
**An exploration of the Effect of Market-driven Journalism on
The Monitor newspaper's Editorial Content**

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Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies**

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**By
Grace Rwomushana Agaba**

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Supervisor: Professor Nixon Kariithi

DEDICATION

To my parents; Mr and Mrs Rwomushana who called me a child and not just a girl.

And to my unborn baby for being so peaceful in the womb while mum worked hard on her thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The media today are under pressure from various fronts including governments, businesses as well as cultural interests. In the developed world, this pressure that led to the emergence of a new form of journalism that puts the demands of the market at the forefront. This commercial oriented journalism gives priority to articles that attract mass audiences like entertainment while it downplays information that promotes debates that is necessary for citizens to be able to have a voice on the issues that affect them. And since participation and discussion are cornerstones of a democratic process, market-driven journalism undermines democracy because it narrows down the forum for debate. As a result, active citizens are turned into passive observers in society. Although several studies about this phenomenon have been done in the western world, the same is happening in Africa because the media face similar challenges as in the West; challenges of globalisation and media conglomeration facilitated by the rapid advancing technology. This study, which is informed by political economy and market-driven journalism theories, notes that the media in Uganda are also faced with these challenges. The study is focused on Uganda's only independent newspaper, *The Monitor*. The findings indicate that market-driven journalism is taking root at the expense of journalism that promotes citizenship and debate such as political reporting and opinions. For example, there has been an increase of entertainment, sports and supplement articles in *The Monitor* as compared to declining political reporting and opinions. More so, investigative reporting has dwindled over the years at the expense of increasing use of press releases. This is because entertainment and sports articles can attract big audiences that the newspaper needs to sell to advertisers. Advertisers are important because they provide financial support to the newspaper. However, in a country where democracy is in its formative stages, public information is necessary not only for citizens to make informed decisions but also to spur economic as well as social development.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This study is informed by political economy of the media and market-driven journalism theories. It investigates the effect and significance of commercial-oriented media and how it affects the role of the media in a democratic process. From a media studies perspective, this work is premised on the hypothesis that pressure on *The Monitor* directors to run an economically viable newspaper has affected the newspaper content. This chapter states the background to the study, its objectives and scope as well as presents the breakdown of chapters.

1.1 Background to the Study

The Monitor was founded in 1992 by seven journalists after a disagreement with their former employer, *Weekly Topic*, over the newspaper's editorial independence. In its maiden issue, *The Monitor* declared it would promote democracy by providing a forum for political debate and to be a public watchdog by carrying out thorough investigative reporting. The newspaper also pledged to be independent of any business and political manipulations aimed at serving narrow or selfish interests (Oguttu 1992).

The Monitor was the first newspaper in Uganda to be fully owned by journalists and in its first birthday editorial on July 23, 1993, it is described as "a remarkable journalistic and business success" (*The Monitor* 2003:9). The editorial also affirms their commitment to editorial independence despite criticism from some sections of society accusing the newspaper of being biased against them.

In March 2000 *The Monitor*, which also owns a radio station, sold its majority shares to the Kenya-based Nation Media Group. Nation Media Group, according to Awori (2002), publishes 12 newspaper titles, has three radio stations and a television station in the East African region. According to two of the founders of *The Monitor*, David Ouma Balikowa and Wafula Oguttu, the sale was aimed at giving the newspaper capital muscle that would make it more competitive in a liberalised media industry. This study therefore examines how market pressures have affected the newspaper's editorial content.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Monitor is operating in a liberalised economy where providers of goods and services compete for attention from customers. Although its founders envisaged a newspaper that would be independent of any other interests including business, it has been exposed to the harsh realities of technological advancement and globalisation. Media conglomerates as a result of mergers and acquisitions are increasingly dominating the industry and moulding their media products to suit their business interests (Golding and Murdock 2000; Boyd-Barrett 1995). This is at the expense of traditional roles of the media like being a public watchdog and providing a forum for political debate and thus democracy. This study therefore investigates the effect of market-driven journalism on *The Monitor*'s editorial content.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

This study basically examines the effect of market-driven journalism on *The Monitor* newspaper's editorial content. It set out to establish if there were changes in the editorial content of *The Monitor*, which indicated a shift from the values and ideals of the traditional role of the media to a market-oriented one. This, according to McChesney (1997) and McManus (1994) has also happened to the media in other parts of the developed world in recent years as elaborated in chapter two.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study has attempted to establish:

- (a) Whether market-driven journalism has led to changes in *The Monitor*'s editorial content.
- (b) What pressures and issues journalists struggle with in their quest to maintain editorial independence from the providers of financial support.

In addition it aimed to:

- (c) Make suggestions and recommendations on how *The Monitor* can try to balance their commercial interests and still serve the public interest.

As I explain later in chapter four of this study, the above objectives have been addressed by doing a content analysis to establish how much space was allocated to what category of articles. In addition, I conducted five interviews to help explain the quantitative data further. The study methodology is further explained in chapter four.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to studying the trends in the newspaper's editorial content using the selected sample discussed in chapter four. The 30 newspaper copies selected for the study are each analysed as a whole unit because it was thought that changes in editorial content can be subtle and not easily identifiable in one section of the newspaper. The data collected through content analysis and interviews is analysed and discussed in chapter five under the five broad themes.

1.6 Research Issues and Assumptions

One major assumption that guided this study was that *The Monitor* is the only independent daily newspaper in a country where corruption has penetrated almost all sectors of society. For example, according to Transparency International, Uganda was named 88th most corrupt country out of 91 countries in 2001 (The 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index). As such, *The Monitor* would be vital in playing a watchdog role by investigating corruption and making people in offices of responsibility accountable. However, before I set out to carry out this study, I had noticed that the newspaper had over the years shifted from carrying out thorough investigative reporting and moved more into light reporting. The research findings in chapter five confirm this trend.

Further, Uganda is a no party democracy with no legally recognised political opposition. This has placed upon *The Monitor* the role of giving members of the opposition a platform to air out their views. As Kyazze (2003) observes, the opinion pages of media in Uganda, including *The Monitor*, usually carry views that are critical of President Yoweri Museveni and his ruling Movement government for overstaying in power. But at the onset of the study, I had observed that the editorial space allocated to articles on political issues in *The Monitor* had reduced which suggests that the newspaper had narrowed down the public sphere. This study set out to investigate whether *The Monitor* newspaper had narrowed down the public sphere.

1.5 Significance of the Study

I hope that media scholars, other academics and researchers will find the findings of this study a contribution to the existing literature on media economics, especially on how the need for the media to become commercial oriented affects content. The study, also being the first of its kind on *The Monitor* provides empirical evidence of the shift on the newspaper's editorial policy over the years. It can therefore be useful to the newspaper if they want to evaluate their performance or change their editorial policy.

1.6 Research Methodology

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Two principle techniques were used in collection of the research data; content analysis and interviews. Editorial content published in three years of the newspaper's 11 years of existence was measured, coded and analysed. This was in line with Hansen et al (1988) and Alexis (1985) argument that content analysis is appropriate for studying long-term changes and trends in media coverage. Here, the analysis of *The Monitor* editorial content analysed show a shift in the newspaper editorial policy from being an advocacy newspaper's to more of a market-oriented one.

Five interviews were conducted after the content coding exercise. Information from these interviews provided the descriptive and explanatory data to the study. Four of the respondents who were working at the newspaper gave their personal observations and experience at *The Monitor* over the years. A media scholar gave an independent and scholarly opinion of the newspaper.

This study is premised on theoretical framework of the political economy of the media and market-driven journalism as articulated by theorists Golding and Murdock (2000); Boyd-Barrett (1995) on one hand and Picard (1989) and Napoli (1997) on the other. As shown in chapter two, it is informed by an extensive review of literature on debates on how market-driven journalism is negating the democratic role of the media worldwide.

1.7 Breakdown of chapters

This thesis is presented in six chapters. In the first chapter, I briefly present the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research methodology. Chapter two discusses the theoretical debates under which this study is premised. The chapter presents a review of literature on debates concerning the political economy of the media and the effects of market-driven journalism on the role of the media in a democratic society. All arguments correspond with the research issues and assumptions outlined in chapter one and are supported by the research findings presented in chapter five.

In chapter three, I discuss the rise and political economy of the independent press in Uganda. In this chapter, I trace the rise of *The Monitor* to place the study into context.

The fourth chapter presents methods, techniques and procedures used for the study. This chapter gives the rationale for using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as well as explains how the data was collected and analysed.

In the fifth, I present and discuss the findings of the study. The findings are discussed under five broad themes, namely: General Beat Journalism, Entertainment Journalism, Market-driven Journalism, Public Service Journalism and Advocacy Journalism. In this chapter, I present and discuss findings from both content analysis and interviews data. The findings are consistent with the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two that informs this study.

The sixth chapter is also the last one. In view of the study findings, this chapter presents a summary of the study and suggests possible reforms for *The Monitor* newspaper. It also points out areas for further research on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on the theoretical arguments and debates about political economy of media and the media's role in a democracy, market-driven journalism and other issues relevant to the study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Drawing on theories of the political economy of the media (Golding and Murdock 2000; Boyd-Barrett 1995; Garnham 1992), this study investigates the effect and significance of market-driven journalism and how it impacts on the role of the media in a democratic process. The focus of the study is an independent newspaper, *The Monitor* in Kampala, Uganda. The theoretical perspectives that inform this study are the political economy of the media and market-driven journalism. The study looks at how market-driven journalism affects the role of the media in a democratic process. It argues that the media are vital in providing a social realm for debate to form public opinion, which is important in a democratic process and that market-driven journalism interferes with this process. The next section presents an overview of the political economy approach to the media as a theoretical framework.

2.2 Political economy of the media

According to Boyd-Barrett (1995), political economy in media research is often associated with macro-questions of media ownership and control, interlocking directorships and other industries, and with political, economic and social elite. Political economy examines processes of consolidation, diversification, commercialisation, internationalisation, the working of the profit motive in the hunt for audiences and/or for advertising, and its consequences for media practices and media content (Boyd-Barrett 1995:186). Media concentration can occur either internally among media companies themselves or between media and non-media companies.

Political economy goes beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with questions of

justice, equity and the public good. Political economy theorists such as Boyd-Barret (1995) and Golding and Murdock (2000) argue that the significance of the media goes further than questions of individual effects, uses and gratifications, and has something to do with the relationship of media to other social institutions, the economy and the formation of ideologies. This opposes the classic Marxist position, which assumed a direct process of media effect and looked at the media as ideological state apparatuses that perpetuated the ideas of the ruling class. According to Garnham (1992), political economy of the media shifts attention from the looking at the media as ideological state apparatuses and sees them as economic entities with a direct economic role as creators of surplus value. The media do this through commodity production and exchange, and indirectly through advertising, in the creation of surplus value within other sectors of commodity production. The main function of the media is not to 'sell' ideology to consumers but audiences to advertisers (Garnham 1992:29). The political economy of the media recognises the fact that media organisations are industrial and commercial institutions which produce and distribute commodities in the name of media products.

In line with Garnham's argument, Napoli (1997) opines that media organisations are both political and economic entities. This is because they are able to influence public opinion, government policy and citizen voting behaviour and at the same time be competitive as a business. He adds that in a capitalist economy, the sustainability of the media is dependant upon maximising revenue and minimising costs. As a result, these economic considerations have an impact on the selection, style and presentation of news content that the public eventually receives as mediated reality. As Herman and Chomsky (1988:XII) note "most biased choices in the media arise from the pre-selection of right-thinking people, internalised preoccupations and the adaptation of personnel to constraints of ownership, organisation, market and political power."

Media theorists (Golding and Murdock 2000; Boyd-Barrett 1995, McChesney 1997) are concerned that media production is increasingly being taken over by large corporations who mould media products to their interests and strategies. The geographical reach of these conglomerates and strategic alliances are being rapidly extended as governments

around the world embrace privatisation and ‘free’ markets, and increased scope for action (Golding and Murdock 2000:80). Scholars like Dahlgren (1995); Curran (2000); Herman and McChesney (1997), and McChesney (1999) further note that media consolidation limits diversity of views and opinions, and is therefore not suitable for democracy.

Curran (2000:124) argues that with consolidation, the market can give rise not to independent watchdogs serving public interest but corporate mercenaries that “adjust their critical scrutiny to suit their private purpose”. Golding and Murdock (2002:78) agree and add thus:

The rise of communications conglomerates adds a new element to the old debate about potential abuses of owner power. It is no longer a simple case of proprietors intervening in editorial decisions or firing key personnel who fall foul of their political philosophies. Cultural production is also strongly influenced by commercial strategies built around ‘synergies’ that exploit overlaps between the company’s different media interests. The company’s newspapers may give publicity to their television stations or record and book divisions may launch products related to a new movie released by film division. The effect is to reduce the diversity of cultural goods in circulation. Although in simple quantitative terms there may be more commodities in circulation, they are more likely to be variants of the same basic themes and images.

McChesney (1997) points out that most newspapers in the developed world today are concerned with their survival rather than setting the news agenda. As Garnham (1992) argues, any changes in media structure and policy, whether due to economic development or public interventions are political questions. He points out that for example, the policy of western European governments towards cable television and satellite broadcasting is as important as their attitudes towards a United Europe. In the United States, members of Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are beginning to insist that decisions about media ownership should take into account the public interest (McChesney 2003). This, he observes, is as a result of insistence of media activists, journalists and musicians who argue that corporate consolidation is undermining democracy and culture. Similarly, the nation's largest communications corporation giants are lobbying to ram the changes through the FCC, and win Congressional consent. For example, McChesney (2003) notes that between 1995 and 2000, the industry took FCC employees on 1,460 all-expenses paid-trips while between 1997 and 2000, 315 junkets were paid for members of Congress and senior staffers. As Curran (2000) suggests, profit-oriented media have all to

gain from a business-friendly government. At the same time, governments want a friendly media which they can use to woo and retain mass support.

Yet the media lie at the heart of a democratic process (Garnham 1992; Dahlgren 1995). Citizens require equal access to sources of information and equal opportunities to participate in the debates from which political decisions rightly flow, if their equal access to the vote is to have any substantive meaning. This, Kariithi (2003) adds, helps in nation building because it promotes a common sense of citizenship and tolerance for one another. Schechter (1996:5) notes that a right to information is a human right. This right “includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.” According to Kellner (1990), the democratic functions of the media established by law, government regulatory bodies and judicial system, include providing information that is necessary for the functioning of democracy. The media are supposed to be impartial in political contests and debates to be able to expose corruption, abuse of power and illegal or destructive behaviour in the social and political systems. The business of media therefore can not be like any other business because they produce cultural and political goods, which according to Croteau and Hynes (2001), are supposed to help citizens make informed decisions and not simply satisfy consumers’ needs.

The link between the media and democracy is historical. As early as 1791, the founding fathers of the United States democracy amended the constitution to empower the media. Downing and Mohammadi (1995:113) quote the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law restricting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right of the people peacefully to assembly, or petition the Government for redress of grievances.” Likewise, the French Constitution of 1791, which adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens of August 26, 1789, talks of free communication of ideas and opinions as one of the most precious rights of man (Kellner 1990:12). The media, as early as then, were deemed necessarily as a source of information that would enable citizens to democratically participate in public affairs. The term fourth estate (with the executive, judiciary and parliament as the other three) signifies that the media are an

important institution of a democratic society that serves as a watchdog of the other arms of government.

Jurgen Habermas (1989) while theorising about the role of the media in democratic and political life in 18th century Europe referred to the media as a public sphere. He argued that in 18th century Europe, political views and decisions in the public sphere were open not to the play of power but to argument based upon evidence and the concern was not private interest but the public good. The public sphere was thus constituted as the free space for rational and universal politics distinct from the economy and the state (Habermas 1989, Boyd-Barrett and Newbold 1995). Habermas noted that it is in this social realm that public opinion would be formed, and in turn shape policies of the state and the development of society as a whole.

Golding and Murdock (1997) define the public sphere as a realm of social life in which something approaching a public opinion can be formed where access is guaranteed to all citizens. Curran (2000) and Garnham (1992) present the public sphere as a neutral zone where access to relevant information affecting the public good is widely available, where discussion is free from domination and all those participating in public debate do so on an equal basis. Dahlgren (1995:7) notes that the public sphere 'takes place' when citizens, exercising the rights of assembly and association, gather as public bodies to discuss matters of the day, specifically those of political concern to form public opinion. The theorists observe that the media are critical to this process by providing an arena of public debate and by reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion. They note that the media are therefore critical institutions of the public sphere.

Garnham (1992) argues that the public sphere was protected from the power of both the Church and State by its access to the sustaining resources of economic power. It was in principle open to all in the same way because the cost of entry for each individual was dramatically lowered by the growth in the scale of the market. Habermas analysed the role of newspapers, literary and political clubs, coffeehouses and institutions of political debate and

discussion in producing what he called a “bourgeois public sphere.” He went on to argue that this space for rational and universalistic politics was destroyed by monopoly capitalism which led to uneven distribution of wealth, rising entry costs to the public sphere and thus to unequal access to and control over that sphere (Garnham, 1992: 107). Private corporations began taking control of the state and the media to promote their interests and power (Kellner, 1990:12). At that point, advertising became a crucial component of mass communication, providing the advertisers with power over the media and depoliticised the public of the consumer society that emerged after World War II.

2.3 Market-driven journalism debates

Media scholars like John McManus have advanced what is called market-driven journalism. McManus (1994) argues that the logic of market-driven journalism is the logic of the marketplace. He points out that the media environment has become too competitive to support media companies pursuing traditional journalism with the separation of the “church” of newsgathering and the “state” of advertising, sales, production and distribution (McManus 1994:3). He further notes that successful editors must integrate the business and news subdivisions as well as become marketing experts. Eventually, he argues that the media should change or they will be changed. McManus (1994:5) sets out the market-driven journalism model and argues that commercial news production is heavily dictated upon by these four sources of finance. According to him, readers trade their attention; sources trade their information; advertisers pay for their potential customers; and owners contribute capital and expect to reap profits.

McQuail (1992) sees this as a process by which media institutions increasingly re-orient their content towards the interests of advertisers and sponsors from whom the institutions receive revenue and other financial support. He argues that this increased commercialisation results into reduced media independence. Such loss of editorial independence depends upon the extent to which the institution is drawing financial support from one source i.e. readers, owners, advertisers or public subsidy sources.

Media observers like Picard (1989) and Napoli (1997) note that media organisations have to serve the interests of four distinct groups; media owners, audiences, advertisers and media employees. Picard (1989:9) in particular observes that owners want high rates of return on their investments and company growth, audiences want high quality products and services at a low price. In turn, advertisers want access to their target customers at a low price and high quality services from the media employees while employees expect fair compensation. All the four groups that are involved in media production and consumption at one stage or another expect value for their money and time. Like any other capitalist entity, Napoli (1997) argues, the survival of a media company depends upon its ability to make as much profit as possible. As Picard (2002:4) puts it, profit is necessary to finance improvements in equipment and facilities. He observes that in commercial firms, profits make funds available to pay the investors, make capital expenditure as well as pay creditors. And because media owners will usually want to make profits, media managers are expected to minimise costs and maximise audiences, and these two profit-maximising techniques in turn shape media content.

It is against this backdrop that McManus (1994:114) argues that commercial news production follows three kinds of logic; predominantly journalistic logic, predominantly market logic or a compromise between the two. The journalistic logic ascribes social responsibilities to mass media including helping societies make informed decisions (Keane 1991; McChesney 1997). The market logic sees media working to maximise returns for investors by selecting stories with the greatest ratio of appeal for demographically desirable audiences. Under this logic, the media tend to minimise carrying out investigative reporting because though it fulfils the highest level of journalism logic, the stories could attract libel suits and require more time and resources to do, which is too costly for investors. A compromise between journalistic and market logic can be achieved by concentrating on issues and events where the two types of logic coincide. McManus (1994:88) however adds:

Principally, because so few of the conditions for cooperative are met in the transaction between media firms and the public, journalism and market conflict more than converge. If the goal of journalism is public enlightenment, there is potential for conflict with the business goal of maximising benefit for investors at

each stage of news production.

McManus goes on to say that at each of the three stages of news production, the market and journalism theories are bound to conflict. He points out that while the first stage of news production involves uncovering potentially newsworthy issues and events, the most significant issues are usually the most expensive to discover because powerful interests do not want them unearthed. He notes that uncovering such issues through investigation is too costly especially if compared to other sources of news like news wires or press agents. The second stage involves choosing which issues and events uncovered in the first stage that should be included in the publication or broadcast at a particular time. Here, again the market theory and journalism can conflict when the most important events of the day are not necessarily the most interesting. And when it gets to the third stage, journalism calls for the selection of the most significant quotes from the relevant sources to make the story balanced and authoritative. But still getting a well- balanced story also takes a lot of resources and time, and thus eats into the company's would be profit.

According to Picard (1989), it is important to appreciate that the media are economic institutions engaged in the production and dissemination of content targeted at consumers. Media economics looks at how media producers meet the informational and entertainment wants and needs of audiences, advertisers and society with available resources. It deals with factors influencing production of media products and allocation of those products for consumption. Picard (1989:14) goes on:

Communication firms use scarce resources – electricity, paper, equipment, skilled labour, programming, information – to satisfy their wants to produce media goods and services and gain profit. Consumers use scarce resources -- time and money – to satisfy their wants and needs to acquire information and be entertained by media products or to get their messages carried in media. Because the resources of producers and consumers are scarce, producers of media goods and services and consumers are constrained in their abilities to meet all the wants and needs they have for media products.... Media cannot be considered separately from the economic system in which they operate because the economic forces of the system direct and constrain the choices of those who manage the media, just as they do the choices of any other industry.

In agreement with Picard, Albarran (1996:5) defines media economics as a study of how media industries use scarce resources to produce content that is distributed among consumers to satisfy various wants and needs. He argues that media content is designed not only to attract consumers but also advertisers who want to have access to potential consumers. For example, advertising covers up to between 50-60 percent of the total space in a daily newspaper in the United States and this figure goes slightly higher on Sundays (Albarran 1996:155). Advertising also contributes between 70-90 percent of the gross revenue of newspapers and almost all the income for television networks according to McManus (1994:61).

Though the ratio of advertising to editorial content in the developing world is not yet as high as in the developed world, media theorists predict that this will soon change. For example, according to Amienyi (1998), advertising takes up between 28 to 35 percent of newspaper content in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that the media in the developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change. Robins (1997:30) while writing about the re-emergence of the independent media in Uganda, notes that as the media struggle to build readership and advertising base, they are succumbing to providing less informative content and more entertainment. She contends that like in the developed world, the media cannot be able to promote the people's right to know if they are not successful as a business.

However, the capitalist media, which is built on strong business empires, has become a focus of study and debate. Theorists like Bagdikian (1997) and Napoli (1997) point out that media conglomerates have the mechanisms to promote their interests, which include leaving out news that may reduce their income or embarrass the parent company. Bagdikian (1997) particularly notes that one of the reasons conglomerates acquire a variety of industries is that one subsidiary can help another, which would be not as bad if these conglomerates served the public interest and gave a platform to all opinions. In his own words:

The deeper social loss of giantism in the media is not its unfair advantage in

profits and power; this is real and it is serious. But the gravest loss is in self-serving censorship of political and social ideas... Some intervention by owners is direct and blunt. But most of the screening is subtle, some even occurring at a conscious level, as when subordinates learn by habit to conform to owners' ideas. But subtle or not, the ultimate result is distorted reality and impoverished ideas (Bagdikian 1997:45).

Bagdikian (1997) goes on to argue that because of the drive to dominate the market, newspapers have converted news pages into "agencies for merchants." The media do this by introducing new entertainment sections to attract advertisers and the new sections keep encroaching on the space for other information. Underwood (1995:15) concurs, arguing that market pressures have led to the appearance of a new kind of editor who is a cross between an editor and a marketing executive. He points out that the success of contemporary media organisations is premised upon the extent to which editorial, marketing and circulation roles are integrated. He notes that marketing and circulation personnel must monitor editorial meetings and decisions, and vice versa. Underwood (1995:41) opines:

The new capital-conscious, market-driven newspaper companies have found out that they aren't in a position to just sit on their riches. With the stock of the most of the major companies traded publicly, the pressures of the bottom line have grown even more intense. Wall Street, as publishers have learned, can be insatiable in the demand for earning growth and unmerciful in hammering stock if earnings drop.

Underwood, a media practitioner turned critic, left the journalism profession when he could not take it anymore. He later observes:

I exited the profession with my deep concerns about what was happening to a business that had been transformed into a carefully planned, market-place-driven, profit fuelled model of modern, corporate engineering – and at the danger of losing its professional bearing and journalist soul (Underwood: xxi).

Like Underwood, Kathy Kozdemba, an MBA graduate and top news official in the United States (quoted in Underwood 1995) acknowledges that the media are dealing in a world of marketing and this is something they have to live with. She points out that the reality is that if you do not give your readers what they want, they will find it somewhere else. Media businesses, Croteau and Hoynes (2001:26) add, operate in a "dual product"

market. This, they explain, is because they sell different types of products to different sets of customers simultaneously. The first set of products are the media products they produce like newspapers, films or programmes for broadcast to sell directly to customers (readers and viewers) and the second set is the access to audiences which is sold to advertisers. And to be able to attract a big audience to sell to advertisers, media companies end up leaning their content to more of entertainment and celebrity news which is popular among consumers though such content might not necessarily create an informed citizenry. Journalist Onyango-Obbo (2004) is self-critical. He admits that many journalists and media managers believe that serious journalism does not sell and the only way to make money is by giving the audience less serious information. He elaborates:

Many journalists and media managers seem to have made the assumption that serious journalism doesn't sell. That the only way the media can make money is through attracting younger people and women. No problem. The beef is with their conviction that young people and women are idiots who are only interested in light stuff, fashion and stories of pop stars and photos of bare breasts adorned with rings. The result is that most FM stations are more likely to hire a popular clown over a talented investigative journalist and pay the joker three times more... We have become cowardly, lost the stomach for innovation and allowed the "market" to lead us by the nose. At one point, journalists felt challenged to get the market to follow what they considered important issues of the day and they succeeded. Not any more (Onyango-Obbo 2004:13).

Scholars like Garnham (1992) and Dahlgren (1995) observe that making journalism commercial oriented has created a market divided between the information rich and the information poor, provided with increasingly homogenised entertainment services on a mass scale. They note that advertising and public relations represent direct control of public information manipulated to serve either private or state interests rather than rational discourse. According to Dahlgren (1995:8), the increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially where the commercial logic overrides the public interest, transforms public communication into public relations, advertising and entertainment. As a result, the public loses its social coherence and becomes fragmented.

In turn, Habermas (1989) argues that the commercialisation of the press -- the emergence of a mass press subsidised by advertising -- has transformed an active, critical, discussing public into a passive, uncritical consuming public. The principle of free and open

exchange of ideas and opinions has been replaced with business logic. Habermas (1989:184) notes that:

The advertising business puts financial calculation on a whole new business. In a situation of greatly lowered price per copy and a multiplied number of buyers, the publisher could count on selling a correspondingly growing portion of space in his paper for adverts. The paper assumes the character of an enterprise which produces advertising space as a commodity that is made marketable by means of an editorial section.

Market-driven journalism has been facilitated by rapid advancement of information and communication technologies in that the media today are characterised by globalisation, consolidation, deregulation and digitisation. McChesney (1999:1), talking about the media in the United States today, notes that communication is so intertwined with the economy and culture that our times have been dubbed the Information Age. To be able to survive in this cut-throat competitive media world, media companies are coming together through mergers and acquisition to form stronger conglomerates. Media observers (Branston and Stafford 1999; McChesney 1999; Curran 2000) point out that media companies want to increase their market share so as to reap the economies of scale.

Others like Golding and Murdock (2000:79) contend that media moguls, on top of exercising direct control over the companies they own, can also have indirect control over smaller companies in the same market struggling to break even. The conglomerates can be able to finance expensive promotional campaigns and offer big discounts to advertisers. This does not only make it harder for smaller companies to enter the market but can also drive others out. It is important to remember that although there are similarities between media goods and services, and other goods and services in the markets, there is still a difference between the two. Picard (1989) notes that the media serve public interests that have resulted into regulatory control of the structures of some media industries. And at the same time, the media have a special constitutional protection to carry out that role.

However, it is important to note that profit-oriented media may not necessarily be anti-democracy. McNair (1998) argues that private ownership of the media gives them financial independence from the state. John Roach cited in Curran (1979:196) agrees and notes that it

is the economically emancipated media that can afford to be independent. Talking about the development of the press in Britain, Roach notes that it was only with the growth of newspaper profits, largely from advertising, that newspapers were able to free themselves from the state and develop an independent organisation for gathering news. Curran (1979) quotes a historical journal:

Since sales were inadequate to cover the costs of producing a newspaper, it was the growing income from advertising, which provided the material base for the change of attitude from subservience to independence. The chief methods by which governments could influence the press – a direct subsidy, official advertisements, and priority of intelligence – were rendered less effective because proprietors could afford to do without them....The growth of advertising revenue was the most important single factor in enabling the press to emerge as the Fourth Estate of the realm. (Historical Journal 1975: 721, quoted in Curran 1979: 196).

The rise of an independent press as Christie cited in Curran (1979:197) notes, democratised British political institutions by exposing them to the full blast of public opinion. At the same time, the emergence of an independent press led to an increasingly non-partisan news coverage, enabled people to form balanced political judgements and to participate in a more mature political democracy.

In most African countries, the media were introduced by the colonialists. Kiwanuka-Tondo (1990) argues that the events in World War II, which ended in 1945, made broadcasting in the colonies vital for colonial administration because they thought it would help in mobilising people towards the feeling of nationhood. By the time African countries started agitating for independence from colonialists in the 1950s, the continent had a media worth documenting. For example, Bourgault (1995:153) notes that by 1956, which was a few years before most African countries got their independence, there were 100 daily African newspapers on the continent. These increased to 150 in 1966 and to 160 in 1969. During the 1970s when many military coups took place in Africa, the number of newspapers started declining and by 1975-76, they had reduced to 116 dailies. Bourgault (1995) observes that by 1980s, the newspaper market was coming back to life and by 1988, the number of daily newspapers had increased to 200.

As many African countries started embracing political pluralism in the early 1990s, more newspapers hit the streets. Such a diverse media landscape creates a fertile ground to guarantee

pluralism of journalistic viewpoints and a competitive marketplace of ideas. Bourgault (1995) posits that the 1990s saw the media in Africa, especially print, adjust to a new world order epitomised by Western values of democracy and respect for human rights. This, she notes, was accelerated by new communication technologies that have increased the speed at which information travels around the world. For her, these are healthy changes for the African continent.¹

However, that was not the kind of media African countries inherited from their colonial masters at the time of independence. According to Nyamnjoh (2003), most countries inherited a centrally controlled media and kept it like that. He argues that post-independence governments reasoned that central control of the media would be less wasteful of limited resources and guaranteed political stability that was needed for rapid development so as to catch up with the West (Nyamnjoh 2003:124). In agreement with this line of argument, Bourgault (1995) points out that leaders of the independence struggles were aware of the power of the media and were reluctant to set them free. Instead, post-independence governments used the state-owned media as their propaganda machines and turned the journalists employed therein into state functionaries. The journalists in turn took for granted government propaganda and passed it on to the citizens instead of providing the information that the population needed to be able to make informed decisions.

It is important to note that while post-independence African governments owned and controlled one section of the media, especially broadcasting, they did not take as much direct control of the print media. In some countries, independent media grew alongside the state-owned media. For example, Heath (1997:30) observes that the oldest tradition in Kenya was that of a privately owned, competitive, commercial media. He gives an example of the *East African Standard*, which was founded as the *African Standard* in 1902. Another privately owned newspaper, the

¹ Some of these changes can be attributed to conditions set by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other donor agencies for African countries to democratise and liberalise in order to continue receiving financial aid. By August 1992, the Carter Center at Emory University in Atlanta, which was keeping an eye on the African electoral reform, reported that 30 African regimes were in political transition (Bourgault 1995:209).

Nation was launched in 1960, a few years before the country got her independence. The *Nation* has since diversified into radio and television and today, Nation Media Group is the leading media company in the East African region.

Economic independence is vital for the media to flourish. In Benin for example, (Palmer 1995), after the multi-party elections in 1991 that saw the end of a Marxist regime, a system which had been in place since 1972, about 50 newspapers rushed into print. This new-found political freedom gave birth to a private media which raised public criticism, ideas and opinions. However, Palmer (1995) observes that most of these newspapers were affiliated, either directly or indirectly, to political figures, parties or causes on which they depended for financing and were prone to being compromised. This is because there was little advertising through which the newspapers could generate their own revenue and become independent.

2.4 Ownership Effect on Editorial Content

Although some media scholars tend to disregard the level at which owners influence news content and argue that it is professionalism as a result of training of journalists that has led to the production of homogenised news content, (McNair 1998) recent studies reveal otherwise. A study done by Wanta and Johnson (1994) at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* newspaper in the United States is one of the studies that debunk this school of thought. Wanta and Johnson (1994) examined the newspaper's content under four ownership regimes; when it was facing declining competition, as a monopoly, when it was facing re-emerging competition and when it was back as a monopoly. Using content analysis (a randomly constructed week) to carry out the study, the researchers found out that many of the content variables showed some change. They for example established that increased competition could have led to the newspaper's emphasis of covering business news in response to what the competitor was doing. The newspaper also emphasised the coverage of hard news stories during this period. This pattern, the researchers argue, changed when the competitor folded and emphasis was shifted to more of human-interest news stories and features.

The study also found out that market forces influenced *The Post-Dispatch*'s appearance. The newspaper used smaller size headlines and photographs during the time of no competition and bigger size headlines and photographs when it was facing competition. Wanta and Johnson observe that the use of bigger headlines and photographs during competition was meant to attract the readers' attention to the newspaper. The researchers reveal that the newspaper maintained the changes introduced because of competition that had proved to be successful. However, the study also notes that historical events influence news content. For example, they note that the disaster involving a space shuttle that took place in February 1986 led to increased coverage of science news, which had significantly dropped previously.

However, though the study points out that trends in national newspapers at the time like change in design affected their findings, they observe that market influences seem to be one of the factors that affect news coverage patterns. They conclude that the differences in editorial content, which they established at the newspaper under different ownership regimes, suggest that professional ethics and news values are not static but change with the times.

In a quantitative study exploring the connection between press advertising and political differentiation of newspapers, Gabszewicz et al (2002:319-320) established that the ideological (political) messages that the media "sell" to the audience interfere with advertising messages promoting products that are simultaneously targeted at the same audience. As a result, editors are compelled to accept this interference so as to guarantee a level of total receipts that is high enough to cover their costs. The researchers found out that:

Advertising induces editorial firms to compete for maximal audience: advertising receipts are all the more significant when the size of the readership is large. ...the price to be paid by the editors in order to sell a larger audience to the advertisers may force them to sell tasteless political messages to their readers. This, in turn, constitutes the ferment of the *Prensee Unique*, through which citizens' political opinions are uniformly levelled. It should be pointed out that in our approach, advertisers do not influence directly the editorial content, as would be the case when an editor is constrained to conform his editorial views with those edicted by some major advertiser "promoting" the newspaper. Their influence here is indirect; it operates through the competition among editors, who wish to increase the

audience each of them is willing to sell to advertisers (Gabszewicz et al 2002:329-230).

Gabszewicz et al (2002) note that presenting soft political content to the audience is not the only method media companies use to increase their market share and thus attract advertisers. They point out that other strategies such as diversification of editorial content can be used to attract readers who are more interested in the informational content of a newspaper than its specific political ideas. This, they claim, encourages some level of political neutrality in the newspaper since the space that is now allocated to alternative news content would have otherwise carried political stories.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how market-driven journalism affects the role of the media in a democratic process. The chapter has also highlighted theoretic arguments on the political economy and market-driven journalism, and the role of the media in a democratic process. These theoretical arguments inform the analysis of the study findings in chapter five in which the effect of market-driven journalism on *The Monitor*'s editorial content is investigated. This chapter is the basis on which the five broad themes developed in chapter five to analyse the study findings are built. First is the general beat journalism theme, whose coverage according to the findings in chapter five, generally reduces. Second is the market-driven journalism theme and the study establishes that space allocated to this kind of journalism increase as the years go by. The third theme is entertainment journalism, which like market-driven journalism gets more space as the newspaper increases the hunt for profits. The fourth and fifth themes are public service and advocacy journalism respectively. The study establishes that space allocated to these two themes has also been declining throughout the three years under study.

The study finds out that although profit-oriented media need to maintain audience interest to become profitable which can sometimes affect the media's role in promoting democracy, it is important for the media to be profitable in order to remain in business. And indeed, a media company out of business can not be a defender of the people's right to know. It is also worth noting that the media need to sustain public legitimacy in order to avoid retribution and can be influenced by the professional considerations of the staff. These factors, according to Curran

(2000:125), work to mitigate against total subordination of the private media to the political commitments and economic interests of shareholders. This explains why the newspaper, although it has reduced the space available for general beat and public journalism, it still allocates some space to them. In the next chapter, the rise of *The Monitor* newspaper in the wider political and socio-economic environment is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MONITOR AND THE RISE OF INDEPENDENT PRESS IN UGANDA

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the historical, political and social context of the study. It gives a brief history of the rise of the independent media in Uganda and shows how the political atmosphere has always had an impact on the development of the independent media. Emphasis is put on the rise of *The Monitor*, which is the focus of this study. The next section talks about the rise of the independent media in Uganda.

3.1 The Rise of the Independent Media in Uganda

The history of the political economy of the media in Uganda is closely linked to the political history of the country. According to Tamale (1991) *Mengo Notes*, an English newspaper that was probably the first newspaper in Uganda, was launched by the Christian Missionaries in 1890. But since there were very few Ugandans who could read English at the time, the newspaper offered news exclusively for the consumption of the Europeans. As more missionary schools produced literate Ugandans, local vernacular newspapers were introduced which included *Ebifa mu Buganda*, launched in 1907 and *Munno* that was started in 1911 by the Catholic Church.

According to Lupa-Lasaga (1993) another English newspaper, *Uganda Herald* was founded in 1912. It was not until the 1950s that the media became significant. This was a time when the struggle for political independence in Uganda was at its peak and the earliest newspapers took on the format of religious politics. These papers later evolved into a partisan press as Tamale (1991:4) notes:

Various political organisations resorted to the print media in their campaigns for self-determination and democracy. In 1953, the Uganda National Congress (UNC) introduced *Uganda Eyogera*... In November 1957, the first Democratic Party (DP) newspaper *Muwereza* was launched. Around the same time, another Catholic monthly, *Musizi* also appeared on the streets.

However, Tamale (1991) points out, most of these newspapers folded before their fifth birthday because of harassment by the colonial government for their protest reporting. The editors, like many newspaper editors and publishers in Africa at the time, were as often in jail as out of it either for seditious, publication of false news or political activity (Ainslie 1967 cited in Matovu 1990). This kind of harassment, coupled with low levels of literacy hence low circulation figures crippled the newspapers financially, leading to their untimely death. The anti-media laws introduced by the colonial government were inherited by the post-colonial regimes and have been used to muzzle the media throughout the times.

3.2 The Media and the Political Upheavals

The political instability that gripped Uganda in the 1970s and early 80s affected the development of the media like it did to many other sectors of the country. During President Idi Amin's dictatorial regime between 1971-79, the media endured the highest level of repression. Lupa-Lasaga (1993) notes that during this period for example, three newspapers; *Munno*, *Taifa Empya* and *The People* closed down, the first two by a decree and the third because of internal problems. According to Robins (1997), Amin also jailed, tortured and killed both local and foreign journalists.

When Amin was ousted from power in 1979, there was renewed hope for the media in Uganda. Mbaine (2003) notes that newspapers such as *The Economy*, *Weekly Topic*, *The Star* and *Ngabo* were launched during this period. But the honeymoon under the transition government was short-lived and in 1980 it banned *Ngabo* newspaper, which was being published in a local language. President Milton Obote's regime, which started in December 1980, was not media- friendly either. Gariyo (1993) cited in Mbaine (2003) points out that after only four months in power, Obote's government banned four newspapers namely: *The Citizen*, *The Economy*, *Aga Africa* and *Mulengera*. In May 1981, *Weekly Topic* was also banned and in September of the same year, *Saba Saba* and *The Champion* followed suit. Obote's second regime fell in March 1985 and the country went back under a military government led by General Tito Okello who ruled for less than a year.

3.3 The Independent Press 1986-2003

When President Yoweri Museveni took over power in 1986 after leading a five-year guerrilla war, he introduced a no party system known as the Movement. As soon as he got to office, he banned political party activities under Legal Notice No. 1 of 1986, a ban that was formalised by the 1995 Constitution. According to Wapakhabulo (2000), the current no-party democracy is premised on the concept of popular as opposed to representative democracy. Proponents of the Movement system (Museveni 1992; Museveni 1997; Wapakhabulo 2000) argue that this system was preferred to a multiparty democracy because of Uganda's unstable political past. They blame political parties to have divided the population along tribal and religious lines, which contributed to the country's political instability. Museveni emphasised this stand in his inaugural speech in 1986:

Past regimes have used sectarianism to divide people along religious and tribal lines. But why should religion become a political matter? Religious matters are between you and your god: politics is about provision of roads, water, drugs in hospitals, and schools for children. Don't you see that people who divide you are only using you for their own selfish interests? Our Movement is strong because it has solved the problem of tribal and religious division. No one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guards: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country (Museveni 1992:21).

This fundamental change has been reflected in the relative freedom the media have enjoyed under the Movement government as compared to past regimes. Media observers like Robins (1997) acknowledge that though the media in Uganda are not as free as their counterparts in the developed world yet, there is a slight glimmer of light. In her own words:

In early 1994, the once-barren media landscape was dotted with some 20 weekly newspapers in various languages, five dailies and one bi-weekly whose circulation after its first year of publication rivalled that of the leading daily. The diversity of ownership and the range of topics covered – including rebel activity and human rights abuses by the army – seemed to speak well of official tolerance and openness both to an independent press and to the winds of democracy said to be blowing across the continent (Robins 1997:125).

As a result of this new-found media freedom, many publications hit the news-stand. Kemigisha (1998) and Bahemuka (2000) note that between 1986 and 1991, about 50 publications were launched on the Ugandan media market. And after the airwaves were liberalised in 1993, a host of privately owned FM radio stations were launched and together with the newspapers, they

constitute the independent media in Uganda. According to information from the Broadcasting Council, there are over 100 licensed radio stations in Uganda today (Juuko 2004).

It is important to note that while government does not own the majority of the newspapers in Uganda, its papers dominate the market. Through the New Vision Printing and Publishing Corporation, government publishes the highest circulating national daily newspaper, the *New Vision*. The corporation also publishes five regional newspapers in local languages, four of which are weeklies and one a daily (<http://www.newvision.co.ug>). But although the corporation is publicly owned, it runs the newspapers on a commercial basis.

However, according to Bahemuka (2000), about half of the newspapers launched between 1986 and 1991 had closed down by 2000. This high mortality rate of newspapers can be attributed to low level literacy rates of 62 percent and low level of education, which result into low reader sales (Uganda Human Development Report 1998). For example, the total sales of the two leading English daily newspapers are less than 100,000 copies a day in a population of 25 million people. More so, Bahemuka (2000) and Robins (1997) point out that the print media in Uganda have remained elitist and urban based. Most publications are published and circulated in the urban centres in a country where the majority of the population live in rural areas and written in English when most people do not know the language. Robins also notes that the cost of newspapers is so high in that a monthly supply of papers could perhaps be equivalent to an average monthly wage. All these factors combine to affect the growth of the independent media in Uganda.

3.4 The Rise of *The Monitor*

The Monitor was founded in 1992 by seven journalists after they walked out of the *Weekly Topic* because they thought that the editorial independence of the newspaper had been compromised. *Weekly Topic* first appeared on the streets in 1979 during the post-Idi Amin transition preceding the 1980 presidential elections. For a country emerging from eight years of dictatorial rule, the newspaper's liberal coverage of political issues raised high hopes for a democratic Uganda (Balikowa 1995). In May 1981, President Milton Obote's government banned *Weekly Topic*.

Balikowa (1995) notes that in 1985 when Obote was ousted from power, *Weekly Topic* sprang back to life. However, the newspaper's three owners became cabinet ministers, which later compromised the newspaper's critical stand on government. The owners accused the journalists of being too critical of government while the journalists accused the owners of trying to turn the paper into a semi-government mouthpiece. In 1994, the paper that had become a daily closed down. Reacting to the closure, its former editor Wafula Oguttu, who became editor-in-chief of *The Monitor*, said: "It is sad [*Weekly Topic*] should close at such a time when Ugandans are struggling to build a democratic society where newspapers are vital," (Balikowa 1995:604). Oguttu had been fired from *Weekly Topic* because the owners of the newspaper thought that he had become too critical of government.

Six other senior journalists joined him and with their savings and a promise to print the newspaper on credit at the state-owned *New Vision* press, they launched *The Monitor* (*The Monitor*, July 23-27, 1993).

In its maiden issue, *The Monitor* promised to promote democracy by providing a forum for debate and to be a public watchdog through investigative reporting. Oguttu (1992:1) notes:

We shall steer *The Monitor* free from any business and political manipulations aimed at serving narrow or selfish interests... While *The Monitor* may hold its position on any issue, it will allow all schools of thought and views to contend in debates as part of a national growth towards tolerance, respect for other people's opinions and greater democracy... We shall jealously guard our independence and fight off any manipulations to control us. At the same time, we shall acknowledge all efforts and actions by an individual or groups including legitimate governments that are geared towards greater democratisation of society, a higher sense of nationalism and a stimulation of economic growth for the benefit of all Ugandans in particular and humankind in general.

The Monitor was the first newspaper in Uganda to be fully owned by journalists and in its first birthday editorial, it is described as "a remarkable journalistic and business success." (*The Monitor*, July 23-27, 1993). The editorial also talks about the different groups that thought the newspaper was biased against them because of being critical of them. These groups include government officials and monarchists but the newspaper is not moved. It affirms its stand:

Journalism is not a popularity contest. It is part of our job to annoy people who don't want to be criticised, to humble the arrogant, to expose the plunderers of public wealth, and to uncover political charlatans. Someone has to do this job. Since it's our business,

we shall do it (*The Monitor* July 23-27, 1993:9).

However, (Bahemuka 2000; Balikowa 1995; Robins 1997) observe that *The Monitor*'s critical reporting on government did not augur well with the political powers of the day. In 1993, government stopped all its departments from carrying advertisements in *The Monitor* and the newspaper survived on revenue from circulation until 1997 when the ban was lifted. While *The Monitor*'s Managing Editor, Wafula Oguttu, acknowledged that the ban somehow retarded the growth of the newspaper, he said they never appealed to government to lift it. Instead, they relied on reader sales that increased during this period probably because the public was being sympathetic. When the ban was finally lifted, it was not because *The Monitor* had traded anything with government but maybe because government had realised that the ban could not lead to the newspaper's closure.²

In March 2000, *The Monitor* that also runs a two-year radio station, sold its majority shares to the Kenya-based Nation Media Group. Nation Media Group, according to Awori (2002), publishes 12 newspaper titles, has three radio stations and a television station in the East African region. According to two of the founders of *The Monitor*, David Ouma Balikowa and Wafula Oguttu, the sale of their majority shares to Nation Media Group was aimed at giving the newspaper capital muscle to make it more competitive in a liberalised media industry. The two insist that the sale has not affected their editorial policy in any way because the two media companies share the same values of truth, independence, balance and giving a platform to the disadvantaged groups. However, it is important to note that *The Monitor*'s vision has changed after the merger and now talks of being the leading independent, multi-media company in central Africa. While the newspaper's core values are still independence, bold and professional excellency, a new clause that talks about being passionate about customers, has been introduced.

In a country like Uganda where there is no legally recognised political opposition, *The Monitor*, which is the only independent daily newspaper, has even a greater role to play as a watchdog on government. As Kyazze (2003) puts it, the media in Uganda have come to represent the opposition. He observes that for example, the opinion pages of the media, including *The Monitor*

² Personal Interview with Mr. Wafula Oguttu on 29/3/2004).

usually carry views that are critical of President Yoweri Museveni and his ruling Movement government for overstaying in power. The media can be able to criticise government because of the relative media freedom in Uganda, which is loosely guarded by the Constitution. Article 29 (1) (a) of the 1995 Constitution states that “every person shall have a right to freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media” while section (b) of the same article talks about freedom of thought (1995:28). In addition, Article 41 (1) gives every citizen a right “of access to information in possession of the State except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State or interfere with the right to privacy of any other person” (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995:32). Such clauses in Uganda’s Constitution seem to give hope for a free media in the country.

But journalists (Onyango-Obbo 1998; 2000) and scholars (Robins 1997; Kyazze 2003) alike agree that these Constitution provisions are not all the media in Uganda need to promote democracy. They cite other anti-media laws like sedition, which are still alive in Uganda and are invoked by the state from time to time to muzzle the media. Onyango-Obbo (2000) and Kyazze (2003) add that government usually applies these anti-media laws differently to the private and state-owned media. For example, Onyango-obbo, a founding member and shareholder of *The Monitor* says he was in court 45 times between 1997 – 1999 to answer charges related to his work. He observes that when journalists are subjected to such harassment, they resort to self-censorship. Onyango-Obbo puts it thus:

As you edit, you read and re-read every story that is likely to aggravate your case. You check out anything that might annoy your magistrate. You are against the temptation to temper every line that might anger the government and get them to transfer the magistrate on the case and bring a hard-line biased one who will be sure to nail you. We have been through five magistrates, one judge and before an-awe-inspiring judges in the Constitutional Court. It is a subtle and intricate form of censorship, which is invisible except to the initiated (Onyango-Obbo 1998:11).

It is worth noting that *The Monitor* has never lost a single case to government and in 1997, the then managing editor, Onyango-Obbo and senior reporter Andrew Mwenda filed a petition in the Constitutional Court seeking that Section 50 of the Penal Code Act be declared null and void. They argued that the section which states that “any person who publishes a false statement, rumour or report which is likely to cause fear or alarm to the public is guilty of a criminal

offence” is inconsistent with the Constitution that guarantees the right of expression including the freedom of the press. In their ruling, a team of seven Supreme Court judges unanimously agreed that the said section should be declared null and void. The February 11, 2004 landmark ruling meant that journalists could no longer be charged with publication of false news (Mucoori and Abdallah: 2004). This ruling has been followed by courts throwing out a couple of other cases government had filed against journalists. It is hoped this will bring to an end the intimidation and harassment independent journalists have endured at the hands of state functionaries under the Movement government. As Kyazze (2003) notes, the government-owned newspaper *New Vision* has never received such treatment even though it often publishes stories that are as critical of government as *The Monitor* does.

However, as Berger (2000:92) warns, an independent press may be outside government control but not necessarily independent of other powerful interests -- and particularly opposition politicians. He notes that the independent press can thus become an opposition press, as many Third World governments are likely to brand it.

3.5 Conclusion

It is important to note that though the growth of the media in Uganda endured harsh conditions during the political upheavals resulting into some publications being banned by various governments, there were other factors that hampered the growth of the media. For example as noted in this chapter, *The People* newspaper closed down during the 1970s not because of political harassment but because of internal problems. This shows that the right to publish is not all that the media need to stay on the market. Other factors like media economics are important for the media to succeed as discussed in chapters two and five of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to carry out the study. It discusses the research design, the physical location of the study, research procedures and techniques. The chapter also discusses the reliability of the methods and data, problems encountered during the study and how I attempted to overcome them. The next section discusses the research design.

4.1 Research Design

To carry out this study, I used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This helped me to draw from the two distinctive methods of studying the social world. Hansen et al (1988) note that this is advantageous because it allows researchers to use several methods that supplement each other. Jankowski and Wester (1995) argue that this approach provides more valid results than a single research strategy.

From the quantitative research methodology tradition, I used content analysis. According to Hansen et al (1988) and Alexis (1985), content analysis is well suited for analysing and mapping key characteristics of large bodies of text, and it lends itself well to the systematic charting of long-term changes and trends in media coverage. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) add that content analysis helps researchers to study patterns or trends in media portrayals and test hypothesis about policies or aims of media producers. It is also useful in studies that compare media content with the real world, assess the representation of particular groups in society or draw inferences about media effects.

Another method I used was interviews. Basing on Gunter (2000), this method was deemed appropriate to the study because interviews work well with content analysis by providing both verbal and non-verbal communication process results. By conducting interviews, I attempted to find out what my respondents thought of the newspaper's editorial content over the years. The interviews provided descriptive and explanatory data for the study.

4.2 Sample Selection

Deacon et al (1999) argue that systematic sampling provides a less laborious method for random selection of sample units. They explain that the researcher starts off by numbering the elements in the sampling frame and then decides on how many elements are needed for the sample. The next stage, they point out, is to divide the required sample number into a sampling frame total to get a sampling interval. Here, the researcher selects every n th number on the sampling frame, using the sampling interval, to select the sample. They give an example below to illustrate:

In a survey of young children's attitudes to children's television programmes, a research team obtains the class registers from 25 junior schools. In total, these list the names of 2500 children from which the researchers want to draw a sample of 500.

Step 1: Divide 500 into 2500. This produces a sampling interval of 5.

Step 2: Select a random number between 1 and 5 (3)

Step 3: Take the 3rd entry on sampling frame as the first unit of the sample, then select the 8th, 13th, 18th, 23rd, 28th, 33rd and so on, until 500 individuals have been selected (Deacon et al 1999:46).

Building on this method, I selected 30 issues of *The Monitor* picked from three years of the newspaper's 11 years of operation for content analysis. I considered 1992, which is the year when the newspaper started and 1998, which is two years after it became a daily in 1996. Two years as a daily was considered long enough for the newspaper to have stabilised on the market and therefore appropriate for the study. The third year, 2003, was chosen because it was two years after *The Monitor* sold its majority shares to Nation Media Group in March 2000 thus considered far enough for the new owners to have taken full control of the newspaper. From *The Monitor*'s first year of operation when it was a weekly, I considered the first five months (August – December, 1992). Although I intended to select a copy every other week which would have added up to 10 copies, one copy was missing so I ended up with nine. The inaugural issue of July 31, 1992 was also purposely sampled because it was the starting point for the study. In 1998 and 2003 when the paper had already become a daily, I used Rosengren's (1981) method of sampling repetitive data sources. I picked a month from each quarter of the two years, which narrowed down my sampling frame from 24 to six months. I selected every third month in 1998 and every first month in 2003. I then used a sampling interval of nine, which gave me 10 copies from each of the two years, adding up to 30 copies in all. This content was representative enough of *The Monitor*'s 11 years of operation and manageable for the study.

I considered a whole newspaper because the changes in editorial content can be subtle and not easily identified in one section of the newspaper. Following Beharrell et al (1976) system of coding, I categorised stories by theme and source. The story categories studied included:

Table 1: News Coverage by *The Monitor*
(Expressed in Total Number and Percentages)

	Frequency	Percent
General Beat Journalism		
Politics	262	12.9
Government	50	2.5
Defence/Military	165	8.1
Crime	109	5.4
Disasters	49	2.4
Entertainment Journalism		
Entertainment	169	8.3
Sports	417	20.6
Market-driven Journalism		
Business, Finance, Economics & Dev't	246	12.1
Supplements and advertorials	22	1.1
Public Service Journalism		
Health	105	5.2
Agriculture	35	1.7
Education	66	3.3
Environment	19	0.9
Advocacy Journalism		
Corruption & accountability	95	4.7
Human Rights	30	1.5
Others	188	9.3
Total	2027	100.0

For the above categories, I measured and coded space in centimetres occupied by stories and photographs falling under the various themes. Articles that had accompanying photographs were measured as one unit which gave them an advantage over those published without pictures. This was done because when a story is illustrated with a photograph, it usually becomes more visible on the page thus taken as more important than the one without. For example, a story: “Otafiire: I am ready to resign,” quotes a minister who is accused of being involved in illegal timber deals

saying he would resign if his accuser proves the allegations³ (*The Monitor*, September 19, 2003). This story, which is prominently placed on page one, is accompanied by a photograph showing a visibly furious Otafiire talking to journalists outside Parliament with a couple of members of parliament looking on. The photograph here reinforced the text to make the story bigger and the two were published as the day's lead.

However, I was aware of cases where pictures are used in newspapers not because they supplement the text to tell the story better but because the sub editor just has to fill up some space. But a careful examination of the photographs used in the newspapers studied revealed that such cases were very minimal and thus of no significance to the study. More so, letters to the editor were not considered because these usually originate from the public to comment on particular issues and thus have little to do with the editorial policy. Columns of the news in brief were also not coded because they were thought to be of less significance on the page. Both local and foreign stories were placed under the various categories presented above without distinction between them because it was deemed unnecessary to separate them.

4.2.1 News Categories

4.2.1.1 General Beat Journalism

Politics

As shown in Table 1, a total of 262 stories falling under politics category were studied. This category included reports, debates, criticisms and opinions about governance. It also included stories covering elections, campaigns and parliamentary debates on governance. Like for the rest of the categories, a particular category was decided on after reading the headline, the introduction and a few more paragraphs since most of the straight news reports followed the conventional inverted pyramid writing style. A case in point is a story "Movt MPs plot Mbabazi victory" (*The Monitor*, January 9, 2003). The introduction of the story talks of how more than 30 members of

³ Otafiire made a ministerial statement before Parliament yesterday and denied reports that he sacked Capt. James Okello for impounding five lorries of timber 'connected' to him. "I'm ready to resign if at all Okello produces the five trucks of timber he impounded which he purports belong to me. I challenge him and if he fails then he will be arrested," Otafiire said before Parliament yesterday (*The Monitor*, September 19, 2003).

parliament were plotting on how to help their colleague (Mbabazi) regain a lost parliamentary seat. Here, it was easy to place such a story under political category without reading it beyond the first paragraph. And for articles like news analysis, features and opinions that sometimes violate the inverted pyramid writing style, I read more than three paragraphs of the story to be able to determine the category under which they fell.

Government

Government was not an easy category to identify because to some extent, it intersected with politics and this explains why only 50 stories fell under this category. But eventually, I settled for issues of governance that may not necessarily be seen to be directly influenced by politics. Under this category is also where stories covering international relations and diplomacy were placed. A case in point is a story with a headline “E.A to form group Parliament,” (*The Monitor*, March 18, 1998) or “Rwanda protests Kabila visit” (*The Monitor*, November 1998).

Defence/military and crime

For this study, articles falling under the defence and military category included those talking about issues of national security, fighting rebels, military intelligence and the ministry of defence budget. They also included issues of army recruitment, training and deployments. However, this category excluded stories on robberies, rape or defilement and these were coded under crime. And as illustrated in Table 1 above, 165 stories were studied under defence and military category, and 109 under crime. For example, a story “War breaks out in Bunia, 100 killed,” (*The Monitor*, May 14, 2003) was placed under defence and military while another, “Stolen car found near army camp,” (*The Monitor*, May 5, 2003) was coded under crime. Though these two stories in a way involve the army, stealing a car was thought to be a criminal matter and not a military one while a war breaking out in Bunia was considered a defence and military issue.

Disasters

Disasters here included incidents disrupting lives of people either as a result of human error or acts of God. These stories ranged from plane crashes, fatal motor vehicle and boat accidents to mass displacement of people by floods and mass starvation. Stories about massacre of people by rebels were excluded from this category and coded under defence and military which means that the determining factor here was the cause of the death of the people. A story, with a headline “Floods displace 3,600 in Nigeria,” is a typical example of what was included under the disasters category. The story starts:

Heavy floods have forced thousands of people to flee their homes in the northern Nigerian State of Kaduna, relief workers said on Monday. The Kaduna River burst its banks on Saturday after heavy rains, leaving more than 3,600 people homeless, in what local officials described as the worst flooding in more than two decades (*The Monitor*, September 10, 2003:10).

4.2.1.2 Market-driven Journalism

Business, Finance, Economics and Development

This was probably the category that included a wide range of stories and as the results in Table 1 indicate, 246 stories fell under it. The stories here ranged from news about the economy like inflation, taxation and the national budget to news about a company launching a new product or involved in a promotion. It also covered business pictorials, news about commissioning an upgraded road or even commissioning a dam in a particular area. A new road in Uganda, especially in the rural areas, is not just an avenue for people to travel quickly but also for them to be able to transport their agricultural produce to urban centres where the market is. This in turn gives them an income to lead a better standard of living thus development. An example of a story that was placed under this category is “URA snubs Sendaula over tax break for Mastermind.” The story continues:

The Commissioner General of Uganda Revenue Authority, Annebrit Aslund, has rejected a request by Finance minister Gerald Sendaula to cancel a tax on tobacco. Sendaula wrote to the URA boss asking the tax authority not to apply the new Minimum Specific Tax (MST) on cigarettes. The tax is a major issue of contention between the tobacco companies, especially British American Tobacco Uganda and Mastermind Tobacco Uganda (*The Monitor*, January 9, 2003:5).

Supplements and advertorials

The study classified these as articles that specifically targeted advertisers. Whether the stories had originated from the organisation being written about or put together by the newspaper reporters, they were all accompanied by advertisements. Most of these stories empathised how best the companies being written about are and this section covered a wide range of industries from education to banks and motor vehicles. The layout of this section was also distinct from the rest of the newspaper with a different font and a page title indicating that there was a supplement underneath. One typical example is an ISO 9001:2000 certification supplement (*The Monitor*, January 9, 2003). The eight-page pullout gave chance to a number of companies to state where they are located, what they do and the fact that they were ISO compliant. And one story with a headline “National Medical Stores committed to quality and efficiency” is used as illustration below:

National Medical Stores is located on plot 4-12, Nsamizi Road in Entebbe. And their Kampala branch is located on Conrad Plaza, Entebbe Road. National Medical Stores is a semi-autonomous government corporation, which was established by an Act of Parliament in 1993. NMS was set up to carry out efficient procurement, storage, distribution and supply of drugs and other medical supplies to both public and private institutions (*The Monitor*, January 9, 2003:15).

The above story, whose author is not named, would most likely not have been published in any other section of the newspaper because it does not conform to the conventional news standards. But it was able to make it as a cover story of this pullout because National Medical Stores had also placed a two-page colour advertisement to accompany the text.

4.2.1.3 Entertainment Journalism

Entertainment

Entertainment articles were taken to be the light reading material in the newspaper and as indicated in Table 1, this category had 169 stories being coded. To identify each one of these stories, the study looked at how the story was written, the personalities involved and to some extent the intention of the writer. The intention of the writer here was considered important since entertainment reporting is a genre of journalism where the reporter sets out to write in a less

serious, chatty, unconventional and amusing style. Taking a story headlined “Ugandans join search for online love” as an example, the reporter’s intention can be read in the story. The story starts thus:

Sizzling dish can you handle. Gender: Male. Age: 28. Location: Uganda. Can U drive 5 kilometres stark naked (okay, okay, at night in a tinted car!) I have. That’s adventure! About my ideal flirt- funny? Daring? Chatty? Outgoing? Sexy? Okay, Okay, I will stop describing you and ask you to drop me a line! (*The Monitor* May 14, 2003: 21).

This story was accompanied by a picture of a sexy-looking smiling American artiste, Joe and an un identified 26-year-old- Ugandan woman seated on a cane chair donning sun glasses. By looking at the two pictures and reading content of this story, I was able to determine that they were placed on the page more to entertain than to inform readers. I therefore coded such stories under entertainment.

Sports

This category of stories can also be largely described as light reading. Sports activities in the recent past have moved more to entertainment than recreational whereby fans are as involved as the players themselves since they derive pleasure from watching others play. This study identified a total of 417 sports stories which was the highest number of stories studied in one category. However, sports was probably the category where stories were easy to identify because the newspaper under study has a sports section that exclusively covers sports events ranging from football to swimming or volleyball. The section also covers news about sportspeople, fans and to a less extent issues in sports administration and all these areas were included in the sports category.

4.2.1.4 Public Service Journalism

Health

Stories coded under the health category included those about medicine, patients, sanitation and donations to the health sector. Like sports, this was also a category that was easy to determine

because health issues were so distinct from other issues. For this category, 105 stories were studied and include “AIDS to kill one million in Zim by 2010” (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003).⁴ This story talks about the AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe giving figures of estimated deaths as a result of the disease by the year 2010.

Agriculture

This category included stories about farming both commercial and for home consumption, debates about food security, research in agriculture among others. For example, a story quoting the minister of agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries calling for research in agriculture was placed under this category. This story was headlined “Kisamba decries poor research on agriculture,” and reads in part:

We need systematic and long-term research to understand the trends in natural resources and productivity. It is no wonder that most of the data collected by mainly researchers in Uganda have limited information on natural resource trends, their impact on agricultural productivity and their linkage with poverty. We need the involvement of specialised researchers...(*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003:5).

However, it is important to note that as shown in Table 1, stories under this category were only 35 accounting for 1.7 percent of all the stories that were studied. And as discussed in chapter five, agriculture is among the sectors that *The Monitor* covers least despite Uganda being an agricultural country.

Education

This category included all stories covering the education sector right from nursery school to higher institutions of learning. It covered stories ranging from government policy on education, student and teacher activities in schools to opening of a new school. One such story is “Govt names legal universities,” which talks about government’s efforts to streamline private institutions of higher learning. The story goes:

⁴ A top UN official said Saturday that one million Zimbabweans are likely to die from AIDS between now and 2010 as the virus continues to take its toll on the famine-hit southern Africa country. Stephen Lewis, a UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in southern Africa told a press conference that according to discussions he held with government officials, 2,500 Zimbabweans were dying every week from HIV-related diseases (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003:24).

The National Council for Higher Education has published a list of universities and other tertiary institutions and warned the public against enrolling in illegal institutions of learning. The Executive Director of National Council for Higher Education, Prof. A.B.K. Kasozi said in a 2 May release that 17 universities have so far been allowed to award degrees and issue other academic certificates (*The Monitor*, May 5, 2003:5).

On the same page is another story and picture with a headline “300 teachers commissioned.” As the headline suggests, the story talks about teachers who had completed their training and were now were being commissioned to join the labour market. And these two stories were categorised under education in this study.

Environment

All the stories covering issues to do with degradation or protection of natural resources qualified to be under this category. Stories about the need to plant trees or warnings about the effects of cutting them down, pollution and general conservation issues also fell under the environment category. There were as few as 19 stories studied under this category representing just 0.9 percent of the total stories covered in the study. A typical example of a story under this category is: “Dying for the Kabaka’s Lake” (*The Monitor*, November 6-13, 1992). This story talks about how a loyal subject to a local king (Kabaka) was trying to protect a small lake that belongs to his master from being degraded. Though this story also has cultural undertones, the intention of the newspaper to publish it was not to show how loyal the king’s subject was but to make a case for the need to protect the lake.

4.2.1.5 Advocacy Journalism

Corruption and accountability

This category covered stories that highlighted misuse of public offices and these included misuse of funds, bribery, embezzlement and influence peddling. It also had articles that were giving a critique on how public bodies should be run. For example, in an opinion article “Exorcise ghosts from civil service then raise pay” (*The Monitor*, September 1, 2003), the author talks about the existence of ‘ghosts’ (names of non-existent staff whose pay gets into the hands of the people in

charge) in public service. He then questions why employees in this sector deserve a pay raise before the system is cleaned up. And such are the stories that were placed under the corruption and accountability category.

Human rights

This was another area that was least covered by *The Monitor* totalling up to only 30 stories from the entire period under study. This category covered violation of people's rights by State functionaries like the police and military intelligence such as torture of suspects. It also included articles covering individuals violating other people's rights like in cases of child abuse, wife/husband battering or racial segregation and discrimination. One of the stories coded under this category is "Mayombo denies torture charges," (*The Monitor*, September 19, 2003) where the head of Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence is quoted denying allegations that his organisation had tortured a suspect. A businessman, alleging that he had been arrested by Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence personnel in the neighbouring DRC who also stole US \$ 240,000 from him, had taken government to court for violating his rights. In the story, Mayombo told the High Court that his personnel did not torture the businessman.

Others

This category took care of all the other stories that could not fall under the categories discussed above. It is here that stories about religion and cultural institutions were placed. For example, a photograph of an army officer who was set to make the hajji pilgrimage to Mecca was not placed under defence and military but under others (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003). An opinion with the headline: "Virginity, soap or *gaali ekozeeko* (used bicycle), which way to go?" (*The Monitor*, January 19, 2003), was also coded under others since it could not fall anywhere else.

Further, stories and photographs were also categorised by how they got sourced before they made it into the newspaper. This was done because some sources were thought to have more access to the newspaper than others. I identified the following categories of sources:

Table 2: Use of News Sources by *The Monitor*
(Expressed in total numbers and percentages)

	Frequency	Percent
General Beat/Public Service Journalism		
Government Sources	224	11.2
Diary job	22	1.1
Other Public Sources	511	25.6
Government Statement	8	0.4
Market-driven/ Entertainment Journalism		
PR Release/ Spokesperson	70	3.5
Private Sector Sources	609	30.6
Advocacy Journalism		
Investigation	77	3.9
News Analysis	287	14.6
Opinion & Commentaries	182	9.1
Total	1990	

4.2.2 Use of News Sources

4.2.2.1 General Beat/Public Service Journalism

Diary job

Contrary to investigation, diary job kind of articles are where the reporter is sent to cover an event that is known to fall on a certain date. Such events include days like Labour Day, Independence Day or any other anniversaries that are marked on the national or international calendar. In otherwards, the reporter does not go out of the way to uncover facts to write a story but goes to a public function, listens to what is being said and then puts a story together. While prominent people who usually speak at these scheduled events are quoted in the stories, in this study the researcher decided to go with how the stories were generated and coded them under diary job. An example of such stories is “No more wars, says Museveni,” where the president who is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces was quoted while addressing the army at 17th National Resistance Army anniversary celebrations. The story’s introduction reads:

“There are no problems, we will have no war and bloodshed again,” the president said yesterday in *Luganda* while presiding over the National Resistance Movement Day

celebrations at Kololo Airstrip in Kampala. Museveni again promised to end the rebellion in northern Uganda (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003:1).

The above story had more than three sources. First, Museveni as president is part of the executive and therefore a government source. He is also the commander in chief of the army, which makes him another public source. Above all, he was speaking at a scheduled function and thus simply presented as a diary assignment for the reporter. Such a story was therefore coded under diary job category because that is how it was generated.

Government sources and statements

Government sources in this study meant members of the executive arm of government from the president to ministers, permanent secretaries and resident district representatives. This category also included members of parliament. However, it excluded articles quoting members of the judiciary because they usually do not talk about government policies. A story below gives an example of what kind of voices were coded under government sources:

The Minister of State for Information, Mr. Nsaba Buturo on August 30 re-opened Kyoga Veritas FM. Government closed the radio in June accusing it of airing alarmist information about the rebel attacks in Teso... Buturo told the radio management, headed by Bishop Erasmus Desderius Wandera, to be stingy with the truth in order to cater for security interests of the State (*The Monitor*, September 1, 2003:4).

Government statements on the other hand referred to statements issued by government officials and sent to the newspaper. These are normally issued by people like the minister or his permanent secretary ahead of days such as International Labour Day and World Aids Day, and can even be carried verbatim by the government-owned media.

Other public sources

By other public sources, this study refers to other public figures who are neither government officials nor members of the private sector. Here, a story quoting a religious leader for example was coded under other public sources. This was because such a person has a constituency and yet could not be referred to as a private source and yet is not a government official either. The middle line here was creating a category known as other public sources to cater for such voices. This category also catered for officials of the judiciary, cultural leaders, and other bodies set up

by Acts of Parliament but operating independent of government as well as diplomats. A story “Judge to visit disputed land,” (*The Monitor*, September 10, 2003) is one of those that were placed under this category. According to this story, a judge rules that the High Court should visit a disputed piece of land in the countryside to establish the facts about the case.⁵

4.2.2.2 Market-driven/Entertainment Journalism

Press release/Spokesperson

This category included stories generated and written by media people in organisations and then sent to the newspaper. These people, also known as public relations executives, marketing executives, spokespersons or media agents have an idea about the media and will normally write the story titled in their organisation’s favour. This category also included stories where spokespersons of organisations were quoted as the main voice in the story. For example, in a press release Kenya Airways announces a promotional return air fare that was used to write a story: “KQ offers new fare to Europe” (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003). It was in the interest of the airline to announce the news to the public because it would attract a few more customers for them. Kenya Airways therefore sent a press release to the newspaper, which is quoted in the story.

Private sector sources

These, as opposed to government sources, included private institutions and individual actors in the economy. They included bodies that bring manufacturers, businesspeople, private investors in education or health and all the other voices that are neither government nor other public sources. A case in point here is a story with a headline “Demand pushes up share value,” which quotes both Uganda Securities Exchange executive director and market research and development manager. This story, (*The Monitor*, September 10, 2003), is a typical example of what sources were considered under the private sources category.

⁵ Justice Tabaro said that after visiting the place, he will order Kawalya and Kasaija to make a fresh land survey to establish the actual land boundaries. He said the findings of the new survey would help during trial (*The Monitor*, September 10, 2003:8).

4.2.2.3 Advocacy Journalism

Investigation

These are instances where the reporter generates the story usually from sources other than the dominant voice in the story. Such sources will not want to be identified and will be quoted as “a highly placed, reliable, credible, anonymous source or a source who asked not to be named.”

These sources do this because in most cases, an investigative story uncovers wrong doings of high profiled people in society who are in position to harm the people who reveal such information about them to the public through the media. The reporter therefore tries to protect the sources by quoting what they are saying without revealing their identity. The story, “CID finally on Kayiwa’s trail,” is an example of an investigative story (*The Monitor*, May 5, 2003). This story talks about Pastor Simeon Kayiwa, the chairman of Born Again Churches in Uganda who is being accused of witchcraft, fraud and human sacrifice by one of his former benefactors. While the story starts off by quoting the head of Criminal Investigation Department who does not say much other than saying that they are monitoring Kayiwa’s activities, it thereafter extensively quotes a police source who is not named. Part of the story reads:

Police sources told *The Monitor* that CID had taken two witnesses into custody after they pleaded that their lives were in danger on account of what they know about the pastor’s activities. They claim that there have been death threats and attempts to shoot them after they volunteered to speak to the Police. The CID interviewed the witnesses (names withheld) at the weekend (*The Monitor*, May 5, 2003:2).

News analyses and Opinions

Analysis stories in this study refer to articles that went beyond merely reporting about a news event and tried to explain the ‘so what’ to the readers. Unlike opinions which are usually a one person view about an issue, news analyses quote other expert opinions and sources to put the news event into perspective. In an article, “Mengo’s Kampala trip won’t frighten anyone,” (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003), the author explains why an impending match to the city by officials of Buganda Kingdom could not lead to the Constitutional Review Commission granting their kingdom a federal status. The article quotes several sources to explain why the Constitutional Review Commission was not in position to grant Buganda region a federal status. Unlike in an

opinion, the tone of the article is explanatory other than domineering and authoritative. And this is how I was able to decide on placing the article under news analyses and not opinions.

However, it is also worth noting that some stories, especially sports, had no clearly identifiable sources and it was therefore difficult to categorise them by source. This explains why the total number of sources studied was 1990 as shown in Table 2 which is less than 2027 stories that were studied as illustrated in Table 1. And though 30 issues of the newspaper were studied, most of the examples given in this section are from 2003 because it was not possible to carry bound copies of the earlier years from *The Monitor* headquarters in Uganda to Rhodes University in South Africa from where this chapter was written. The loose newspaper copies of 2003 were easier to come by and manageable to transport. More so, it was not possible to hire coders so I did most of the work while two other people did minimum work in measuring the space covered by editorial content. These had been trained and were supervised to ensure that measurements were consistent between the three coders. The coding exercise took about 10 weeks.

4.2.3 Interviews

After completing the coding exercise, I conducted interviews with the following respondents; two of the founding directors of *The Monitor*, a journalist who had an uninterrupted tenure at the newspaper for 11 years, the company's advertising manager and an independent media scholar. Though the Nairobi-based Nation Media Group editorial director was approached for an interview and had initially accepted to answer questions via email, he never responded to the questions despite a couple of reminders. It was assumed that he later declined to participate in the study. However, his failure to participate in this study does not render the findings less reliable. Two of the founding directors who were still running the newspaper at the time were extensively interviewed and provided a suitable substitute for him.

I chose to conduct the interviews after the coding exercise so that I could use them to probe further the trends that I had noted during the coding exercise. The interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed, and the notes used to supplement the explanatory part of the study findings as illustrated in chapter five.

4.3 Physical Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Kampala, Uganda. Since the main objective of the study was to investigate the effect of market-driven journalism on *The Monitor*'s editorial content, most of the work was carried out at the newspaper's headquarters. Here, I was able to find the copies of newspapers for content analysis and to meet most of the interviewees. The media scholar, who is a senior lecturer at Makerere University's department of mass communication, was interviewed from his office. The study comprised of newspaper content and notes from five interviews. The newspaper content chosen was representative of the newspaper's 11 years of operation while four of the five respondents interviewed were at the time taking part in the production of *The Monitor* on a regular basis. A media scholar was interviewed to get an independent opinion of the newspaper.

4.4 Reliability of Methods and Data

One of the limitations of content analysis, according to Wimmer and Dominick (1987), is that different researchers can use varying definitions and category systems to measure a single concept. Since I relied on my journalist knowledge to categorise the units of analysis, my personal idea of what these categories are could have affected the replicability of the study findings. Further, content analysis is time-consuming and expensive. The exercise of categorising and analysing content in 30 issues of *The Monitor* was laborious and tedious and since I did not have the financial resources to hire coders, I carried out most of the exercise alone. This required sometimes working late into the night and some important information could have been missed out when I would be very tired. However, the advantage for this is that coding was more consistent than if multiple coders had been used.

Lastly, since most of the respondents were working at *The Monitor* at the time, they could have given particular answers to my questions because of their positions at the newspaper. As much as I tried to explain to them that the information would be used for academic purposes only, theses are put in libraries and can be easily accessed. More so, as a former employee of *The Monitor*, I could have looked at some issues from the newspaper's standpoint especially when I had to interview people who were my former colleagues or bosses. However, to overcome these shortcomings, I used more than one method of data collection; content analysis and interviews.

These two methods re-enforced each other to give more valid results. Further, using my journalistic professional ethics of being a neutral observer in a news event, I was able to conduct the interviews objectively.

4.5 Data Analysis and Processing

Statistical Package for Social Scientists was used to analyse the quantitative data, which included measurement of space allocated to the study's units of analysis. Here, percentages were computed and used for interpretation. Space allocation for this study means the space an item occupied in the newspaper and its percentage was computed from the entire space of the newspaper. The total number of photographs used in each year was computed. Qualitative data was used to complement the quantitative interpretations. Here, interview notes were used to give a detailed explanation of the trends that emerged from the quantitative findings. Finally, the various categories of articles and photographs were analysed under five broad themes.

4.6 Problems/Challenges Encountered

The data collection part of the study was largely successful with minor setbacks. First of all, I was able to find most of the newspapers for content analysis at *The Monitor* headquarters and though a couple of copies were missing, I managed to find them at Makerere University and Uganda Management Institute except one. The people in these three libraries were very co-operative. The only major challenge was the manpower that I needed to carry out the coding but I enlisted two members of my family at no cost to assist in measurement exercise and the coding was consistent among the three of us.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methods, strategies and techniques used to carry out the study. Drawing on the theoretic framework discussed in chapter two and the context laid out in chapter three, these methods were found appropriate to carry out the study. They are the basis for the research findings discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussion from two forms of data; content analysis and interviews. The findings answer the research question, which was an exploration of the effect of market-driven journalism on *The Monitor* newspaper's editorial content. The results indicate that over the years, *The Monitor* has moved from playing a public service role of the media to being market-driven. This chapter is presented in three sections. The first section looks at coverage of articles by category in the entire newspaper. The second section deals with coverage of articles in regard to sources while the third section discusses the use of photographs.

The data is presented and concurrently discussed under five major themes namely: General beat journalism, Entertainment journalism, Market-driven journalism, Public service journalism and Advocacy journalism. Since the study employs quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, the data is presented in both statistical and narrative form. Overall, the study findings indicate that *The Monitor* has changed from putting public service and advocacy journalism at the forefront to being commercial oriented. The next section discusses distribution of articles by category.

5.1 News Categories

5.1.1 General Beat Journalism

Research findings from Table 3 (see end of chapter for tables 3, 4 & 5) show a decline in space allocated to political articles in *The Monitor* from 32.3% in 1992 to 14.9% in 1998, which then increased slightly to 15.4% in 2003. This was unexpected, primarily because the country has been discussing political transition from a “no party state” to “multi-party democracy” ahead of the general elections in 2006.⁶ Political reports and analyses would be vital at this point to give

⁶ In a referendum held on June 29, 2000, Ugandans adopted a Movement system of governance. But this stand was off set by the Political Parties and Organisations Act, 2002. Issues of contention have been whether or not to return

the citizens information so that they can make informed decisions at the time of elections. The 1% increase in 2003 is still not good enough to provide a forum for all citizens to participate in discussions towards a democratic Uganda. According to Garnham (1992) and Dahlgren (1995), it is important for citizens to get access to sources of information and equal opportunities to participate in political debates if their votes are to have any substantive meaning. This, Kariithi (2003) adds, helps in nation building because it promotes a common sense of citizenship and tolerance. For Kellner (1990), the democratic functions of the media include providing information that is necessary for the functioning of democracy. The fact that there was only a slight increase in political coverage in 2003 means that *The Monitor* is not giving adequate platform to the on-going debate.

However, some media observers thought that *The Monitor* portrays itself as an opposition mouthpiece despite its reduced reporting on politics. Mr. Adolf Mbaine, a lecturer at Makerere University's Department of Mass Communication, said *The Monitor* started off as a good newspaper but deteriorated thereafter:

The Monitor never became the big newspaper that it was supposed to be because many people suspected its fairness. They seem like they are fighting other people's wars especially for the opposition. For a newspaper that says it is independent, I think if government does something good, it should report it and if it does something bad, it should also report it too... There are times I have picked a copy [of *The Monitor*] and I would not differentiate it from a political party newspaper. That in itself kills the newspaper (Personal Interview with Mr. Adolf Mbaine on 19/4/2004).

Mbaine said that while he appreciates *The Monitor*'s criticism of government, he thought the newspaper opinions and commentaries on political issues need to be more balanced with everybody getting an opportunity to be heard.

The Monitor's coverage of government increased from 1.4% in 1992 to 2.5% in 1998 and declined slightly to 2.2% in 2003. This category included stories covering issues of international relations, diplomacy and governance that were not considered to be directly influenced by politics. However, there was a thin line between this category and politics, which explains why the trend is almost the same.

to multiparty democracy and the amendment of Article 105 (2) of the Constitution that limits the presidential terms

According to the study, space allocated to defence/military articles declined from 10.1% in 1992 through 9.2% in 1998 to 7.3% in 2003 as shown in Table 3. This is despite of a war raging in the northern part of the country that has been going for the last 17 years. Second, the army recently assigned spokespersons for most of the divisions in the war-torn areas and yet this has not resulted into increased coverage of articles about the army. This could be a strategy for the newspaper to give defence/military less coverage in order to reduce chances of friction with government. Although *The Monitor* has had run-ins with the government, the only time it was closed down was over an article on a military issue. In October 2002, the newspaper was closed down for a week after it published an article suggesting that an army helicopter had been shot down by rebels fighting government in the war-torn northern Uganda. This could therefore have resulted into the newspaper handling articles about the army cautiously.

But the decline in defence/military articles can also be explained in the general trend of market-driven journalism which results into the media covering less of topics that are not very popular with mass audiences. This confirms Garnham (1992) and Dahlgren (1995)'s observation that the drive to make journalism commercial oriented has created a market divided between the information rich and the information poor. This shift has been criticised by a number of people. In an opinion piece: "Why journalists are not telling the truth," the author is highly critical of this kind of journalism:

These days one can find in the papers stories like "Five killed in ambush" or Twenty abducted in displaced camp attack" summarised in a brief while Miss Uganda or heroes like Bebe Cool [musician] or Gaetano [Ugandan 2003 representative to the Big Brother House in South Africa] are flashed on front-page headlines for days. The main reason for these distortions could be the realisation in recent decades that information can be sold like any other commodity for economic benefits. In the past, an editor was a more seasoned and experienced senior journalist whose interest was finding out the truth and serving to some noble cause of highlighting some hidden situation. Today, editors are more of businessmen concerned with selling stories on a commercial basis. The tragedy of northern Uganda thus appears a boring war-it doesn't sell (Rodriguez 2004:9).

There was no notable disaster that took place in 1998 to account for increased coverage of disasters from 0.9% in 1992 to 2.0% in 1998. The fact that the trend again drops to 0.9% in 2003

to two should be put to a referendum or a vote by Parliament and district councils.

can be explained by more editorial space in the newspaper in 1998. As shown in Table 3, the newspaper published a total of 832 articles in 1998 compared to 506 in 1992 and 689 in 2003. This means that there were higher chances for articles on disasters to get published in 1998 than 2003.

Further, *The Monitor* coverage of crime declined from 3.4% in 1992 to 2.5% in 1998 but slightly rose up to 2.9% in 2003. Crime, being a general news beat assignment, can easily be neglected in preference to entertainment and sports that attract a large audience.

While the various categories of articles discussed under the general news beat theme provide what Murdock (1992) calls working information for citizens, they might not necessarily attract mass audience that *The Monitor* needs to sell to advertisers. As a result, editorial space allocated to the general news beat journalism generally has declined over the years in preference to entertainment journalism, which appeals to mass audiences. This is not suitable for a country that is discussing the political transition from “a one party democracy” to “multi-partyism” in an effort to build a democracy. Schechter (1996:5), quoting Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, points out that a right to information is a human right. This right, he adds, “includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.” By giving general news beat journalism less coverage therefore, *The Monitor* is starving the Ugandan society of information and this interferes with the democratic process.

5.1.2 Entertainment Journalism

Media scholars argue that in search of a big audience to sell to advertisers, media companies are re-orienting their editorial content to lean more to entertainment and celebrity news (Croteau and Hoynes, 2001). As such, a content analysis of *The Monitor*'s editorial confirms this trend.

According to the study findings in Table 3, there was an increase of space allocated to entertainment articles from 3.7% in 1992 to 12.5% in 1998 and 14.1% in 2003. As discussed above, the increase of editorial space allocated to entertainment articles has been at the expense of political reporting which is one of the cornerstones of traditional journalism because it promotes debate that is essential for a functioning democracy.

Indeed, *The Monitor* management admits that because of the demands of the market, they have had to increase entertainment articles at the expense of hard news and political reporting. Mr. Wafula Oguttu, *The Monitor*'s managing director and founder director said they have increased entertainment reporting to attract the young audience:

We have had changes which are [as a result of] the demands of the market. We have given more space to light reading largely because we took a decision that we should address young people. Young people are not interested in hard stuff, they have a short concentration span, want to read short things and are interested in entertainment a lot so we increased a bit of that... We are not totally abdicating our resolve that we should set an agenda but that agenda must also take cognisance of the fact that the market has something they want. The old people are interested in politics and scholarship while the young people are in a hurry to move (Personal Interview with Mr. Wafula Oguttu on 29/3/2004).

While Oguttu is aware that the media should set an agenda by giving prominence to issues that are thought to be important for citizens to make informed decisions, he noted that the market is important in setting the news agenda in today's media. And by giving more coverage to entertainment to attract young people who are the majority of Uganda's 25 million people, *The Monitor* is trying to target a mass audience.

More so, according to the study findings in Table 3, there was an increase in space allocated to sports from 8.3% in 1992 through 17.0% in 1998 to 18.4% in 2003. Sports journalism, which had the highest total number of stories (417) in the newspapers studied, has become more of entertainment than recreational. Entertainment and sports can pull crowds, which the media need to create an audience to deliver to advertisers. Although the surging number of sports stories in 1998 can be explained by the World Cup football tournament in France, the fact that the trend continues in 2003 suggests that an increasing number of Ugandans are getting interested in sports, especially football, that has been popularised by the media. The South Africa based pay television, DStv includes sports channels that broadcast European football matches in Uganda and these have become popular with big audiences who gather in bars and restaurants to watch them. To attract this audience to the newspaper, *The Monitor* introduced a sports pullout on Saturday in 2002 in addition to an average of three sports pages daily. The sports pages usually publish articles with detailed information about players, coaches and reports about leagues. A

typical example of the articles published in the sports pages with a headline “Cup thriller” is presented below:

English League Cup holders, Blackburn Rovers’ hopes of a successful defence of their title were still alive after a 1-1 draw with Manchester United in the first leg of this season’s semi-final at Old Trafford. England midfielder Paul Scholes gave United a second-half with his third goal in successive matches and 10th of the session (*The Monitor*, January 9, 2003:30).

It is most likely that the majority of the Ugandan audience interested in the article above might not care about anything else that happens at Old Trafford. They can follow news about the game played there because it is entertaining. In fact, most of them might not even go to watch a local football match because it is not as entertaining as a foreign one where broadcasters use advanced technology. The interest in sports for *The Monitor* therefore is because it attracts the right demographic composition (young people) who are of interest to advertisers as potential consumers.

These findings concur with Bagdikian (1997) who argues that because of the drive to dominate the market, newspapers introduce sections such as entertainment, which attract audiences. A newspaper with the biggest audience is easier to sell to advertisers and thus generate revenue for the media company. Robins (1997) agrees and observes that as the re-emerging independent media in Uganda struggle to build readership and advertising base, they are succumbing to providing less informative content and more entertainment. This means giving more space to entertainment journalism that attracts big audiences at the expense of for example public service or general beat journalism, which are necessarily to provide citizens with information that they need to make informed decisions.

However, Mr. David Ouma Balikowa, another founder director and *The Monitor*’s managing editor argues that the newspaper has merely been depicting the reality; the consumerism and social habits of the population that have changed. He would not describe this trend as market-driven journalism because to him, there has always been no distinction between journalism and marketing:

My understanding is that they are the same. It is journalism which is waking up to realise that what they are doing is actually marketing. When we say we are covering elections,

what we are doing? We are marketing the elections. When we say our headline has sold, what do we mean? We have marketed the headline. Marketing basically drives the whole concept of writing headlines and packaging newspapers.... What we call readers in journalism are called customers in marketing and those are just semantics. And there is a functional element in the content we put out there. We want to write about things which are relevant to people's lives, be it business, social, entertainment e.t.c. (Personal Interview with Mr. David Ouma Balikowa on 13/3/2004).

Balikowa's observation is consistent with what media scholars say of a commercial oriented media. Murdock (1992) and Keane (1991) observe that as the media get more and more commercially oriented, people's identity as citizens is marginalised. Instead, they are looked at first as audiences because of the media products they buy and second as consumers since they are targeted for the products promoted in the media by advertisers.

In line with this argument, the newspaper's advertising manager, Mr. Alex Asiimwe, who regularly sits in the daily editorial meetings to determine the next day page one articles, concurred. He added that separating marketing from journalism is an ancient way of running the media:

If you are going to succeed in this era, you must market. Forget about sitting in newsrooms and writing the paper for yourselves. Real marketing comes in to tell you that this is what you have written, the reader is asking for this... I will tell you that this is what the market you are trying to reach demands of your product. We complement editorial. If you sat down in closed doors and wrote a headline and nobody buys that is not business... People need to know that this is a company that must deliver dividends to its shareholders, make a profit and grow. We might say we are an independent newspaper, a voice for the voiceless, this and that but at the end of the day, you need to grow as a business (Personal Interview with Mr. Alex Asiimwe on 25/3/2004).

Media observers like Underwood (1995) acknowledge Asiimwe's observation. Underwood (1995:15) points out that the success of contemporary media organisations is premised upon the extent to which editorial, marketing and circulation roles are integrated. He notes that "marketplace pressures have led to the appearance to a new kind of editor, a cross between an editor and a marketing official... The new marketing –oriented editor is an outgrowth of a concept known as 'The Total Newspaper' where newspaper executives are urged to coordinate the news and business departments and work together to market the newspaper as a total

product.” McManus (1994:3) adds that the media environment has become too competitive to support media companies pursuing traditional journalism with the separation of the “church” of newsgathering and the “state” of advertising, sales, production and distribution.

5.1.3 Market-driven Journalism

During the period under study, space allocated to business, finance, economics and development in the newspaper increased from 9.4% in 1992 to 10.5% in 1998 and then decreased to 8.1% in 2003. This is unexpected of a business-oriented newspaper but the increase in business and economic reporting in 1998 can be explained by the unique circumstances particular to Uganda’s economy.

First, there was a shake-up in the banking industry with the Central Bank closing down a couple of privately owned banks because of some irregularities in their operations. This generated articles about the banking sector, which to a limited extent, is responsible for the increase of this genre of journalism in 1998. Typical examples include: “The Kattos of closed ICB bank face MPs,” (*The Monitor*, November 10, 1998) and “Tough times ahead for banks,” (*The Monitor*, November 28, 1998).

Second, the newspaper took a deliberate policy to support businesses by giving them coverage and this could have pushed up the number of business-oriented articles in 1998. Oguttu (op. cit) elaborated:

We [decided] to pro-actively support businesses so as to encourage them to grow because they create jobs and pay taxes. And of course they give us money through advertising. So we said: Is business all evil? We are in business ourselves, so business can’t all be evil. There is something good about business and sometimes we give them a good turn (Personal Interview with Mr. Wafula Oguttu on 29/3/2004).

This deliberate policy to support businesses is well supported by the dominant storylines evident in business coverage in *The Monitor*. Many of the articles and photographs that fill the business pages today are product launchings, promotions and corporate parties. For example, in a full-page pictorial (*The Monitor*, January 9, 2003), three out of seven photographs on the page were corporate end of year parties and two of them about one party. Three other photographs on the

pictorial page and a lead story on another page are promotional content. This was part of a three-page BusinessWeek pullout.

The decline in space allocated to this category of articles in 2003 therefore might not mean that the newspaper has changed its policy but that advertising was “crowding out” editorial content and the business pages were major casualties. As I observed in the business pullout discussed above, two other pages had a feature each other than editorial content. The first page, on top of carrying a master head “BusinessWeek” which took up some space, also had one column taken up by foreign exchange rates, leaving five columns for editorial content. The third page carried a quarter page advertisement and yet this was the day of the week when the newspaper focused on business and economic issues.

Moreover, after the Nation Media Group bought the majority shares in the newspaper in March 2000, they introduced a strict policy on increasing pagination without increased advertising. According to Balikowa (op. cit), advertising today is getting to 60 percent in revenue generation for the newspaper. Asiimwe (op. cit) added that the ratio of advertising to editorial content in terms of space has grown from about 10% in 2000 to between 27% and 40% today and yet the newspaper pagination had remained at an average 32 pages. He explained that according to a market survey the newspaper had carried out, customers said *The Monitor* was too small compared to their major competitor, the *New Vision* which had eight pages more and costs the same price. Indeed, seven out of the ten newspaper issues studied in 2003 were 32 pages. In fact, the January 9, 2003 issue was 32 pages including a seven-page ISO 90001: 2000 certification supplement and other advertisements spread across the rest of the newspaper. The advertisements in the other part of the newspaper ranged from soft drinks to vacancy announcements and companies calling for tenders.

However, Balikowa (op. cit) disagreed that increased advertising was “crowding out” editorial content. He said that on days when there was heavy advertising, management increased the newspaper’s pagination. (Although this was not observed in the issues studied in 2003 as discussed above). To him, advertising in free market economies supports the media short of which newspapers would have to depend on subsidies either from the State or political parties.

He added that the business of media imposes its own rules that require the media to balance both advertising and editorial. As such, the success of a private newspaper is measured on the extent to which it manages to balance advertising and readers' interests. This argument is supported by John Roach cited in Curran (1979:196) who argues that it is the economically emancipated media that can afford to be independent. Talking about the development of the press in Britain, Roach notes that it was only with the growth of newspaper profits, largely from advertising, that newspapers were able to free themselves from the State and develop an independent organisation for gathering news.

The second component of market-driven journalism examines space allocated to supplements and advertorials. As shown in Table 3, the study established that space allocated to supplements and advertorials in the newspaper grew from 0.0% in 1992 to 0.3% in 1998 and jumped to 7.8% in 2003. Supplements and advertorials are sections of the newspaper that directly target advertisers and the surge in 2003 indicates that *The Monitor* generated more editorial content that directly targeted advertisers.⁷ This concurs with the political economy of the media theory that acknowledges that the media are economic entities that must make profits to stay in business. According to Garnham (1992:29), the main function of the media is not to 'sell' ideology to consumers but audiences to advertisers.

5.1.4 Public Service Journalism

Media scholars like McQuail (2000) and Garnham (1992) present a public sphere as neutral zone where access to information of public interest is widely available. In Uganda where the majority of the population live off agriculture, coverage of the agricultural sector would be in the public interest. However, space allocated to agriculture declined by half from 1.2 in 1992 to 1.0 and to 0.6 in 2003. It is important to note that the majority of the people directly involved in agriculture are peasants who might not even have the money to buy a copy of the newspaper let alone place an advertisement. Coverage of agriculture therefore could only be done as a public service

⁷ I also established that *The Monitor* hired its first supplements editor mid-1999 in an effort to prop up supplements and advertorials and raise advertising revenue.

commitment but for a newspaper such as *The Monitor* that is commercial oriented, that would not be good business.⁸

Promotion of a clean environment was one of the promises *The Monitor* made to the population in its inaugural issue (Oguttu July 31, 1992). Despite the pledge, coverage of environment declined from 3.2% in 1992 and then remained at 0.3% in 1998 and 2003 which is negligible. Promoting environmental protection should be a public service commitment especially at a time when there are world-wide outcries that mother earth is being depleted. Today, *The Monitor* has chosen to promote environmental protection by placing skip bins in Kampala city with a company logo and a word of caution about the need to protect the environment. But one of the journalists who has had an interrupted tenure at *The Monitor*, Ms Linda Nabusayi Wamboka was critical of the forum the newspaper has chosen to use:

When you are a newspaper, the best forum you have to champion a cause are your pages. But if you place skip bins in the city with your company logo on them that you are playing a role to protect the environment, I don't know the difference between you and some other business company in town (Personal Interview with Linda Nabusayi Wamboka on 21/3/2004).

Although health reporting reduced from 7.0% in 1992 to 0.6% in 1998, it remarkably increased to 4.1% in 2003 as Table 3 indicates. This can be attributed to the SARS outbreak in China that attracted world attention. Ugandans were scared of SARS, which is partly because of the global media that beams the news across the world in a blink of an eye. The global media set the news agenda by empathising particular issues over others and the SARS outbreak was one of such cases. As a result, government set up SARS screening centres at the major entry points into the country and this level of preparedness was reflected in *The Monitor*. Typical examples are: "Sars suspect freed" and "Sars kills 7 more" (*The Monitor*, May 14, 2003).

Under the public service journalism theme, it is only the coverage of education where there was a consistent increase. Table 3 shows that space allocated to articles on education rose from 2.6%

⁸ The Monitor's major competitor, the New Vision publishes a farming page once a week. While management said it was introduced as a public service commitment, they explained that they try to make it lively to attract readers (Personal communication with Ms. Barbara Kaija, the New Vision features editor on 2/6/2004).

in 1992 to 3.6% in 1998 and 4.8% in 2003. This can be attributed to private investment in education, which has turned the sector into big business. A story “Private schools bitter over choking taxes,” is a typical illustration of a public service sector being taken over by business interests. It reads in part:

Private schools are in disagreement with government over taxation. The private schools believe government has slapped too many taxes on them. But government thinks otherwise. The taxes are justified because private schools are profit-making ventures...Mr. Aggrey Kibenge, the public relations officer at the Ministry of Education and Sports said: ‘Private schools are set up with a motive of profit and other business concerns,’”... (*The Monitor*, September 1, 2003:15).

To tap on revenue from the education sector, the two English daily newspapers; *The Monitor* and *New Vision*, have each introduced special pullouts on education to write about this sector and at the same time target advertising revenue.⁹

But the general decline of public service journalism indicates that as *The Monitor* grows bigger as a business it keeps moving away from covering public interest issues to covering issues that bring money to the company. This trend is well explained by media scholars. For example, Bagdikian (1997) observes that the deeper social loss of giantism in the media is not its unfair advantage in profits and power but self-serving censorship of political and social ideas. He notes that this results into distorted reality and impoverished ideas.

5.1.5 Advocacy Journalism

The media are vital in reporting about corruption to promote transparency and accountability, which are some of the tenets of democratic governance. However, as Table 3 shows, coverage of corruption and accountability articles dwindled from 8.2% in 1992 through 4.4% in 1998 to 3.6% in 2003. For a country that was rated 88th most corrupt out of 91 countries in 2001 (The 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index), the trend in *The Monitor* does not reflect reality. Yet, it is necessary for actions of those in power to be regulated by public opinion and the media are important in gauging public opinion. Curran (2000) adds that the watchdog role of the media

⁹ The liberalisation of Uganda’s economy in the early 1990’s has resulted into many private investments in education right from nursery to higher institutions of learning. For example, private universities have grown from

should be a source of redress against abuse of power by others other than the State. In a country where democracy is still in its formative stages, *The Monitor* as the only independent daily newspaper, would be vital in making those in power accountable. Instead, the newspaper has been allocating less and less space to articles that highlight corruption as entertainment and supplements take up increase.

Like corruption and accountability, the study findings in Table 3 indicate that space allocated to human rights articles decreased from 2.1% in 1992 through 1.5% in 1998 and negligibly increased to 1.8% in 2003.

This trend reveals that that *The Monitor* is becoming less of a public watchdog and would rather give more space to a supplement that will be paid for than a well-investigated report about human rights abuses in police cells. After all, the latter might add only a few copies on the day's circulation figures. As Curran (2000:124) argues, media consolidation can result into the market giving birth to corporate mercenaries that adjust their critical scrutiny to suit their private purpose instead of independent watchdogs serving the public interest. Instead of keeping a critical eye on those in power to make them accountable to the people they lead, the newspaper is more interested in delivering an audience to advertisers. It would therefore rather focus on genres like entertainment and sports that attract big audiences than crusading journalism.

Others

As presented in Table 3, there was increased coverage of other issues from 6.2% in 1992 to 11.8% in 1998 but then dropping to 7.6% in 2003. The drop in 2003 can still be explained by the general shrinking of editorial space in the newspaper. The Nation Media Group and *The Monitor* merger in 2000 created confidence among the public that the newspaper was a viable project. Before the merger, some sections of the population looked at *The Monitor* as purely anti-government and this to some extent determined whether they advertised in it or not. But after the merger, many advertisers can confidently advertise in the newspaper because it is associated with Nation which is the highest circulating newspaper in East Africa. While this has led to increased

about two in 1993 to more than 10 today. Many of the private schools aggressively market themselves through advertising in the media and public relations activities.

advertising for *The Monitor*, it has been at the expense of editorial content. For example, a total of 832 articles were coded in 1998 compared to 689 in 2003 and yet the number of copies studied in the two years was the same. And the others category, like others discussed earlier, has been a victim of the general decline of editorial space in *The Monitor*.¹⁰

Table 3: News Coverage by *The Monitor*
(Expressed in Percentage Terms)

Category	Year		
	1992	1998	2003
General Beat Journalism			
Politics	32.3	14.9	15.4
Government	1.4	2.5	2.2
Defence/Military	10.1	9.2	7.3
Crime	3.4	2.5	2.9
Disasters	0.9	2.0	0.9
Entertainment Journalism			
Entertainment	3.7	12.5	14.1
Sports	8.3	17.0	18.4
Market-driven Journalism			
Business, Finance, Economics & Dev't	9.4	10.5	8.1
Supplements & advertorials	0.0	0.3	7.8
Public Service Journalism			
Education	2.6	3.6	4.8
Agriculture	1.2	1.0	0.6
Environment	3.2	0.3	0.3
Health	7.0	6.0	4.1
Advocacy Journalism			
Corruption & accountability	8.2	4.4	3.6
Human Rights	2.1	1.5	1.8
Others	6.2	11.8	7.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	506	832	698

¹⁰ According to data not discussed in this study, political articles did not only reduce in *The Monitor* between 1992 and 2003 but also got relegated from the front page to inner pages. For example, there were 12 political stories on front page in 1992, which increased to 14 in 1998 and shrunk to 5 in 2003. Defence/military articles increased from 5 in 1992 to 14 in 1998 and dropped to 6 in 2003. While 10 articles on corruption and accountability made it to page one in 1992, they reduced to only 4 in 1998 and 2003 respectively. On the other hand, entertainment grew from zero in 1992 to 1 in 1998 and then 3 in 2003 while sports rose from zero in 1992 to one in 1998 and then two in 2003.

Table 4: Use of News Sources by *The Monitor*
(Expressed in Percentage Terms)

Category	Year		
	1992	1998	2003
General Beat/Public Service Journalism			
Govt. Statement	0.0	0.0	0.6
Govt. Sources	4.3	10.7	8.7
Other Public Sources	22.0	17.9	15.6
Diary job	0.1	0.6	2.8
Market-driven/Entertainment Journalism			
PR Release/ Spokesperson	0.4	0.7	5.9
Private Sector Sources	19.2	37.3	27.6
Advocacy Journalism			
Investigation	10.9	2.2	2.7
News Analysis	24.2	18.4	21.6
Opinion and commentaries	18.8	12.1	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	470	831	689

5.2 Use of News Sources

5.2.1 General Beat/Public Service Journalism

Results presented in Table 4 show that space allocated to articles accruing from diary job kind of reporting rose from 0.1% in 1992 to 0.6% in 1998 and to 2.8% in 2003.

This can be explained by the increased frequency of the newspaper. It is expected that a weekly newspaper will miss out on covering some of the scheduled events because an event that takes place at the beginning of the week for example will no longer be news by the end of week. The fact that *The Monitor* was a weekly newspaper in 1992 explains this.

More so, the study findings in Table 4 show that there was an increase in space allocated to government sources from 4.3 % in 1992 to 10.7% in 1998, which decreased slightly to 8.7% in 2003. The use of government statements was negligible in the three years under study.

Table 4 also shows that space covered by other public sources generally decreased from 22.0% in 1992 through 17.9% in 1998 to 15.6% in 2003. Other public sources in this study included all public figures quoted in the newspaper who could not fall under the other categories. For example, a story “Odama unveils new peace body” (*The Monitor*, May 14, 2003) where a head of a religious body is quoted fell under this category. And the fact that these voices decreased in the newspaper over the years suggests that as more press releases got published, they edged out other sources that advance causes of public interest as discussed below. For a newspaper that is getting more commercial oriented like *The Monitor*, publishing press releases is not only a good turn to the advertiser but also a cheaper way of news gathering. This is supported by McManus (1994) who argues that a media house that is commercial-oriented may choose news wires or press agents as sources of news compared to investigation because the former is cheaper.

5.2.2 Market-driven/Entertainment Journalism

As shown in Table 4, the study established that there was an increase in space allocated to PR release/spokesperson sourced articles from 0.4% in 1992 to 0.7% in 1998 and 5.9% in 2003. PR sourced articles are usually written with less effort and resources by the newspaper. A typical example is a story: “EA gets online shopping store” where the company sent a press release to the newspaper and an article quoted below was written entirely based on the release:

An East African Company, Watuwetu has introduced online shopping for residents of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania with access to the Internet. Watuwetu.com, a premier online goods and services provider for East Africans was launched early last week, a statement from the company said. ‘Watuwetu.com is finally here, ready and eager to meet the needs of Ugandans both abroad and at home,’ the statement said... (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003:12).

In the above story, a press release from the company was just reproduced by the newspaper without question. This could also be because this being a new company, the newspaper foresaw advertising prospects and therefore gave them a good turn in advance by publishing the press release. According to Wamboka (op. cit), “after the Nation/*The Monitor* merger the newspaper takes advertisements very seriously.”

This is what media theorists say of a commercial-oriented media house that is out to maximise profits. According to Dahlgren (1995:8), the increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially

where the commercial logic overrides the public interest, transforms public communication into public relations, advertising and entertainment. And as a result, the public loses its social coherence and becomes fragmented.

However, *The Monitor* management thought that by publishing more of press releases, they are giving a platform to the companies to present their point of view as well. Balikowa (op. cit) explained:

When academics talk about press releases, they look at them as an influencing factor on the media. My submission is that it is not the truth because if a newspaper must be a platform where all views must co-exist, my understanding is that even PR must have a place there. I do not see anything wrong if a company is launching a product or celebrating a good year performance. That is very important information because there are many people out there who are struggling in business and want to learn from this experience. Businesses are related to functional services and I think we must recognise in one way or the other, the stereotype among academics is not based on practical experience. I think a newspaper is a basket of interests and everyone does not have to agree with the entire collection.

According to Balikowa, articles written based on press releases or comments from an organisation spokesperson are also important since a section of the newspaper readership is interested in them. To him, publishing press releases is giving more voices an opportunity to express themselves. And if one reader does not like articles that quote press releases, she can move to the next section that she is interested in.

Notable also is that space allocated to private sector sources in *The Monitor* increased from 19.2% in 1992 to 37.3% in 1998 but then dropped to 27.6% in 2003 as shown in Table 4. As explained above, when *The Monitor* became more and more commercial oriented, it allocated more space to PR sources, leaving little room for other voices. For an economy that has been undergoing privatisation, giving less space to voices from the private sector means that a section of the population which is coming in to run the economy is not being heard. This is not good for the economy because the media as a public sphere should provide a forum for all voices to discuss on an equal basis.

5.2.3 Advocacy Journalism

The study findings in Table 4 reveal that space allocated to investigative articles fell from 10.9% in 1992 to 2.2% in 1998 but increased to 2.7% in 2003. The slight increase in 2003 is much less than the figure in 1992 when the newspaper published an average of 16 pages, which makes it negligible. The general decline of investigative reporting in *The Monitor* suggests that the newspaper has become less of a public watchdog over the years. The trend reveals that while *The Monitor* allocated more time and money to carry out investigative and news analysis articles in its first year of operation (1992), they put relatively much less resources in this genre of journalism as the years went by.

This confirms the theoretical arguments (McManus 1994; Croteau and Hoynes 1991) that even though investigative reporting fulfils the highest level of journalism, it can lead to legal suits that are too costly for a newspaper that is more of a business than a crusading one. According to McManus (1994), this is the market logic of journalism where the media work to maximise returns for investors by selecting stories with the greatest ratio of appeal for demographically desirable audiences. Under this logic, the media tend to minimise carrying out investigative reporting because in addition to attracting libel suits, it requires more time and resources to do, which is too costly for investors. Publishing less of investigative stories, news analyses and opinions therefore is “safe” journalism and leads to few legal problems.

However, other reasons include the newspaper’s change in frequency or even dwindling financial base. For *The Monitor*’s case, most of the people interviewed attributed the decline in investigative journalism to the increased frequency of the newspaper. They said that when *The Monitor* started in 1992 as a weekly newspaper, journalists had enough time to carry out extensive research, a major factor for writing an investigative article. Mr. Balikowa (op. cit) explained:

The people who started *The Monitor* were coming from a weekly newspaper and basically the content and design of a weekly is always different from a daily. So we were used to doing a lot of analyses, a lot of commentaries and a lot of long pieces that are suitable for a weekly newspaper. When the frequency changed from a weekly to a bi-weekly, tri-weekly and finally daily, we had to start competing with the other daily newspaper [*New Vision*] in terms of news and events, and had to adjust the format of the newspaper.

In line with this argument, Wamboka (op. cit), felt that when the newspaper became a daily, there was less time to do research because they were expected to produce more articles that come out quickly. But she added that some of the policies the company introduced as it grew bigger also affected the character of the newspaper. For example, she said that the newspaper came to rely heavily on freelance reporters who are interested in working on what can come out quickly and easily. At the same time, staff reporters were required to produce so many stories in a month, which would not give them enough time to do research:

With time, the company introduced a quota of 28 published stories per month for the staff reporters if they had to keep their jobs. For a person to have a story in the newspaper everyday means relying on press releases. And if you do not have [a telephone] money to crosscheck a story, you are just not going to do it. You do not bother to do what you are supposed to do journalistically; you do what your editors want you to do to beat the story count so as to be paid at the end of the month... Motivation is very important. If you are a reporter, you need to know that you will still get paid at the end of the month even if you had one story [published] but it was a story well done. You took time to do research, talked to a lot of people; put an effort in making a better product (Personal Interview with Linda Nabusayi Wamboka on 21/3/2004).

Wamboka pointed out that while reporters knew what a good story was, they reached a point when they just wrote whatever came their way to raise the number of stories required. To her, a newspaper needs to give reporters more time and resources like telephone facilities and transport to be able to do investigative and news analysis articles. She said that while *The Monitor* did that in the initial years, the financial priorities changed as the company grew bigger and this affected the editorial content of the newspaper.

Further, news analyses are a vital aspect of the media because they help the public to put issues of the day into perspective. As presented in Table 4, this study has established that news analyses dropped from 24.2% in 1992 to 18.4% in 1998 but increased to 21.6% in 2003. The high figure of news analyses in 1992 was because the newspaper was a weekly and therefore put more emphasis on writing to put issues into perspective in addition to having more time. The increase in 2003 can be attributed to the political atmosphere in the country explained earlier in this chapter whereby the population is discussing transition from “a no party” to a “multi-party democracy.

However, the news analyses in 2003 were to some extent propped up by sports articles. *The Monitor* introduced a Saturday sports pullout in 2002 whereby the reporting is more analytical than straight news reporting. And since there was a surge of sports stories in 2003, the way they were sourced contributed to the increase of news analysis in this year. A typical sports analysis article is presented below:

In four days time, Europe's football governing body UEFA will close the mid-season transfer exercise. Rather expectedly, a curtain will come down on the month long window without much activity. European football is facing financial meltdown that has seen clubs struggle to cope with huge bills and spiralling debt burdens. From Fulham to Fiorentina, clubs are staring in the face of financial ruin (*The Monitor*, January 27, 2003).

The study also revealed that space allocated to opinion and commentaries dropped from 18.8% in 1992 to 12.1% in 1998 though it slightly increased to 13.1% in 2003 as shown in Table 4. Most of the opinions and commentaries in *The Monitor* cover political issues and their rise and fall correspond with the trend regarding political reporting presented in Table 1. The slight increase of this category of articles in 2003 is too small to suggest that the newspaper is giving enough space to political debate. Instead, more editorial space is being taken up by press releases and advertisements. This undermines the democratic process taking place in the country.

However, the trend confirms what media scholars (for example Schechter 1996; Garnham 1992; Dahlgren 1995) note that as the media get more market-oriented, they give less attention to stories that promote democracy. Schechter (1996:7) argues that "a media system targeted at creating more consumerism is in conflict with the democratic spirit committed to promoting citizenship."¹¹

¹¹ Data outside the scope of this study indicate that investigative stories on page one decline 20 in 1992 to 8 in 1998 and 4 in 2003 while other public sources rose from 4 in 1992 through 11 in 1998 and then declined to 7 in 2003. Although there were no press releases/spokesperson sourced stories on page one in 1992, 2 made it on the page in 1998 and 3 in 2003. Government sources increased from three in 1992 to 14 in 1998 and fell to six in 2003. The trends on page one correspond with the trends in the rest of the newspaper presented in this study.

Table 5: Use of Photographs and illustrations
(Expressed in Total Counts)

Category	Year		
	1992	1998	2003
General Beat Journalism			
Politics	29	29	42
Defence/Military	13	16	22
Disasters	1	3	1
Crime	5	1	6
Entertainment Journalism			
Entertainment	2	36	43
Sports	13	40	72
Market-driven Journalism			
Business, Finance, Economics & Dev't	5	21	30
Supplements and Advertorials	0	1	14
Public Service Journalism			
Health	5	12	10
Government	1	7	6
Agriculture	0	3	3
Education	2	6	14
Environment	3	0	2
Advocacy Journalism			
Corruption and Accountability	4	6	7
Human Rights	5	2	4
Others	6	38	25
Total	94	221	301

5.3 Use of Photographs and Illustrations

The study findings in Table 5 below show that there was a general increase in the use of photographs across the three years studied. While 94 photographs were published in 1992, the number more than doubled to 221 in 1998 and increased further to 301 in 2003.

The use of photographs has also increased in sections like sports (from 13 in 1992 to 72 in 2003) and entertainment (from 2 in 1992 to 43 in 2003) confirming the argument that the newspaper today accords more space to entertainment journalism than when it started in 1992. Many of the photographs on the entertainment pages cover celebrities and social functions. A typical example

is a full-page pictorial covering the first birthday of a sports bar, “The Venue” (*The Monitor*, September 19, 2003).

According to Balikowa (op. cit) when the newspaper started in 1992, they put more emphasis on editorial content than design but later realised that they needed to look at their design as well. He said that in 1996, *The Monitor* bought a colour press that was the first in East Africa and started publishing photographs in colour. As media scholars Giles and Hodgson (1990) note, photographs are important for both the newspaper design and information. Garcia and Stark (1991:26) add that unless readers are searching for a specific element, the reader’s attention focuses on the dominant visual element first, usually a photograph or graphic and sometimes a strong headline. First, a newspaper with colour photographs is attractive to the eye from a distance and can therefore attract readers thus an audience to sell to the advertisers. Second, advertisements printed in colour are clearer and attractive to the potential consumers compared to the black and white ones. This means that the ability for the newspaper to be able to print advertisements in colour attracts more advertisers.¹²

5.4 Discussion

The study set out to investigate whether the demands of the market have had an effect on the newspaper the founding journalists of *The Monitor* promised to publish -- independent of any political or business interests, giving a platform to views and opinions and promoting democracy among others. These are the ideals of traditional journalism but media scholars and critics are concerned these are being eroded by a commercial oriented media. Indeed, although *The Monitor* set on the traditional journalism premise, it took the founders a few years to realise that they were a business and had to operate as such least they go under. For example, this study has established that although political and investigative reporting which are the cornerstones of traditional journalism were dominant in the newspaper in 1992, they had dropped significantly by 1998 as opposed to increasing entertainment articles that were increasing. This was a year before the Nation/Monitor merger March 2000, which confirms the fact that the newspaper

¹² I also observed that the newspaper had by 2003 changed from publishing long articles that would jump to the next page up to three times shorter articles designed in a modular style.

became market-oriented long before the sale and chance of ownership was to concretise the process. Balikowa (op. cit) explained why they had to sell:

We did recognise that that *The Monitor* newspaper was a business that was operating under the forces of demand and supply... We were local investors with enormous skills but we recognised our capital limitations... So we realised that if we are to survive in this era of capitalism, we would have to ally with a big investor. It happens all over the world.

The study findings concur with media scholars, Croteau and Hoynes (2001) and McQuail (1992) who argue that as the media become market-driven, they re-orient their editorial content to more of entertainment and softer stories, which attract big audiences to sell to advertisers.

More so, the study intended to investigate what pressures and issues journalists face in their quest to protect their editorial independence from the providers of financial support. As a private company, *The Monitor* gets financed by its shareholders as well as money generated from advertising and circulation. Even if it was not very evident from quantitative data that advertisers and shareholders have direct influence on the newspaper's editorial content, some interview data indicated that this sometimes happened. For example, some of the cost-cutting policies introduced after the merger like requiring staff reporters to publish 28 stories a month discussed earlier in this chapter, affected investigative reporting, which requires a lot of time and money.

According to media scholars, this is expected of a market-driven newspaper like *The Monitor*. Picard (2002:4) observes that profit is important for a commercial driven media to finance its operations. He argues that because media owners will always expect profits, media managers are expected to minimise costs and maximise audiences. And these two profit- maximising techniques shape media content that the public receives as mediated reality.

Further, *The Monitor* has of late been involved in a number of sales promotions, which are aimed at creating the desire to buy the newspaper. The promotions are usually joint with another company, say a car dealer who puts up a car for a prize. The public is then invited to buy a copy of *The Monitor*, fill a particular coupon and be eligible to winning a car at grand draw. During the period of the promotion, the company that puts up the prize also keeps getting mentioned in

the newspaper, which shows that there is little difference between a car dealer and a newspaper publisher. This is done to increase circulation figures. Asiimwe (op. cit) elaborated:

The newspaper is getting a lot more market-driven, a lot more market-oriented. Before Nation came into this market, *The Monitor* was hardly selling. People understood its editorial policy as opposed to *New Vision*... In this game of competition, you have to tell the customers time and again. Even persuade them. Create a desire for them to buy.

However, the two founders of *The Monitor* interviewed maintained that the newspaper's editorial content has not succumbed to advertisers' interests. They also insisted that the sale of the majority shares to Nation Media Group has not changed the newspaper editorial policy since the two companies share similar values. But it is important to note that they both saw nothing wrong with publishing articles that support businesses since they acknowledged that they are also in business. Oguttu (op. cit) in particular revealed that the newspaper decided to soften their stand on tobacco advertising when they were faced with an advertising squeeze. He said that from their original stand of not accepting any advertisements dealing with tobacco, the newspaper can now publish an advertisement, say of jobs or sale of used vehicles belonging to a tobacco company.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings and discussion of the study. The research results show that *The Monitor*, like many commercial-oriented media institutions in the world today, has become market-driven. The newspaper emphasises editorial content that can create a big audience to sell to the advertisers. The study also establishes that advertising contributes a significant percentage of the newspaper's revenue, which is important for the company to be able to meet its financial obligations. However, this has affected the newspaper's role in providing a forum for debate and participation, which are key to democratic governance. And when commercial interests interfere with the democratisation process, active citizens are turned into passive observers. The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Concluding Reflections

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. In it, I give concluding reflections and suggestions on areas for further research.

In Chapter one, I gave the background to the study, stated the research question as well as the objectives and importance of the study. This chapter also set the scope of the study and finally presented the breakdown of chapters. In chapter two, an extensive review of literature on the theoretical arguments about political economy of media and the media's role in a democracy, market-driven journalism was given. These were the theoretical arguments on which this study was premised and were the basis for research findings presented in chapter five. It was also from this chapter that the five broad themes under which data was presented and discussed emerged. The theoretical arguments and debates in this chapter formed the data analysis basis.

The importance of chapter three was to give a historical, political and social context of the study. Here, a brief history of the rise of the independent media in Uganda was given to show how the political economy of the independent press in Uganda had had an effect on media independence. The chapter put emphasis on rise of *The Monitor*, which was the focus of this study. It was important to note that though the growth of the media in Uganda endured harsh conditions during the political upheavals resulting into some publications being banned by various governments, there were other factors that hampered the media growth. This chapter noted that for example, *The People* newspaper closed down during the 1970s not because of political harassment but because of internal problems. This showed that the right to publish was not all that the media need to stay on the market. Other factors like media economics were found important for the media to succeed as discussed in chapters two and five of this study.

In chapter four, I presented the research methodology employed in this study. Two principle techniques were used in collection of the research data; quantitative content analysis and interviews. The chapter explained how a total of 30 copies of *The Monitor* were selected from

the newspaper's 11 years of existence. After sample collection, space occupied by various categories of articles was measured, coded and analysed. Content analysis was chosen because it was the most appropriate method for studying long-term changes and trends in media coverage. The analysis of *The Monitor* editorial content across the years revealed a shift in the newspaper's editorial policy from being an advocacy newspaper to more of a market-oriented one. The chapter also explained how the five respondents, who provided data through interviews, were selected. The interviews were important because they provided explanatory data to the study. Through the interviews, which were conducted after the content coding exercise, I further investigated the trends that had emerged from the content analysis data.

Chapter five presented the findings and discussion from two forms of data; quantitative content analysis and interviews. The findings answered the research question, which was an exploration of change of ownership of *The Monitor* newspaper on its editorial content. The results indicated that over the years, *The Monitor* had moved from playing a public service of the media to being market-driven. This chapter was presented in three sections. The first section looked at coverage of articles by category in the whole newspaper. The second section dealt with coverage of articles in regard to sources while the third section discussed the use of photographs. All in all, the findings showed that market forces today influence the selection of editorial content of *The Monitor* more than they did in 1992.

6.1 Recommendations for Further Research

There is need to carry out further research to establish whether the founders of *The Monitor* newspaper ever put into practice their journalistic vision at all or the vision just died in the first year of operation. It was not possible to establish that in this study yet it would be important to establish whether the founders of *The Monitor* actually believed in what they pledged to do or it was mere rhetoric. It was important to note that the founders of *The Monitor* say it was started to provide an independent forum for debate. But years later, the company established a book-publishing department, a commercial printing section and a radio station. These sections were introduced as a fall back position in case government closed down the newspaper as happened in October 2002 (Oguttu op. cit). He said that they envisaged that in such a situation, they could still afford to pay staff until government came back to their senses and re-opened the newspaper.

He insisted that these departments, of which two (commercial printing and books) have since been closed down, was never to make money. It was difficult to take him at his word and since testing such an assertion was outside the scope of this study, another one would be worth taking to investigate whether the founders of *The Monitor* newspaper ever believed in this vision and if so, for how long.

This research also was not able to empirically establish what the ratio of advertising to editorial content was because the space covered by advertisements was not measured. The figures given in chapter five were based on interview data and it would be better to verify that. Here, another content analysis study that also measured space allocated to advertisements was recommended to establish the ratio of advertising to editorial. This would help to establish how far advertising crowds out editorial in *The Monitor* newspaper.

One of the journalists interviewed raised an issue of motivation of staff to have contributed to a decline in investigative reporting at *The Monitor*. And since that was outside the scope of this study, further studies looking at the relationship between journalists' motivation and the quality of the newspaper's editorial content would be worth a try.

Further, although two research methodologies, content analysis and interviews, were used for this study, it would be useful to look at this phenomenon using other methods like discourse and textual analysis. While quantitative content analysis established the trends in editorial content and interviews provided the explanatory data for this study, discourse analysis would investigate the dominant ideology being promoted by the newspaper. Textual analysis on the other hand, would look at how language is being used to privilege the dominant ideology in *The Monitor* newspaper.

More so, this was a one-person study with limited resources and time. A bigger study involving more newspaper copies and more years would give a much broader picture of the trend. Second, further studies could also consider involving readers of *The Monitor* to get an idea of what kind of newspaper they want.

6.2 Summary and conclusion

This study investigated the effect of market-driven journalism on *The Monitor* newspaper's editorial content. The findings discussed in chapter five show that while the newspaper still maintained some principles and values of traditional journalism, it was steadily becoming market-driven. This was revealed by the increase of editorial space allocated to entertainment and sports journalism, which attracted big audiences as well as supplements and advertorials that were directly targeted at advertisers. This was at the expense of shrinking editorial space for political stories, opinions and investigations, which provide a fertile ground for democracy to grow. Moreover, increased space for entertainment articles and supplements meant less space for public service and advocacy journalism as elaborated in chapter five. These findings were consistent with what media scholars predicted of market-driven media presented in chapter two.

While I appreciated the fact that it was important for *The Monitor* to make money in order to stay in business, this should not be entirely at the expense of the public interest. Hickey (1998) suggested that profits and the public's right to know could be compatible. As Onyango-Obbo (2004) pointed out, the young readers whom the newspaper had gone out of the way to attract could still read a story about a serious issue if it was written in an interesting way. More so, the young readers whom the newspaper's management assumed do not have time to read long stories about politics are as politically conscious as any other demographic composition. They needed to know what happens in the world other than entertainment if they were to be tomorrow's leaders and citizens. The newspaper should therefore not deny them useful information and retard their growth as active conscious citizens.

Further, *The Monitor* in its earlier years built its reputation as a political newspaper. As Oguttu (op.cit.) said, the newspaper was able to survive mainly on sales from circulation when government slammed an advertising ban on them. This was at a time when it was still carrying out a lot of political and investigative reporting, which shows that such journalism has a following. If *The Monitor* therefore re-focused itself more to the ideals they promised to advance at inception and less on entertainment, they could still be able to run as a viable business.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Coding sheet

Name		Position
YEAR	Year of publication Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right Print Format: F8 Write Format: F8	1
SPACE	Space covered by story/picture (cm) Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right Print Format: F8.2 Write Format: F8.2	2
PHOTO	Photo Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Left Print Format: F8 Write Format: F8 Value Label 1 Personality 2 Activity 3 Personality and activity combined 4 Illustration/cartoon 5 Personality/illustration/cartoon	3
PLACEME1	Placement of story/picture Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Left Print Format: F8 Write Format: F8 Value Label 1 Front Page 2 Non- Front page	4
PLACEME2	Order of story/picture Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Left Print Format: F8 Write Format: F8 Value Label 1 Lead 2 2nd lead 3 3rd lead 4 Brief/filler	5

SOURCE Source of story/picture 6
 Measurement Level: Scale
 Column Width: 8 Alignment: Left
 Print Format: F8
 Write Format: F8

Value	Label
1	Investigation
2	Diary job
3	PR Release/ Spokesperson
4	Govt. Sorces
5	Private Sector Sources
6	Other Public Sources
7	Govt. Statement
8	News Analysis
9	Opinion

CATEGORY Category of story/picture 7
 Measurement Level: Scale
 Column Width: 8 Alignment: Left
 Print Format: F8
 Write Format: F8

Value	Label
1	Politics
2	Defence/Military
3	Entertainment
4	Sports
5	Business, Finance, Economics & Dev't
6	Supp & advertorials
7	Health
8	Government
9	Agriculture
10	Education
11	Environment
12	Disasters
13	Corruption & accountability
14	Human Rights
15	Crime
16	Others

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Appendix II: Sample of data entry sheet

YEAR	SPACE	PHOTO	PLACEME1	PLACEME2	SOURCE	CATEGORY
1998	480.77		1	1	8	1
1998	188.50	2	1	2	2	2
1998	290.90		1	3	2	1
1998	227.06		1		3	1
1998	126.00		1		6	2
1998	376.64	1	2	1	9	1
1998	240.80		2	2	9	1
1998	164.10		2	1	6	16
1998	153.00	3	2	2	2	2
1998	92.75		2	3	6	2
1998	484.70	1	2		5	6
1998	122.12		2	1	4	9
1998	254.14		2	2	5	3
1998	104.06		2	3	5	2
1998	105.06		2		5	2
1998	72.16		2		5	1
1998	86.00		2		5	10
1998	42.14		2	4	6	2
1998	319.20		2	1	4	5