play in talk show production on the station you work for? (If answered yes, go to Question 2. If answered no, go to Question 5).
2. How did you get involved in talk radio production and why? How did you end on this programme?
3. What level of journalism training have you undergone? What was your experience in talk radio before you joined this programme?

### **Specific questions**

#### **Talk production**

4. How would you describe the specific role that you play in the production of talk shows on the station you work for?
5. If someone who was unfamiliar with your programme asked you, how would you describe your programme to this person? Please describe how the programme started.
6. What value do you see in this programme? In other words, why do you do this programme?
7. What kind of topics are discussed on the programme and how are these topics arrived at? Can you give me a list of topics that were discussed during the month of December 2002?
8. Who participates in the programme? Can you give me a list of participants and callers-in on the programme during December 2002?
9. Describe to me the process of hosting the programme on a typical day from preparation to hosting. How do you determine panelists and callers-in? Describe to me a typical panelist and a typical caller-in on your programme.

#### **Understanding the role of talk radio**

10. What do you understand by "talk radio"? Do you see talk radio as informative or entertaining?

11. Is your programme sponsored?
12. Research suggests that talk radio are popular and so attract advertising/sponsorship. How does this impact on your show?
13. Research and existing literature also talks of the democratic potential of talk radio. Do you think talk radio effectively opens up space for political debate? Give me some examples to illustrate your point.
14. To what extent does talk radio in Uganda provide alternative space for political debate? What role do you see your programme playing in the country's democratic process? Give me examples to illustrate your point.

### **Approaches to talk production**

15. Uganda has a diversity of languages. Tell me why you chose to broadcast this talk programme in (English/Luganda).
16. Explain to me the limitations that you face as host of this programme. Has a government officials called you to complain about your show? (If yes, then ask) Give me an example of what happened.
17. What differences do you see between your approach to talk radio and that of the other stations (Radio One/Mama FM/Star FM)? How do these differences influence the impact of your programme?

## Appendix C

### List of documents obtained:

- Proposed topics on *Spectrum*, December 2002
- List of guests on Mama FM, September 2001-December 2002
- Programme schedule on Star FM, August – December 2002
- Daily Programme line-up for Mama FM
- Analysis of daily media activities among Kampala people – Steadman Research Services
- Urban Kampala spontaneous radio awareness report – Steadman Research Services

SSUMBA CHARLES.

Sept 2001 - Dec 2002

GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
1-	HON KASOLE				
	LWANGA -B.	MALE	M.P	TEACHER	M.P
2-	NSERENDO A.	"	SPEAKER	RADIO UGANDA	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
3-	SARAH NKEHE	FEMALE	COUNSELLOR	TEACHER	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
4.	BALIMUDA				
	MALYBE FULANE	FEMALE	COUNSELLOR	TEACHER	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
5.	MALONGO				
	BEMBUNA S	FEMALE		TEACHER	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
6.	PROFF. J.P. ROY				
	ROBY LINDHE	MALE	PASTOR	TEACHER	
7.	REV LWANGA				
	CHARLES T.	MALE	PASTOR	TEACHER	
8.	Winnie				
	MAKUMBI	FEMALE	COUNSELLOR	K.C.C.	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
9.	SALONGO				
	BEMBUNA	MALE		TEACHER	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
10.	SEKIBONGO	MALE		TECHNICAL	COUNSELLOR
11	RATIT		MP	KISUMU	
	SEBASSAZA	MALE		TEACHER	M.P

- \* J. MUNAHWA MALE MAJOR MUKONO MAJOR
- \* JUSTINE SENKABINDA MALE C/MAN LUSAGA: COUNCIL C/MAN
- \* LEO KIJJAMBI MALE C/MAN MAKUMBI COUNCIL C/MAN

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
12.	ROSE				
✓	HAMAYANJA	FEMALE	M.P		M.P.
13.	FLORENCE				
✓	KINYIHI MAKIYALI	FEMALE		UTOJA	
✓	HAMISA				
	NAMATIYU	FEMALE	COUNCILLOR	HOUSE WIFE	LOCAL COUNCILLOR
✓	MRS TERTISA	FEMALE	COUNCILLOR	HOUSE WIFE	LOCAL COUNCILLOR
16.	DADIA				
	LULANGA	MALE	STUDENT	MITANDA	
✓	EVER				
	NEMBELIYWA	FEMALE	STUDENT		
✓	MARGARET				
	KICUNDA	FEMALE	TEACHER	BULOBA	TEACHER
✓	LIVINGSTONE				
	KIMERA	MALE			LOCAL COUNCILLOR
✓	BAWUSA				
	RABU .M.	MALE	TEACHER	KAMUKU	LOCAL COUNCILLOR
21.	KUGOZI				
	FRANCIS	MALE		MASULITA	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
22.	SWATI BU				
	BERU KOTI-K	MALE		KANDOMPE	C.B.C.SJ INSTRUCTOR.
23.	DANIEL				
	KARANGA	MALE	STUDENT	MITYANA	
24	WASWA				
	ZIRITWAJULA	MALE		K.P.C	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
25	SOLOMBA				
	FLEA	MALE	MUSICIAN		
26	HANTUME				
	ROSE	FEMALE			LOCAL COUNSELLOR
27.	LYDIA				
	BIRAKI	FEMALE		NAWODU	
28.	MALONGO				
	HODI WILYASHIMWUS	FEMALE		NAWODU	
29	KAYIRA R.	MALE		KAMWANGA	
30	KWAKABYE KODIA	MALE		KANYAMPA	
31	SEBULIME EMMANUEL	MALE		KANYAMPA	
32.	KIGUMBA A.	MALE	MANAGER	JHA. AREA	
33	JULIET BUIE	FEMALE	HOUSE WIFE	MAGATIJO	LOCAL COUNSELLOR.

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
24	H HALUNA	MALE		KAMPALA	L.C COUNSELLOR
	PENAGIRE		P.W.B		
25	HAMULEME				
	ELIZABETH	FEMALE	P.W.B	LHWER	
26	HABRIET				
	KARANGERA	FEMALE	P.W.B	MURONGA	L.C COUNSELLOR
27	ROSS				
	KIGUNJU	FEMALE	TEACHER	BULOBA	TEACHER
28	SEKAGALA				
	ABDU	MALE	P.W.B	IRABINDU	L.C COUNSELLOR
29	PASCODIA				
	NAMENIARO	FEMALE	TEACHER	BULOBA	TEACHER
30	DEBA				
	BIRUMGI	FEMALE		L.VICTORIA	
31	MUGALI				
	MELBY	MALE	P.W.B	IRABINDU	
32	SEKAJUGO				
	SAMUEL	MALE	P.W.B	KATYATTA	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
43.	MURUMA				
	ABBAS	BURMAE	P.W.D	BUKOTO	
44.	MAMUKIJE				
	HANIFA	FEMALE		M.P.G.	
45.	EVANS				
	MARIAMBAZA	MALE	PASTOR PRIEST	MUNDA	
46	MARGRETT				
	BABANIP	FEMALE	P.W.D		M.P
47	JULIUS				
	KADYA	MALE	P.W.D	MURIPU	
48.	MUSOKE				
	BENIGRATIUS	MALE	TEACHER	KABON	TEACHER
49.	REGANDA				
	BENIGOLEXO	MALE	P.W.D	MAKINYE	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
50.	MUKISHA				
	BUNDENBO	MALE	P.W.D	MAKINYE	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
51	KAPERE				
	SEKAGYA	MALE	P.W.D	MAKINYE	LOCAL COUNSELLOR

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
52.	MAMUCENI				
	ANNET	FEMALE		KYENGEBA	
53.	KAMUGA				
	ABAIL	MALE	TEACHER	KINUBI	TEACHER
54.	MATZIAA				
	KASHLE	FEMALE		KALANLISA	
55.	KASOZI				
	EMMANUEL	MALE	ARTIST	PRIME GARDEN	
56.	PAUL				
	SEWAYA	MALE		BUKOTO	
57.	HERBERT				
	KIGOZI	MALE	STUDENT	BUKOTO	
58.	RENAGAMAA				
	HENRY	MALE		BUKOTO	
59.	LUTAYA				
	LUNE	MALE	STUDENT	BUKOTO	
60.	BDA				
	MEDIA	MALE		BUSOGA	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
61	KISHA				
	MARUKE	FEMALE SFA		KYEMBEZA	
62	SARA				
	BULEGA	MALE		MAMAMUNDA	
63	MUSA				
	KIHINGI	MALE			
64	ALAPA				
	MAGAYA	FEMALE			
65	MAKITO				
	SUZAN	FEMALE		KYEMBEZA	
66	GETAAGWA				
	ALICE	FEMALE		MUYENGA	
67	KIGHTANGI				
	KALINDA	FEMALE		MUYAGO/ MUYENGA	PHYSIOTHERAPIST
68	MAKANTAKO	FEMALE			
	MAMUKEME	FEMALE	P.W.O	KASOMBE	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
69	KASAJJA				
	KALIMAAU	MALE		MAKELERE	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
70.	MUGAMBE				
	TOPHER	MALE	P.W.D	MARUBAGITA	
71.	MANHIGI				
	ZHALIFA	FEMALE	STUDENT	BUTAMBALA	
72.	KNEUME				
	ALDYBIALS	MALE	YOUTH LEADER	BUTAMBALA	BUG. FOR CIVIC COMMITTEE
73	KIYONDA				
	JRENE	FEMALE	YOUTH LEADER	KAMPALA	L.C COUNCILOR
74	KALYANDU				
	KINTU JR.	MALE	LEADER	KATOPALA	L.C COUNCILOR
75.	EMMANUEL				
	KIRAKYA	MALE	LEADER	MAKEREJE	
76	BABIRYE				
	KHMET	FEMALE	STUDENT	KATOKALA	
77	SEETIMBA				
	ADOLA	MALE	TEACHER	KAGOMA	TEACHER
78	HALANDA				
	ADIFA	FEMALE	STUDENT	OGABA	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
79.	ROBERT				
	ROBERT	MALE	P.W.A	KAMPUNYA	
80	MATILDE				
	ACHMET	FEMALE	STUDENT	BUNYAMA	
81	HANIFAH				
	HANIFAH	FEMALE	STUDENT	MPIGI	
82	SEMUNYARA				
	SAMUEL	MALE	STUDENT	MASUNYARA	
83	CHARLES				
	SURMASIKINGIRO	MALLES	TEACHER	MAGGULU	TEACHER
84.	PROSS				
	KEMYA	FEMALS	TEACHER	MAGGULU	TEACHER
85	KADYLA				
	MATHEUS	MALE		BETANIA	
86	ZURSIKA				
	MUSODNA	FEMALE	STUDENT	KIRUMU	
87	EVA				
	MARIKASA				
	MAIUGO	FEMALE	STUDENT	KARAKA	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
88	MATHINYANZI				
	MOENINGE	FEMALE	STUDENT	ZANA	
89	LEONARD				
	SEMPITJA	MALE	PEASANT	WAKWED	
90	OLIVER				
	NALIAHWA	FEMALE	PEASANT	BICAHWA	
91	PROSCODIA				
	NATSEMBA	FEMALE	WIDOW	MATEETE	
92	CATHERINE				
	KABAZI	FEMALE	WIDOW	KISANSI	
93	DANIEL				
	BOWLE	MALE	P.W.D	MAGARJO	LOCAL COUNCILOR
94	LILWAGA				
	ROBERT	MALE	STUDENT	MUK	
95	ALLEN		VALUATION		
	SEKIMBI	FEMALE	OFFICER	KISANSI	
96	LYANA		HEALTH		
	MUTIENGA	FEMALE	SECRETARY	KISANSI	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
97	ALICE				
	MAMULETHI	FEMALE		KIRETCA	
98	SEBASTYA				
	RICHARD	MALE	P.W.D	MANDOTO	
99	PROSCODIA				
	MAMULI	FEMALE	PEASANT	QALAMBA	
100	MABAKODATHIKA				
	SEJAY	FEMALE	STUDENT	MAKABEKE	
101	MISAMNU				
	JACKSON	FEMALE	THERAPIST	MULAGO	THERAPIST
102	MATHEN				
	DEBO	MALE		MULAGO	
103	MABABAZI				
	EMILIANA	FEMALE	WIDOW	KASURI	
104	MARISWA				
	ERLOT	MALE	P.W.D	WIMBEGENA	
105	DR. MARYA	FEMALE	COUNCILLOR	KAMPALA	LOCAL COUNCILLOR
106	RSETTUMBA				
	WILSON	MALE	COUNCILLOR	ULA CENTRAL	LOCAL COUNCILLOR

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
107	Mrs KIROESSA	FEMALE	COUNSELLOR	KAMPALA	
108	BACILIKA				
	CHRISTINE	FEMALE	STUDENT	MAKINDWE	
09	NAGAYANA				
	SHALIYA	FEMALE	STUDENT	NAEEBA	
100	JUMA				
	KIYINDA	MALF	STUDENT	KANYAMA	
111	MUKILANGA				
	JANE	FEMALE	STUDENT	MITYANA	
112	KAITESI				
	BEATRICE	FEMALE	STUDENT	MITYANA	
113	AUGUSTINE				
	MBAZIRA	MALE	STUDENT	M.U.K	
114	GWICKYALYA				
	VICKET	FEMALE	STUDENT	M.U.K	
115	DOROTHY				
	NAWUGA	FEMALE	P.W.D	MAKINDWE	
116	NSUBUGA				
	MATIA	MALE	STUDENT	KALEGE	

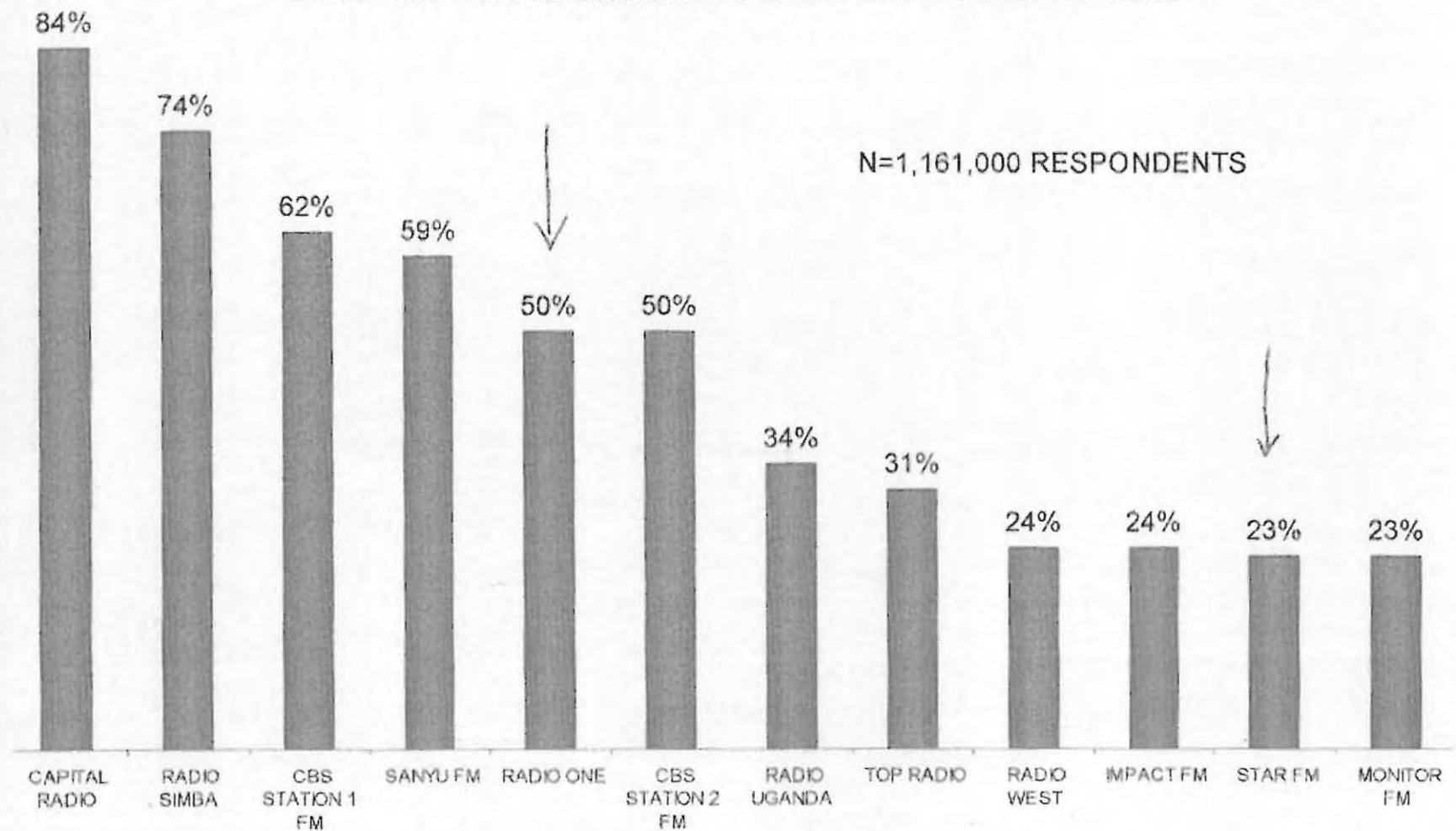
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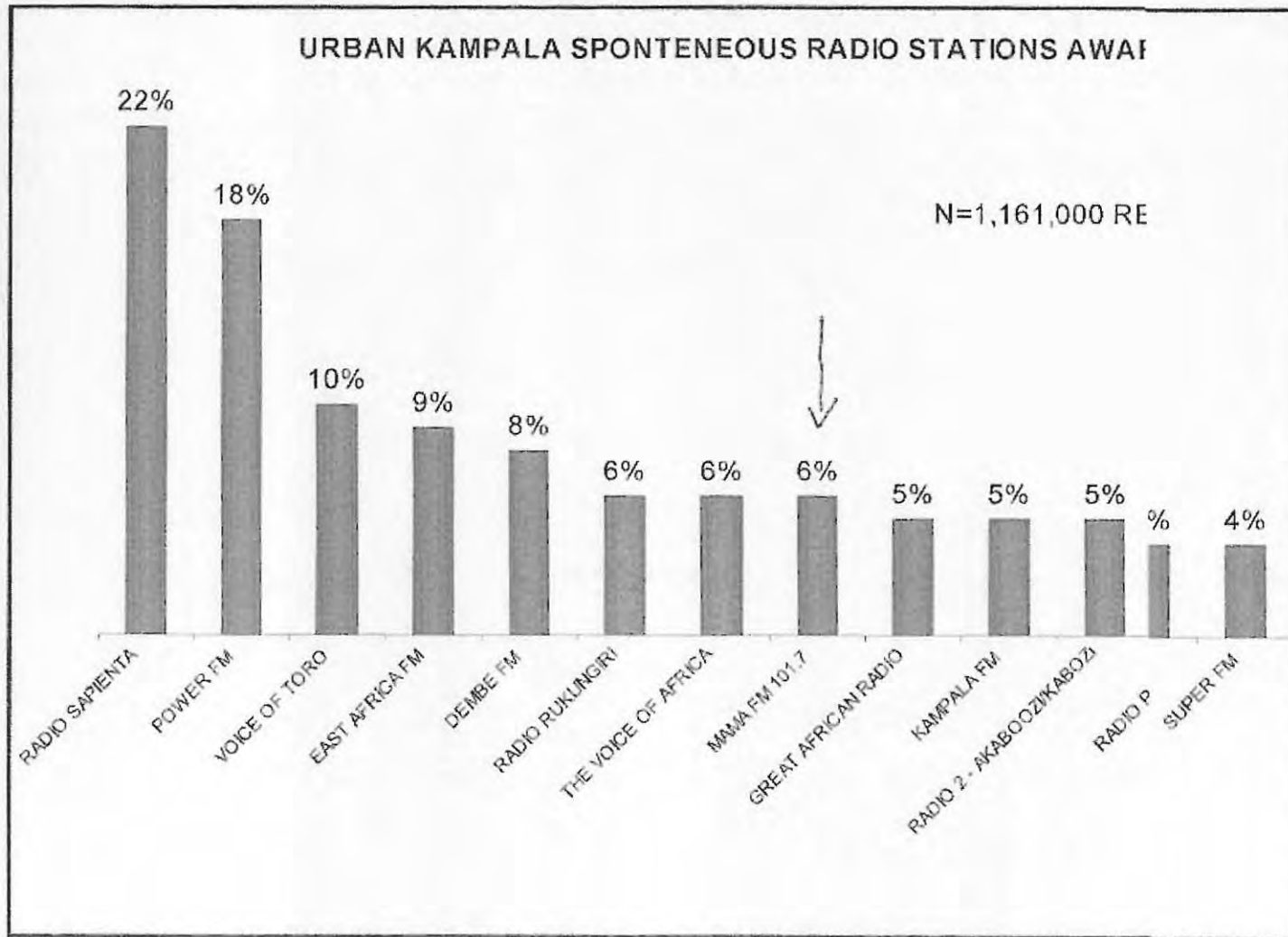
DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
117	MUGABI				
	JACOB	MALE	STUDENT	KIDWANI	
118	MASITHLA				
	KIZITO	FEMALE	STUDENT	M. U. K.	
119	SULAMAH				
	MBAZIRA	MALE	P. W. D	BURKUSE	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
120	KIGAZI				
	ARRAS	MALE	P. W. D	WAMBAKAYA	LOCAL COUNSELLOR
121	MUHAMMAD				
	RESSEIMBA	MALE		MABISAKU KIBUTE	
122	ROBERT				
	ZIWA	MALE	±	MUKUWA	
123	MALITTO				
	SUZAN	FEMALE & STUD	STUDENT	KYENGEZA	
124	REHEMA				
	MULUNGI	FEMALE	STUDENT	KITEEZI	
125	ZULEHA				
	ZIZINGA	FEMALE	STUDENT	KISAKSI	

## GUESTS RECEIVED ON 101.7 MAMA FM

DATE	NAME	GENDER	POSITION	WORK PLACE	PUBLIC POST
126	MPANGO				
	EMMANUEL	MALE		KAMPALA	
127	RODREY				
	RENTONGO	MALE	PEASANT	KALAGALA	
128	SHUK				
	KIRATE	MALE	PREACHER	KAMPALA	
129	HERMINIA				
	AERPA	FEMALE	STUDENT	MASOBI	
130	FREA				
	SEWALU	MALE	HERBALIST	KAMPALA	
131	MUSANJE				
	KYABAGU	MALE	"	"	
132	MTAMBI				
	WILSON	MALE	"	"	
133	NERIRANTA				
	NATHYONJO	FEMALE	HERBALIST	ENTEBBE	
134	KARYIKWUSA				
	MOSES	MALE	STUDENT	KIZEKA	

**URBAN KAMPALA SPONTANEOUS RADIO STATIONS AWARENESS**



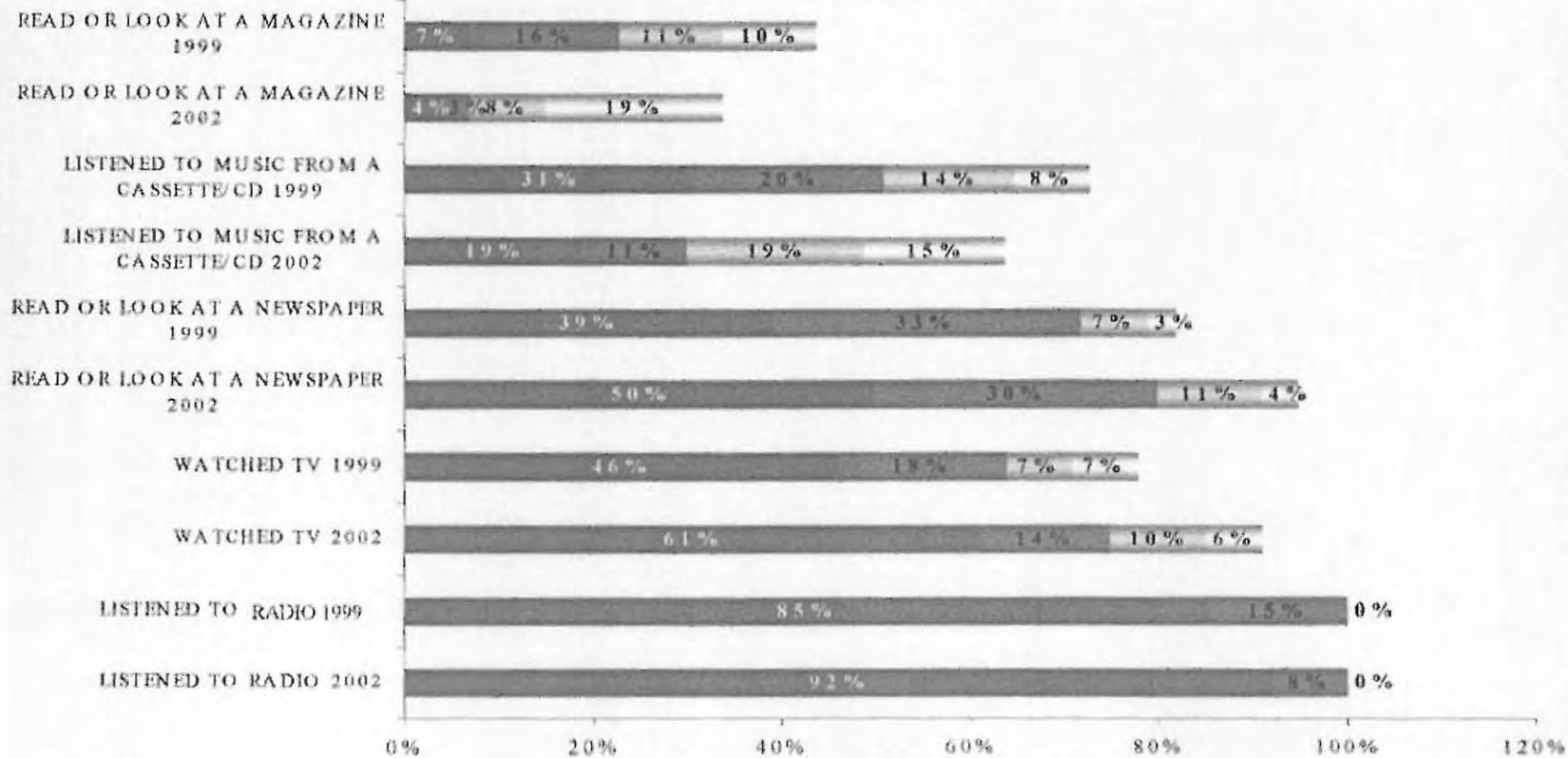


# Media Activities



**MEDIA ACTIVITIES DONE IN THE PAST.....**

■ YESTERDAY ■ PAST 7 DAYS ■ PAST 4 WEEKS ■ PAST 12 MNTHS



N = 1,175,000 GREATER KAMPALA 15+ RESPONDENTS

Proposed Spectrum Topics for Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 2002

- Reform Agenda reacts to the Byanyima allegations
  - Louis Otika, Deputy Secretary General/Reform Agenda
  - Aisha Kabanda, Secretary for Mobilization, Movement Mobilizers Forum
  
- The Election Violence Probe Report: Why Parliament wants it debated.
  - Hon. Proscovia Salaamu Musumba, Bugabula South County MP
  
- 16 days of activism against gender violence
  - Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi, EALA Legislator
  
- Bringing Parliament to Accountability
  - Frank Tumwebaze, Deputy RDC Iganga District
  
- Fifty years of National Parks: Is tourism only a 'foreign' thing? Helping Ugandans appreciate their own country
  - C/o Mr Mayambala, Sales Dept

**Proposed Spectrum Topics for Dec 9-13<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

- Reform Topic of the Week
  - Geoffrey Ekanya, Reform Agenda Secretary General
  - Fred Bamwine, Movement Mobilizers' forum
  
- The Federo Question
  - Hon. John Ken Lukyamuzi, MP Lubaga South.
  
- Human Rights and the Rule of Law: A look at the Uganda Human Rights Report 2001
  - Commissioner Veronica Bichetero, UHRC
  - Commissioner Joel Aliro Omara, UHRC
  
- Issues of Succession and Related Political Intricacies (as seen by the UPC Youth League)
  - Ssenyonjo Kyeyune, UPC Youth League
  - Aisha Kabanda, Movement Mobilizers' Forum
  
- Rtd Colonel Besigye's Controversial 'War' Statement
  - Beti O. Kanya, Reform Agenda Publicity Secretary

Proposed Spectrum Topics for Dec 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2002

- Is Uganda Ripe for War?' The controversial Besigye document on war in Uganda.
  - Moses Byaruhanga, Presidential Assistant for Political Affairs
  - Beti O. Kanya, Reform Agenda
  
- The Examination Question: How best can it be improved upon?
  - David Were, UNEB (in charge Continuous Assessment)
  - Fagil Mandy, Educational Consultant
  
- The Release of former Greenland Bank Chief, Dr. Sulaiman Kiggundu
  - Dr. Sulaiman Kiggundu,
  - Erias Lukwago, Dr. Kiggundu's Attorney
  
- The Release of Dr. Sulaiman Kiggundu (part 2)
  - Phone in show only
  
- Amending the Land Act 1998
  - Harriet Busingye, Co-ordinator Uganda Land Alliance
  - Chairperson, Natural Resources Committee

Spectrum Ideas for Christmas Week- Dec 23-27, 2002

- Reform Commentary on the situation in the north
  - Louis Otika, Reform Agenda
  
- Law and Order Review
  - Ahmed Wafuba, Regional Police Commander Kampala
  - Gabriel Tibayungwa, Regional Traffic Chief, Kampala
  - Moses Sakira, CID Chief, Kampala
  
- (Christmas Day-Spectrum not on programme)
  
- Christmas Cantata
  - Courtesy KPC
  
- The Kenyan Elections
  - Jude Mbabaali, DP Spokesperson; also *Techniques and Strategies of Campaigning*.
  - Dennis Lukaaya, Political Observer; former Spokesperson Aggrey Awori Presidential Campaign Team.

101.7 MAMA DAILY LINE UP

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7.00 – 8.00 a.m.	Early Morning Hope	Early Morning Hope	Early Morning Hope	Early Morning Hope	Early Morning Hope	Early Morning Hope	Glorify
8.00 – 11.00 a.m.	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Saturday Musanyusa / Happy Saturday	Glorify 08.00 – 10.00
10.00 – 11.00 a.m.	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Rise and Shine	Saturday Musanyusa Happy Sat	In the news this week
11.00 – 1.00 p.m.	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	The Voices	Children talk 11.00 – 12.00
12.00 – 1.00 p.m.	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Speak Out! Listen Too	Okwerinda live program	Agafa mu Palamenti
1.00 – 2.00 p.m.	Lunchtime request/Poyesamu	Lunchtime request/Poyesamu	Lunchtime request/Poyesamu	Lunchtime request/Poyesamu	Theatre program	Kiddawalime 1.00pm – 2.00pm Community Focus 2.00pm – 3.00pm	Papa Mama Round table 1.00 – 3.00pm
2.00 – 4.00 p.m.	Katukyo – gereko / Let's talk /	Katukyo – gereko / Let's talk	Katukyo – gereko / Let's talk	Katukyo – gereko / Let's talk	Katukyo – gereko / Let's talk	Teen Age 3.00pm – 5.00pm	Nawe Kikukwa –tako It's Our Problem 3.00pm – 5.00pm
4.00 – 5.00 p.m.	Tukyenyumirizemu / You too can do it	Tukyenyumirizemu / You too can do it	Tukyenyumirizemu / You too can do it	Tukyenyumirizemu / You too can do it	Islamic Hour	Teen watch	
5.00 – 7.00 p.m.	Evening Voyage	Evening Voyage	Evening Voyage	Evening Voyage	Evening Voyage	African Beat	Abakyala tweyogerere Women-talk-back 5.00pm – 7.00pm
7.00 – 9.00 p.m.	Okwerinda / Health matters	Family matters	Okwerinda/ Health matters	Abami Wetuli/ Men talk back	Ndimugezi Osaniide Omanaye	Family issues	Top Watch
9.00 – 10.00 p.m.	Kiwummulo / Reflections	Kiwummulo / Reflections	Kiwummulo / Reflections	Kiwummulo / Reflections	Kiwummulo / Reflections	Kirimuttu Special Package	Rights and Duties

STAR FM 100, 96.9

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE <sup>Since</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2002

TIME	PROGRAMME	PRESENTER(S)
0500-0600	MAMBYA/EKIGAALI 2000	KABANDA / KIRYOWA
0600-0700	TULEPUKE	SERUGGA / KABANDA
0700-0720	PRESS REVIEW	MUGAMBE STEVEN
0720-0730	ENSI BWEYIMIRIDDE/JINGLES	BUGEMBE MARGRET
0730-0800	MUGENDA WALA	BANDA/LUTAYA
0800-0815	TUZANYE	KASIRYE/NGOBI/SEMUGENYI
1815-1000	NYONZA	SERUGGA MATUVU
1000-1100	EBITABO BYO	BANTU BALAMU KIBUULE
1100-1300	EKINTABULI	KULUMBA/IGA/NAMBI
1300-1500	OLUGENDA ENJALA	NABAYUNGA/LAJU/KENNO
1500-1800	UNCLE DICK LIVESHOW	MULIMA/NAMUBIRU
1800-2100	CYCLONE SHOW	ORLANDO/MUKIIBI
* 2100-2200	SEKANYOLYA	SERUGGA/ GAMBOBBI/ BANDA
2200-2230	TUZANYE	ZIKUSOOKA/SEBUGWAWO/KENETH
	ROTATES WITH DIFFERENT	
2230-2400	PROGRAMMES	KALULE KASUJJA
2400-0200	EMUNYENYE	JAZZY JOKES
0200-0500	WEWUMULIRE	KALULE KASUJJA

**SATURDAY**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>PRESENTER</b>
0600-0700	KAWOMERA	KULUMBA
0700-0720	PRESS REVIEW	MUGAMBE STEVEN
0720-0730	ENSI NGA BWEYIMIRIDDE/JINGLE	BUGEMBE MARGRET
0730-0900	KAWOMERA (CONT.)	KULUMBA
0900-1100	OMUKULEMBEZE	MUKALAZI/KALULE
1100-1200	ABATO	KAZINDA/NAKANJAKO/SOPHIA
1200-1400	KATETEMERA SHOW	NAMUBIRU/MPANGA
1400-1500	OBWO BUNTU BULAMU?	MULIMA
1500-1600	MUSIC INTERLUDE	MULIMA
1600-1700	KYUSAAKO	NSEREKO MUTUMBA/KISUBI
1700-2000	BAVUBUKA	KISUBI/NAKATO/NAKALEMA /NASSALI
2000-2100	TUZANYE (WEEKLY ROUNDUP)	ZIKUSOOKA /KENETH/KASIRYE
2100-2200	TUNULIRA OMUKYALA	PROSSY NABAYUNGA
2200-2300	TWEJUKANYE	CYYDE MAYANJA
2300-0600	EKIKEESA	DON MILES SSEBAGALA

**SUNDAY**

TIME	PROGRAMME	PRESENTER
0600-0700	TUMUSINZE	KYOBE/NJAGALA/KABANDA
0700-0720	PRESS REVIEW	MUGAMBE STEVEN
0720-1000	TUMUSINZE (CONT)	KYOBE/NJAGALA/KABANDA
1000-1300	KASONSOMELERA	NAMUBIRU/MPANGA
1300-1400	GAMPE	BANDA/KIVUMBI
1400-1500	MUSIC INTERLUDE	BANDA
1500-1600	OBULIMI OBWOMULEMBE	BANDA
1600-1630	MUSIC INTERLUDE	MULIMA SEMPAKA
1630-1700	ESSUBI LY'OMULEMA	SEMIGGA
1700-1800	OMUSOMESA	MALE BUSULWA
1800-1900	ENYIMBA EZITUNYUMIRA	CLYCDE MAYANJA/MONICA
1900-2000	EKINONOGO	BANTU BALAMU
2000-2100	MUSIC INTERLUDE(GOSPEL)	GAMBOBBI
2100-2200	EWA KANYUMIZA	GAMBOBBI/NSEREKO ABDUL
2200-2300	MUGOBA NSONGA	GAMBOBBI/NYOMBI TEMBO
2300-2400	STAR GOSPEL MIX	DEAN KIBIRIGE
2400-0500	STAR COUNT DOWN	DON MILES SEBAGALA

NB: News bulletins every top of the hours except weekends.

Personal announcements – 8 am , 1 pm, 7 pm

No change should be made on this schedule without the consent of the under signed.

STEVEN MUGAMBE



AG. STATION MANAGER