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## “IN QUOTES, ANYONE”

### CITIZENSHIP OF DISTINCTION IN THE OPEN AIR RADIO DEBATES OF KAMPALA

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IMAGE 1 - AN ORATOR IN ONE OF THE OPEN AIR RADIO DEBATES IN KAMPALA (PICTURE FBF 2008)

“We have beliefs within us that if I want to speak in *ekimeeza*, first of all you have to be very, very strong, you shouldn't be shy. You have to be a very strong speaker, you are not supposed to show any kind of shyness. Secondly, you are supposed to be a researcher. You are supposed to be knowledgeable enough in any kind of field, either political, social, economic, so that whatever question that is asked to you, you may be able to answer it. You are supposed to be of a noble character. If you are known of some bad behaviour like stealing, people cannot pay attention to you. And you are supposed to be a good listener when people are debating. If you argue when people are debating no one will take you seriously. **Q: And who can participate at *ekimeeza*?** Anyone. Anyone as long as you register and you think you are capable. Anyone. Anyone. But you still have to have those qualities... If you don't have those qualities, you can debate just once and the next time the moderator may be not interested in calling you when there are other sharp debaters. At least he may call you when the sharp debaters are not there but if the sharp debaters are there he can't call you. **Q: So it's not anyone...** In quotes, anyone (laughs)<sup>1</sup>...”

This paper is focused on open air talk shows in Kampala, otherwise known as *ebimeeza* (round table in luganda) or “People's Parliaments”<sup>2</sup>. The *ebimeeza* were debate competitions which took place in

<sup>1</sup> Interview with P.S., Kampala, 23/07/08.

<sup>2</sup> “*Ebimeeza*” is the plural of “*Ekimeeza*”.

pubs or courtyards, and which were broadcasted live on different radio stations. Hundreds of people used to gather every week end and discuss about a political topical issue. The first one was launched in 2001 and they were banned by the government in 2009. Before that, there were 10 of them in the capital, and a few up-country. Most of them were in local languages, mainly luganda, one of them was in English.

The paper is based on the idea that the analysis of how people talk about politics in these specific spheres, and how different actors, especially the State, try to shape these voices, gives us information on the practices and the imaginaries of citizenship in contemporary Uganda<sup>3</sup>. Through the discourses and the practices of the orators, the spectators, as well as political entrepreneurs and the State, in and around the *ebimeeza*, and through the procedures which are in force in these spheres of “deliberation”, political and moral definitions of the conditions of the legitimacy to talk about politics, by extension to be a citizen, are deployed<sup>4</sup>. As we’ll see, the *ebimeeza* are the cradle of exclusive definitions of citizenship, a citizenship which is based on academic and education qualities: the ones entitled to talk about politics are the ones who are educated enough to handle it.

The *ebimeeza* reflect the evolutions of the margins of action and nature of the political parties in a country that was organized for 20 years under the “No Party Democracy” arrangement<sup>5</sup>, the renewal/reinvention of the Buganda kingdom<sup>6</sup>, the political and social expectations of the youth and the way they are expressed, as well as the transformations of what is now the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), since the end of the 1990’s. The integration of these spheres of “deliberation” in different networks of sociability and mobilization has an influence on the procedures and forms of talk as well as on the models of citizenship deployed.

These models of citizenship can be contradictory, especially in the case of the *ekimeeza* of the Buganda radio, where the procedures of discussion respect the etiquette in force in the kingdom and

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<sup>3</sup> This methodological proposal is based on Habermas’ historical approach : forms of talks and procedures used in spheres of discussion are the cradles of normative representations of politics.

<sup>4</sup> French historian M. Agulhon has shown the parallels between the transformations of sociability practices (from the “salons” to the clubs) and the promotion of more egalitarian relations in 19<sup>th</sup> century France. M. Agulhon (1977), *Le Cercle dans la France bourgeoise 1810-1848. Etude d’une mutation de sociabilité*, Paris, Armand Colin. See on Africa L. Fourchard, O. Goerg, M. Gomez-Perez (eds.) (2009), *Lieux de sociabilité urbaine en Afrique*, Paris, L’Harmattan.

<sup>5</sup> Political parties were allowed to exist but not to hold rallies or to support candidates in elections. On the « no party democracy » arrangement and the margin of action of political parties between 1986 and 2005 (when multipartyism was instaurated), see among others G. Carbone (2008), *No Party Democracy ? Ugandan Politics in Comparative Perspective*, Boulder, Lynn Reiner.

<sup>6</sup> The Buganda kingdom, one of the most powerful political entities of the Great Lake region, benefited from a certain autonomy under the protectorate regime and from an advantaged position both economically and politically compared to other populations when Uganda accessed to Independence in 1962. In 1966-1967, Prime Minister Milton Obote suppressed the kingdoms in Uganda, proclaiming a centralized republicanist Constitution. The Kingdoms were only restored in 1993 by president Museveni. On the history of the Buganda kingdom, see H. Médard (2007), *Le royaume du Buganda au 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, Paris, Karthala. On its status and its inner debates in the 1940’s and 1950’s see D. Apter (1961), *The Political Kingdom in Uganda*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, London, Oxford University Press, on the restoration in the 1990’s, see M. Karlström (1999), *The Cultural kingdom in Uganda. Popular royalism and the restoration of the Buganda kingship*, PhD dissertation in Anthropology, University of Chicago, as well as the analysis of one of the actors of the process : C.P. Mayiga (2009), *King on the Throne. The story of the restoration of the Kingdom of Buganda*, Kampala, Prime Time Communication.

the royal political architecture, in discordance with Museveni's modernist vision of politics, which encourages citizens to get away from any ethnic ("sectarian" or "backward" in the President's words) influence when they engage in politics.

Nevertheless, the different actors of the political spectrum agree on the importance of education, as well as of certain social, moral and behavioural qualities which are supposed to come with it, in the definition of a suitable and legitimate way to talk about politics. Actually, one of the interesting outcomes of the analysis of the practices inside the *ebimeeza* and the debates that the existence of these spheres of talk triggered in the Ugandan society is to underline this common ground and the fact that despite Museveni's revolutionary rhetoric and the emphasis on the "grassroots" democracy through the creation of the Resistance Councils, the model of citizenship that has been promoted by the elites of the regime has been characterized by a fundamental separation between the citizenship of the educated elite, which is entitled to be "political", and the citizenship of the uneducated grassroots, which is encouraged to be local, "developmental", and to be deployed in state controlled environments<sup>7</sup>. What is interesting is that this conception of a "bifurcated" (Mamdani) citizenship is shared around the political spectrum, but also that it reinterprets tendencies in the definition of political participation that were already in force under the regime of the protectorate<sup>8</sup>.

### **1) The genesis: generalization of "bourgeois" and exclusive repertoires of politics and practices of sociability**

The *ebimeeza* were radio talk shows, but they don't only originate from the media. The first one to be launched, in 2001, prolonged practices of discussion and sociability in force in a specific social environment: the Buganda bourgeoisie of Kampala. It was born from the initiative of a radio owner, who decided to broadcast discussions that took place in a small circle of friends and acquaintances in one of the most famous pubs in Kampala, the Club Obligatto.

The *ebimeeza* are called "people's parliaments" by radio producers, but the procedures in force are marked by these "bourgeois" origins. There are a lot of inequalities in accessing the floor and the different actors involved (orators, organizers) are kin to maintain these social barriers as they want to preserve the specific social identity of the *ebimeeza*. There is a fundamental tension in these spaces between the will to preserve them from what is perceived as social and moral degradation and the general discourse around their supposed "openness" and the idea that they are "representative" of the Ugandan society and public opinion<sup>9</sup>. The question is how much were the discussions still shaped

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<sup>7</sup> This division of the citizen's work is more or less in accordance with M. Mamdani's thesis in (1996) *Citizens and Subjects. Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late colonialism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, New York, David Phillip, Kampala, Fountain Publishers, London, James Currey. These tendencies of the Movement regime have also been underlined in different contexts by S. Dicklich (1998), « Indigeneous NGOs and Political Participation in Uganda under the NRM regime : 1986-1994 », in H. Hansen & M. Twaddle (eds.), *Developing Uganda*, London, James Currey, Kampala, Fountain Publishers, Athens, Ohio University Press, Nairobi, Heinemann, p.145-158 as well as A.M. Tripp (1998), « Local Women's associations and politics in contemporary Uganda », in H. Hansen & M. Twaddle (eds.), *Developing Uganda, op. cit.*, p. 120-132.

<sup>8</sup> See for a historical perspective on that question M. Chibita & P.J. Fourie (2007), « A Socio-History of the media and participation in Uganda », *Communicatio*, 33 (1), p.1-25.

<sup>9</sup> This is actually one of the greatest tensions in the deliberative democracy theory, as Habermas said : « L'idée d'un accès ouvert à tous est à l'origine de la sphère publique bourgeoise, mais c'est aussi le principe sur lequel

by this specific class “origin”<sup>10</sup>? How much were they socially enlarged from the original group of friends?

The first discussions were held between the owners of Club Obligatto and managers of the famous Ugandan band which used to perform there, Afrigo Band. This pub aims at getting a well off clientele of a certain age: the food and the concerts are expensive, the music (which reminds of afro beat), being appreciated by people between 40 and 60 years old. The bar was famous for attracting the “crème” of Kampala’s political and business class: it was not rare to see cabinet ministers sipping a beer. When the club was launched in 2000, the owners, themselves wealthy ganda businessmen in their 50’s, with links with the NRM establishment and the Buganda kingdom, wanted to advertize it, and decided to offer the lunch to their friends on Saturdays. They used to gather there and discuss, especially about the electoral campaign which was just launched and marked by the surprise of Kiiza Besigye’s candidacy (Museveni’s former doctor and important cadre of the regime). One of the important common characteristics of the members of this informal discussion group was that a number of them had known each other at King’s College Budo, Uganda’s oldest and most prestigious school, created in 1906 on the model of Eton<sup>11</sup>. Compared to other places and spheres, the bar was the cradle of a masculine sociability, where men came without their families, and where relations were relatively equalized, compared to when someone is receiving at home or other social gatherings such as clan meetings, wedding ceremonies etc.

The political discussions between these high profile friends were characteristic of their vision of politics. All supported the NRM, but discreetly, and not because of its leftist revolutionary ideology but rather because they acknowledged what Museveni did for the stability and the business community and because they support the *status quo*. They represent some kind of conservative branch of the Movementist ideology. The extract from a conversation I had with two of them, reproduced below, illustrates that idea:

**A1-** In the old days [under Amin and Obote] you find you have a car like this one if it’s taken away and you are killed, it’s driven with the same [plate] numbers [they didn’t even bother to change it]... My friend’s father was killed just because of his property... If he was not rich maybe he wouldn’t have died, but he died because of his money so why do I want politics? Let the man [Museveni] rule as long as he wants as long as we have peace...

**A2-** We didn’t think it’s was going to be like this, but he [Museveni] has brought a change. Big change... You can make your money and you can drive any car you want<sup>12</sup>...”

The owner of the Club admits he supports the NRM and that he “campaigns” for them “talking about the NRM in private circles”. An important member of the Kampala business community, he has access to the closest acquaintances of the president, including the first family, even if he also says

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elle achoppe », (1993), *L’Espace public. Archéologie de la publicité comme dimension constitutive de la société bourgeoise*, Paris, Payot, p.95.

<sup>10</sup> The word « origin » must be taken with caution and not be assimilated as the « true nature » of these discussions see on that question M. Foucault (1971), « Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire », in *Dits et Ecrits*, II, text n°84, p.136-156.

<sup>11</sup> See the history of the school by one of its headmasters : G.P. McGregor (2006), *King’s College Budo. À Centenary History 1906-2006*, Kampala, Fountain Publishers.

<sup>12</sup> Conversation with two friends from the Club Obligatto group (recorded), Kampala, 25/09/09.

that he is “not interested in politics”. The suitable way of “doing politics” for these actors is actually to have private conversations and to support the NRM financially, in a discreet manner. All these actors didn’t have any open political commitment or activities in their youth. They were not especially enthusiastic about the “grassroots democracy” model that Museveni implemented in 1986. The discussions in the Club Obligatto wanted to be distinct from these popular spheres of “deliberation”. They were hostile to their “politicization”, understood as their investment by open supporters of political parties, considered a vulgar form of doing politics<sup>13</sup>. That’s why some of them opposed the decision to broadcast the discussions.

The idea of broadcasting the discussions was brought by Maria Kiwanuka, also an eminent member of Kampala’s business community and owner of a radio station<sup>14</sup>. In the heated context of the 2000-2001 electoral campaign, she wanted to launch a new media product. For the owners of the bar, it was a commercial opportunity, which prevailed on the desire to preserve the exclusive and distinguished character of the discussions.

## 2) A limited enlargement of the discussions

Even before than the decision to broadcast the discussions, the first circle of friends was enlarged to cadres from the administration who came to the Club to have “a proper lunch, where you don’t have to choose between meat and chicken”, as one of them told me... After the launching of this new media product, just before the parliamentary elections, more people came, especially students, who were from another generation (mainly born in the 1970’s) and who were sometimes very close to specific political parties, which found it was a great opportunity to campaign and touch people easily despite the restrictive legislation against their activities under the “no party arrangement”. Young and unknown MPs, from remote constituencies, especially Northern Uganda, began to frequent the *ebimeeza* a lot in order to have cheap and easy media time as well as access to citizens. Rapidly, with the success of the first *ekimeeza*, other radio stations picked the trick and launched their own, this time in luganda.

Before they were banned in 2009, the three main *ebimeeza* in Kampala gathered between 200 and 600 people every week end. Usually, coming to an *ekimeeza* is free, apart from one where you have to buy a soda (more or less 700 shillings, around 30 euro cents) to enter in the bar<sup>15</sup>. Some members walk long distances in order not to pay the taxi to come. Going to an *ekimeeza* also demands a lot of free time.

Here are some results I got from the questionnaires I distributed in 2008 about the characteristics of the audience. I only give the results for the one in English because of lack of space<sup>16</sup>:

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<sup>13</sup> Which is interesting per se because these support the « no party democracy » not so much in accordance with Museveni’s revolutionary ideals but from a bourgeois point of view against the fact that parties are for masses and the popular classes, whereas the true intellectuals base their arguments of the strenght of ideas and not party loyalties.

<sup>14</sup> In May 2011, after discreetly supporting the regime for several years, she was, to the surprise of many, nominated Minister of Finance in Museveni’s new cabinet.

<sup>15</sup> The owner of the bar openly wanted to « regulate the entries ».

<sup>16</sup> See for the whole results of the investigation with questionnaires : F. Brisset-Foucault (2011), *Prendre la parole en Ouganda. Critique et citoyenneté sous l’hégémonie du Mouvement de résistance nationale*, Thèse de

- Average age: 32,3 years old
- 98,3 % are men
- The majority of the people in the audience come from Northern and Eastern Uganda, which is the reverse of the proportions in Kampala, where the majority of the people come from the Central region. Compared to the original ethnic composition of the discussions in the Club Obligatto (exclusively Baganda), there is a tremendous change here. Nevertheless, in the *ebimeeza* in Luganda, the majority come from Central. The reasons are mainly linguistic.
- 75,9 % hold a diploma (from high school to University)
- 54,4 % have a University diploma
- 13,4 % have no diploma at all
- 12,5 % are students
- 85,7 % vote regularly
- 16 % go to other *ebimeeza*. In the case of the Luganda shows, this figure is higher, because of linguistic reasons (the offer is bigger in Luganda).
- 51,8 % are engaged in an association
- 61,5 % of the respondents never talked in the microphone

Two elements are obvious to characterize the audience: it is predominantly male, it is very educated and there is an important separation between a minority which has access to the microphones (orators) and the others (spectators). Some discriminations are deepened when one considers only the characteristics of the orators compared to the spectators. The orators are even more educated (only 5,75 % of the orators don't hold any diploma, and 68,5 % have a University diploma), they have more associative activities, and some of the ethnic characteristics change as well (the people coming from the Centre and the West of the country are a bit more represented among the orators compared to the proportion in the audience globally). On the contrary, there is a change of proportion concerning gender: women are more present among the orators compared to their proportion in the audience, because the moderators of the debate favor women.

Officially, according to the code of conduct (see below about this document), "any member of the civil society in Uganda" is authorized to have access to the microphone. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of the term "civil" takes here all its potential<sup>17</sup>: if officially organizers are not allowed to discriminate and that the pub is, objectively, open to anyone who wants to enter, the founders, the organizers (orators and journalists) as well as the most famous orators would like to preserve a certain "civility" to the discussions. The inequalities created by the procedures are not resented by the founders and organizers, they are seen as a way to protect the sphere of "deliberation" from a what was perceived as a social and moral degradation. This is well illustrated with the discourses the founders and a lot of orators have around the fact that one of the *ebimeeza* is in English. They praise the use of English not so much because it is the vehicle of a form of multi-ethnic citizenship but because it vehicles a form

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doctorat en science politique, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, p.581-595. See the appendix of this paper for a discussion of the methodological aspects of the research.

<sup>17</sup> Where it takes not only the meaning of being not linked to the State but also a moral, behavioural sense of « gentility ». See on the evolutions of the implications of the term N. Elias (2000), *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, and for a discussion of the term with African examples J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff (eds.) (1999), *Civil society and Political Imagination in Africa*, Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press.

of exclusive citizenship, which is supposed to be limited to educated, “rational” and suitable people, as one of them (a lawyer) explained to me:

**“Q: Why did you do decide to do it in English?** We thought that... First of all, most of us are relatively educated, we are intellectuals, we wanted intellectual arguments. We didn’t want rumor. Because a guy would just come up, pick out a rumor from somewhere, and make a statement... And say come on, where did you get that... So, if you’re an intellectual you say what you are saying much better, you would like to stick to the fact, analyze them and then come to a conclusion. (...) You see that other *ebimeeza* which have developed since had arguments which were not intellectual. They were based on rumor, they were based on some tribal sentiments, they were based on certain bias. We didn’t want that. We wanted to create a platform where people could feel free to have intellectual arguments. (...) We knew that the language the people are taught in school is English. Very few schools teach in luganda for example. We all learn in English. Our books are in English, our constitution is in English, our statutes are written in English. Our Parliament debates in English. So why would we debate in local language? We wanted something which is that standard<sup>18</sup>.”

During the debates, grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary errors in English are systematically noticed and mocked by the spectators. The majority of the founders and of the orators regret what they feel is a deterioration of the intellectual level of the debates over the years.

### **3) The justification of repression on the basis of the capability of citizens, the voluntary limitations to the enlargement of the discussions through the procedures**

There was a relative social enlargement of the audience of the *ebimeeza* since they were created but there was also an emphasis on the implementation of rules and procedures in order to control the kind of speech deployed that were still creating a lot of inequalities. The majority of the orators and the journalists expect the interventions to be based on research, to bring knowledge to the audience, and the orators to respect the rules. They want to maintain the idea that the *ebimeeza* are a battle of wits, and not an equivalent of what is called in France the “café du commerce”, a place where people give ridiculous and pompous statements or, worst, an angry crowd or “shouting matches”.

Because of that, discipline is an important issue in the *ebimeeza*. Several shows have codes of conduct like the one reproduced below (image 2). Disciplinary measures, like being expelled from the show, are sometimes taken by an executive committee when a member commits a felony<sup>19</sup>. In general, there is a consensus around the necessity to be severe, among the members, the journalists, the politicians from all sides and the State. Over the years, one could witness a growing process of bureaucratization of the *ebimeeza*, which corresponded both to an injunction from the State, which was getting worried about the *ebimeeza* and considered they were a potential source of public disorder, the journalists, who were afraid the government might ban the *ebimeeza* and wanted to preserve the quality of the show, and the orators, who wanted to preserve its quality as well. Among them, some used the executive committees of the *ebimeeza* as stepping ladders to gain status both inside the show and inside their political party, as being the “chairman” or one of the “secretaries” of

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with A. Shonubi, Kampala, 28/07/08.

<sup>19</sup> I have found several letters of apology in the archives of the show where the offender describes his fault and asks to be admitted again on the show.

one of the *ebimeeza* gave them some political momentum<sup>20</sup>. Generally, there is a high coincidence or articulation between the instructions of the State, the radio producers and the orators themselves around the kind of speech that should be deployed in the *ebimeeza*<sup>21</sup>.

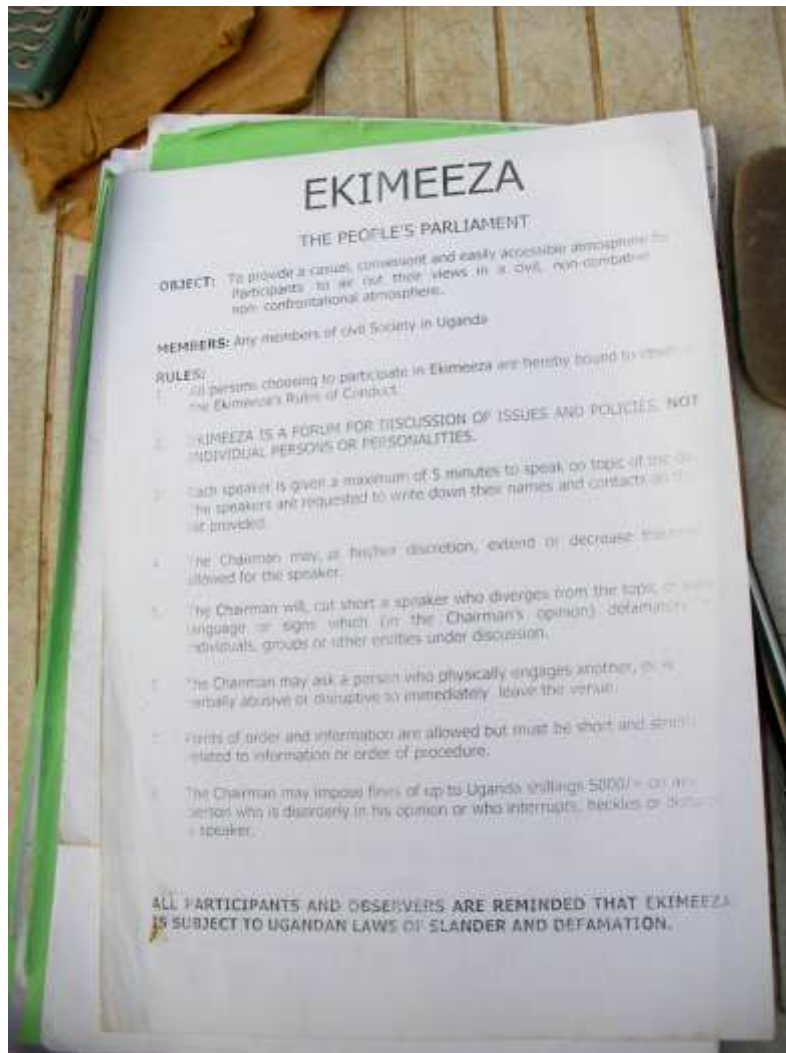


IMAGE 2 - EKIMEEZA CODE OF CONDUCT

The powerful executive committees in the *ebimeeza* in Uganda and the formalization of the code of conduct in the one in English followed the State's first attempt to ban the *ebimeeza* in 2002. The rules enforced correspond both to the representation of what a good intervention should look like according to the producers and the orators, and to the instructions of the State. For example orators are not supposed to discuss "personalities" but stick to issues. This echoes with an old controversy

<sup>20</sup> I analyse this process in detail in my PhD dissertation, in particular in the case of the NRM. Several subaltern activists inside the ruling party created orators associations and were elected inside the executive committees of the *ebimeeza*, and this gave them some kind of legitimacy to be acquainted with big men inside the party and even to gain access to the president.

<sup>21</sup> With the exception of the important issue of the kingdom: one of the important rules in the *ekimeeza* of the radio of the kingdom is to display blind loyalty to the king and support to the loyalists' agenda, which goes against the NRM's vision of citizenship.



between the State and the media around the nominal denunciation of corrupt politicians as well as the idea that nominative criticism is equivalent to mob justice. In that sense, the rules inside these spheres of deliberation are influenced by the way journalism was defined as a profession from the 1980's up to today and the compromises that were found between journalists and the State around certain issues. The *ebimeeza* codes were directly drawn from media deontology codes. Journalism as a profession is also a source of control of the kind of speech displayed by citizens in the *ebimeeza* as the State has required that "professional" journalists (as defined by the 1995 Press Act) should host the debates. Journalists orient the debates because they have the control over the choice of the topic (see examples of topics in the appendix at the end of this paper) and, in the case of the one in English, distribute "issues to consider" on a sheet of paper before the debate (see in the appendix).

The producers, managers and journalists generally agree with some of the State's injunction and the project to control lay political speech on the airwaves is a shared one, especially in times of crisis. The journalists, both because they agree and also because they anticipate repression, usually stop taking phone calls live on air when there are riots in town.

Respecting the rules and the procedures also echoes with ancient representations of morality in Buganda. Personal behaviour, good manners (*mpisa* in luganda) are highly valued and represent one of the scales on which individuals and leaders are judged, even if these manners have evolved in time<sup>22</sup>. As historian C. Summers analyzed, for the Buganda officials under the Protectorate, breaking civility rules was used to express dissent towards the British<sup>23</sup>. In the 1990's, anthropologist M. Karlström showed how morality and good behaviour were central in ordinary definitions of democracy and good polity in Buganda<sup>24</sup>. Democracy is often defined by his interviewees as a society where leaders and subjects respect rules of civility, which are both ethical and political<sup>25</sup>. This ideal of civility is expressed in some of the orators' discourse, when they talk about how they would like the rules to be better implemented inside the *ebimeeza*, and the fact that "politics" disrupted this ideal order based on civility:

"*Ekimeeza* council is supposed to create discipline, and sanity and order, like in any good society. But unfortunately society being political at *ekimeeza*, it over raided the *ekimeeza* council, in that for instance if somebody is undisciplined but people love him the way it is, then that person could not yet be disciplined. At one point even me I was very undisciplined, but because by then people loved me by then, by then the majority of the people love me. And then now when I don't attract so much popularity, I am very disciplined. Council evaporated. For matters of civilization (sic), it is my humble wish that probably it would have been there, because we really believe in the law, because it is a

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<sup>22</sup> See for precolonial Buganda H. Hanson (2003), *Landed Obligation. The Practice of Power in Buganda*, Portsmouth, NH, Nairobi, Heinemann. See for colonial Buganda A. Richards (1964), « Traditional Values and Current Political Behaviour », in L.A. Fallers (dir.), *The King's Men. Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*, Londres, New York, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, p.294-335.

<sup>23</sup> C. Summers (2006), "Radical Rudeness: Ugandan Social Critiques in the 1940's", *Journal of Social History*, 39 (3), p.741-770.

<sup>24</sup> M. Karlström (1996), « Imagining Democracy. Political Culture and Democratisation in Buganda », *Africa*, 66 (4), p.485-505.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.490. Accountability of leaders is also central in that scheme. This was visible in the Resistance Councils, see R. Banégas (1998), « Entre guerre et démocratie : l'évolution des imaginaires politiques en Ouganda » in Martin D.-C. (dir.), *Nouveaux langages du politique en Afrique orientale*, IFRA, Nairobi, Karthala, Paris, p.187-262.

Nation where tomorrow these characters they are contributing... So when you don't have order, simply everyone does everything<sup>26</sup> ...”

Nevertheless, it would be untrue to see some kind of continuity between the ideals of civility under the pre-colonial and colonial systems and today. As we said earlier, the *ebimeeza* are places where relative egalitarian ideals are also expressed. Even if civility is still an important value which political centrality is reaffirmed through the *ebimeeza*, there have been some fundamental ruptures with ancient schemes of politeness especially in terms of respect to age and relations between genders, but also political status.

Analyzing the way the government justified its attacks on the *ebimeeza* is a way to decipher how it imagines a “suitable” or a “decent” way of talking about politics and a “legitimate” format of citizenship. The first argument in favor of the ban in 2002 was legal: according to the Broadcasting Council (the institution in charge of regulating the airwaves), the licenses given to the radio stations were meant for indoor production. Political speech deployed outside the controlled environment of the studios was not acceptable: the lay citizens’ discourses couldn’t be cut as easily as when they are given from a phone call. More generally, the place from where political speech is deployed was debated: is it suitable to talk about politics from anywhere? The president himself declared *ebimeeza* should be conducted in...

“ ...non intoxicated places which don't disturb other people's freedom. (...) I am a footballer you know but I can't play [along] Kampala road. (...) You can see this issue is out of order; why are you carrying out an activity in a place for something else? To [turn] a bar [into] a media house? No, there is something wrong. (...) I can't hold meetings in a toilet. Why should I hold meetings in the toilet? I think people would think I am mad<sup>27</sup>.”

As J. Willis showed, discourses and politics of restricting alcohol consumption vehicle political and moral injunctions and models of citizenship<sup>28</sup>. Of course, the fact that the *ebimeeza* were taking place in places where alcohol is consumed was one of the main points of discord. Political speech under the influence of alcohol incarnates the “bad politics” (Museveni), of confusion, deception, immorality and irrational violence. The *ebimeeza* were also presented as a manifestation of idleness and a useless way of doing politics.

What is interesting is that the repression was stronger on shows in vernacular language and shows produced in rural areas. Generally political control is stronger up country. The media houses are less autonomous from public funds, and human rights movements are weaker than in town, as well as the opposition political parties. Opposition leaders have for a long time denounced the fact that they have a lot of difficulties to access the airwaves outside Kampala. The Resident District Commissioners, the powerful representatives of the president at the district level, exercise a lot of control on political activities in their area, and put pressure on local media houses, monitoring who

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with A.L., Kampala, 14/07/08.

<sup>27</sup> President Museveni quoted in B.D. Mulumba, « Museveni cautions on bimeeza », *Saturday Monitor*, 1/02/03.

<sup>28</sup> J. Willis (2007), « 'Clean Spirit'. Distilling, Modernity, and the Ugandan State, 1950-1986 », *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1 (1), p.79-92.

they host in their talk shows<sup>29</sup>. The rural radios receive strong injunctions to focus on “development”, rather than “politics”.

In the aftermath of what is usually called “the Buganda riots” in 2009, four radio stations were banned, one of them (the kingdom’s radio) for more than a year, and the *ebimeeza* were banned as well, up to today. It was not the first time the government tried to ban them. According to the State authorities, they were encouraging violence and chaos because the speakers were not qualified enough to handle “political” topics. According to the government, the speakers were not talking, but rather “shouting”, “insulting”, and sometimes “fighting”<sup>30</sup>. Generally, the repression against the media in 2009 was aiming at two targets: to defuse radical royalist speech, which found the *ebimeeza* a good place to be deployed in, on the one hand; to control lay political speech on the other. Apart from banning the *ebimeeza*, the Broadcasting Council wanted the studios to be equipped with special machines that could delay the phone calls coming in, in order to record them and edit them if something was deemed wrong.

To ban the *ebimeeza*, the elites of the regime had to produce an explanation that could justify the apparent contradiction in the fact that a regime which had based part of its legitimacy in the creation of a “grassroots democracy”, where popular political speech was granted a fundamental role, could suppress such a thing called “people’s parliaments”. They had to differentiate “decent” (sic) popular speech from the other, and through that they had to define how a “good” citizen was supposed to talk politically. On the other side of this suitable citizenship was a degraded form of political speech, characterized by the influence of ethnicity, violence, alcohol, ignorance and idleness. *Ebimeeza* were described as “a platform for mayhem”<sup>31</sup>, accused of encouraging tribalism and violence, even “genocide”, they were accused of “insulting” the president rather than “educating” people. The discourse of a former cabinet minister who also owns a small radio station in town, I interviewed just after the ban illustrates that:

**“Q: And what about the bimeeza programs?** That one I don’t even think that one should be allowed to come back as far as I’m concerned. As far as I’m concerned, they went out of hand. There were no rules, people would come and tell all sorts of rubbish, drunkards... people who... I mean people would come and say I don’t like so and so, he’s stupid. You can’t allow such things on public. Because you are having a lot of people listening to those radios. And you can create a very dangerous precedent. Yes.

**Q: So you think they should not even come back... Because you had one on Metro FM, if I’m not mistaken...** We stopped it, we all stopped it. (...) You can bring people in the studios. You can have political programmes that are controlled, where you have a topic and people talk, and you bring people who have the capacity to debate. But you bring people who don’t even have a capacity on an issue, and they just make all sorts of funny statements. It’s dangerous... This is a very powerful tool, you cannot misuse it. (...) **Q: But it’s also a way for the Ugandan people to express themselves...** (*sounds annoyed*) Noooo! But they are not expressing themselves! Noooo! They are abusing each other! They are not expressing themselves in the sense that they will tell you something that will help you. (...) You want to express yourself, who are you? ‘Oh, I am so and so...’ You are expressing yourself

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<sup>29</sup> On the pressure on rural media houses see Human Rights Watch (2010), *A Media Minefield. Increased Threats to freedom of expression in Uganda*, New York, HRW. See also M.A. Habati, J. Masinde, « Besigye, Otunnu face tough times without FM stations », *The Independent*, 24/02/10.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with former Minister from cabinet, Kampala, 28/09/09.

<sup>31</sup> A. Mugere, « Political Radio *Talk shows* are a platform for Mayhem », *The New Vision*, 12/08/02.

as an individual? As an expert? As somebody representing LC1 [Local Councils level 1, new name of Resistance Councils, local government participative arena created by Museveni in 1986]? And somebody... I mean, what is your... What's your take? You stand up, you're talking about land, you live in a hired room in Nakulabye like you just told me, and you're now talking about land, you don't know anything that talks about land? What are you talking about? You don't... You're not a tenant on land, you don't own land, you're a tenant in somebody's house, who probably is a tenant... The owners of land, have never gone to any *ekimeeza* to speak! The tenants... who are renting the land, the lawful tenants have never gone to speak to these *bimeeza*... The guys who are speaking do not even own land! **Q: But they are entitled to have a position...** What position? Which position? Tell me your position. You're living in a hired house. You don't know the relationship between the tenant and the landlord... You don't even know the relationship. **Q: But they are Ugandan citizens...** Ok so you're a Ugandan citizen, so what opinion are you giving? Of abusing? **Q: Not necessarily abusing...** No but most of them were! (pause) And they are talking on issues they have no...they have no... facts about. I want somebody... who is a tenant, to come and say... I'm not happy I am a tenant, the landlord, who is giving us his land is cheating us, is pushing us, and because I am a tenant I do not any benefit out of it... Let him speak, or let somebody who knows about that speak! But these guys do not even know that... (...) **Q: But the fact that you want them to be more educated... The whole point of the Movement system was to allow people to have a voice...** Nooo. (...) No, no, no... don't compare the two, the two are totally different. (...) What used to happen in a LC, I was a chairman of LC1. On LC1, you would have a meeting, somebody would put up his hand, I don't agree with this, you get somebody else correcting, he says no, no, it's not like that, it's like this. It was not a place where they insulted each other. Until today... So the people who go to this, they are just guys and women who have got a way, they want to do a game, some of them are paid, they get paid to come and give a propaganda about certain things. And I don't think... To use the radio to have a thing like they had in Rwanda would help us very much<sup>32</sup>."

This kind of discourse is denying the speakers a certain format of citizenship: the right of the capacity to talk in public about any topic. Their opinion is reduced to an "insult". According to the State and the NRM elite, the citizens should limit themselves to a "suitable" format of oratory, in accordance with Museveni's modernist vision of politics (away from "backward" and "sectarian" politics, that is to say the influence of ethnicity) limited to "development" issues, deployed in State controlled spheres of deliberation, and limited to local issues: a citizenship based on residence and practice. *Per se*, they encouraged the formation of a "bifurcated public sphere" (Mamdani), characterized by the separation of the voice of the non educated *wananchi*, and the voice of the elite, who assume a role of guidance and endorse the clothes of the professor of politics. As such, the "democratization" encouraged by the NRM in the 1980's, was reinterpreting ancient rules of legitimacy and political participation already in place during the protectorate, based on the level of academic education<sup>33</sup>. Doing politics when you are not capable to handle it leads to "bad politics" (Museveni). This despise against uneducated citizens is widespread among NRM elite. Uneducated peasants need to be educated by the elite<sup>34</sup>. As Ibirige Ssebunya, at that time Minister for Agriculture once said to a rural crowd:

<sup>32</sup> Interview with former cabinet minister, Kampala, 28/09/08.

<sup>33</sup> M. Chibita & P.J. Fourie (2007), « A Socio-History of the media and participation in Uganda », *art. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> On Museveni's « pedagogic strategy » and paternalism see R. Kassimir (1999), « Reading Museveni : structure, agency and pedagogy in Ugandan Politics », *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 33 (2/3), p.649-673.

“Some of you who are wearing slippers and are making noise about a third term. Leave that to us who wear suits. You people need to work hard in your gardens, get money and buy a shoe like mine, a shirt like mine, a coat like mine, and then you can talk politics<sup>35</sup>.”

One of the main injunctions is to adopt an “intellectual” attitude, which is opposed, in the codes of conduct, to “emotional outbursts” and “personal attacks”, or criticism based on ethnicity and religion. The moderators are specifically very vigilant on the issue of tribalism. Generally, academic knowledge and expertise, research, are considered barriers against irrationality and anarchy.

Generally, apart from the specific case of the ekimeeza of the kingdom, which puts an emphasis on the celebration of the greatness of Buganda, the procedures are in accordance with Museveni’s modernity model, one of its objectives being to “go beyond ethnicity”, which is defined as a “short term problem” (*Sowing the mustard...*, p.188), which could be “solved” with commerce, development and education.

#### **4) The importance of education in the political imaginaries, in the establishment of morality and reputation**

One of the most striking characteristics of the *ebimeeza*, in English or in other languages, are how they copy procedures and forms of talk associated to the universe of the Westminster Parliament. People attending are called “members”, “members in the House” or “Honorable members”, the speeches are addressed to “Mr Speaker” or to “Mr Chairman”<sup>36</sup>. The language used is formal and reminds of the parliamentary debates (“Allow me to proceed...”), the topics are sometimes called “motions” etc. This similarity is not the result of mere mimetic. It reflects the integration and reinvestment of habits of public speaking acquired in school through the numerous debating societies one finds in Uganda, which are inspired by the debating societies that were founded in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and still exist today<sup>37</sup>. These societies are widespread in Ugandan schools from the primary to the University levels. Leaders testify how important they were in their political socialization<sup>38</sup>.

When they were created in Britain, debate societies were supposed to encourage students to engage in a “civil” form of politics, as opposed to left radical ideologies, and to breed some of them to the Parliamentary debates. They were thought as domesticated means to produce reputation and to canalize competition between the students<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> E. Kisambira, « Leave 3rd Term talk to those who wear suits – Sebunya », *The New Vision*, 2/06/03.

<sup>36</sup> The « Mr Chairman » is omnipresent in the members’ interventions. In the show of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2008 on *Radio One*, I counted that it was said 169 times, that is to say, for a total of 17 participants, an average of 10 times per speaker, and an average of one time each 18 seconds !

<sup>37</sup> See on Uganda K.E. Cheney (2004), « ‘Village life is better than town life’ : Identity, Migration and Development in the Lives of Ugandan Child Citizens », *African Studies Review*, 47 (3), p.1-23 and on Britain : A. Engel (1980), « Political Education in Oxford 1823-1914 », *History of Education Quarterly*, Autumn, p.257-280 ; M. Ceadel (1979), « The ‘King and Country’ debate, 1933 : Student Politics, pacifism and the dictators’ », *The Historical Journal*, 22 (2), p.397-422 ; F. Graham (2005), *Playing at Politics. An Ethnography of the Oxford Union*, Edinburgh, Dunedin Academic Press.

<sup>38</sup> See for example in Museveni’s autobiography : Y.K. Museveni (1997), *Sowing the Mustard Seed. The Struggle for freedom and democracy in Uganda*, London, Macmillan, p.15.

<sup>39</sup> A. Engel (1980), « Political Education in Oxford 1823-1914 », *art. cit.*

Many of the orators and spectators in the *ebimeeza* have this experience of debate societies. Some of them, especially among the most successful orators, even engaged in debate competitions at the district and national levels. It was the case of one of the few female orators, Mary Mutesi, born in Busoga in 1978, who won a national debate competition when she was 16. The procedures that the *ebimeeza* follow are openly inspired by the codes of conduct of the debate clubs, as one of the founders, who was also the secretary King's college Budo debate society in the 1970's, told me<sup>40</sup>.

This association between *ebimeeza* and school debate competitions is renewed generation after generations. Debate societies ask for a lot of involvement and work from children. They engage in one debate per week, have to prepare the topics, learn the codes, diversify their vocabulary, learn proverbs and correct their grammar mistakes. One understands better the patterns of the *ebimeeza* when realizing the formality of these debates competitions among children. Individuals acquire reflexes of using specific titles (Mr Chairman, point of information etc.) and forms of talk that re-invested in the *ebimeeza*. The political competence and the citizenship models that are deployed in the *ebimeeza* are thus influenced by these specific spheres of public talk.

More generally, the success of the *ebimeeza* and the fact that they attracted a lot of people is linked with the specificity of the Anglo-Saxon way of doing politics inside the University. Every year, a Guild president and his/her whole cabinet, as well as members of the Guild Representatives Council (GRC, the Parliament of the University) are supposed to be elected. They are supposed to campaign inside the campus but they also use outside possibilities of visibility in order to convince fellow students of their value and their capacity to represent their interests not only in front of the administration of the University but also in front of the government and the society. Multiply the number of candidates for the Guild presidency or the GRC by the number of Universities in the Central region and you will have an idea of the number of youth who are longing to get a position inside the student's leadership and dying to get some visibility in the national media. In 2009, when I was talking to the Prime Minister of the Guild in Makerere University, he told me how he encouraged students who want to engage in a political career to go and speak in the *bimeeza*:

"It sends information to your potential voters in the villages and to show that you have the capability to speak. Because when you go to Parliament, it's not just a matter of sitting there, they [the constituents] must know that you have the capability of speaking. (...) [With the *ebimeeza*] you get used to the masses so that when it comes to campaigns you are not scared you are already used to public speaking. Guild is to groom future leaders [but] most of us are not known, we've been in boarding schools [isolated from the world], you have to wait for your name to be known<sup>41</sup>."

This was reflected in the questionnaires I distributed. In the *ekimeeza* in English, 91 % of the respondents said they had occupied a position in the students' leadership when they were at school. They were even more among the orators. 14 of them had occupied a position in the Guild in their universities. Two former Makerere guild presidents were coming regularly to the *ekimeeza*.

In the GRC sessions that I observed, the similarity between the procedures used in the National Parliament, and as such in the *ebimeeza*, was striking. The exchanges were sometimes very

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with E. Kayondo, Kampala, September 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with E. Kintu, Kampala, 21/09/09.

aggressive, but the speakers were always respecting the formality of the procedures and the titles: each and everyone was addressing the others with the “Honorable” title, waiting for the “speaker’s” permission to ask a question or make a point, after raising the hand and saying “point of information”, “order” or “amendment”. Other words characteristic of the Parliament were also used: “This House”, “the gallery” etc. Many Guild representatives were wearing ties and jackets<sup>42</sup>.

Even if in the Kingdom’s *ekimeeza*, cradle of the reinvention of a citizenship and a political subjectivation that are respectful of the royal etiquette, the imaginary of school education as a central source for political morality and the establishment of one’s ability as a leader and as a citizen was very visible. Between 2002 and 2006, in the *ekimeeza* of the Kingdom’s radio (called “Mambo Bado”), the oratory competition was based on what participants called “The Houses System”, which was invented in order to avoid a partisan scheme of political competition. The “Houses system” was adopted in order to respect the legislation against party politics but also according to ancient representations of politics and political competition. Several authors have shown that a lot of Baganda used to view politics and political parties negatively years before the arrival of the NRM, seeing it as a source of violence and degradation for the kingdom, as it displaced political competition from the axis of the king<sup>43</sup>. According to M. Karlström, this historical hostility is one of the reasons why the Baganda seized the Movement democracy so enthusiastically in the 1980’s. This hostility to political parties is still present even among opponents to the regime and is visible in Mambo Bado: “As people of the Kabaka (King), we must sit together”, the moderator was telling me. Generally the *bimeeza* are celebrated as places of sociability beyond political lines. At that time, the audience was divided into four “houses”. Each one gathered around 100 people seating next to another:

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<sup>42</sup> If the attachment to the procedures is common in students’ mobilizations because they are supposed to protect the democratic character of the movement, the attachment to the titles and the hierarchy was amazing for a French researcher accustomed to the format of student assemblies inherited from 1968, where some façade of equality is “de rigueur”, even between students and professors.

<sup>43</sup> See in particular M. Karlström (1999), *The Cultural Kingdom in Uganda, op. cit.*

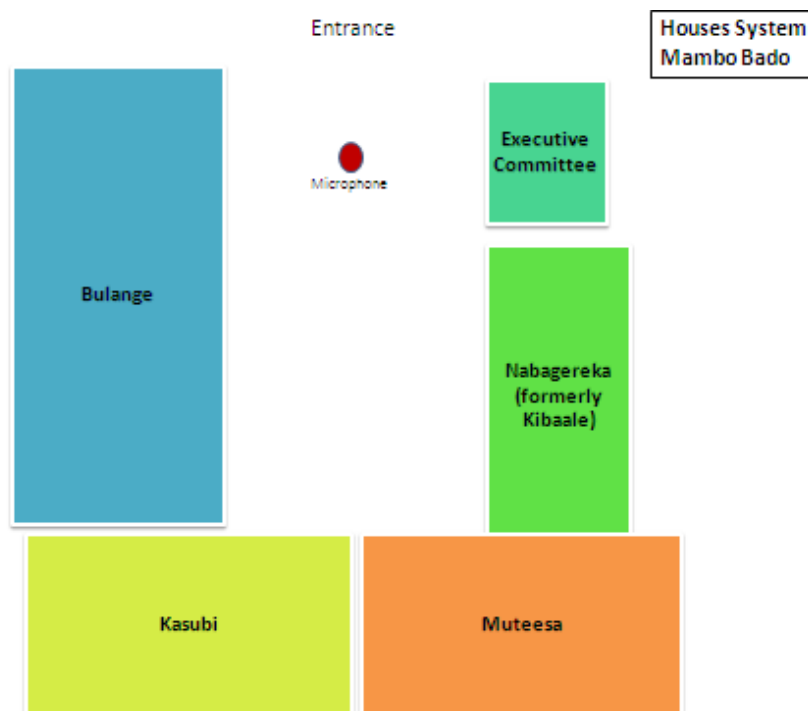


IMAGE 3 - HOUSES SYSTEM - EKIMEEZA OF THE BUGANDA KINGDOM

Each “house leader” (supposedly elected) had to choose a few people among the house which he thought were good speakers and to give their names to the executive committee of the show. Each house was competing against the other and each speaker was presented as coming from one house.

The word “house” is often interpreted by participants as a reference to family links and solidarity as well as a respect to hierarchy, but members of the executive committee told me this system was created in reference to the British-Ugandan education system where students’ dormitories are called “houses” and which are the basis for sports competitions in public schools. According to historians<sup>44</sup>, the houses were created in Ugandan schools explicitly to break ethnic loyalties and create “non ethnic citizens”. Even today they are thought as cradles of “multi-ethnic life lasting friendships”<sup>45</sup>.

The importance of education institutions in the definition of legitimate ways of being engaged in politics is striking when one looks at the action of the Buganda kingdom. Two of its most motor-mouthed representatives, Betty Nambooze and Moses Kasibante had a talk show on the kingdom’s radio about the history of Buganda. They used to call each other “Madam Teacher” and “Class monitor”, nicknames that they used extensively when they campaigned to become MPs during the

<sup>44</sup> See C. Summers (2006), “‘Subterranean evil’ and ‘tumultuous riots’ in Buganda. Authority and alienation at King’s College Budo, 1942”, *Journal of African History*, 47 (1), p.93-113.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with E. Kayondo, Kampala, October 2009. The houses were thought as good tools for maintaining discipline among the crowd and in order to break party solidarities and divisions. Nevertheless, according to participants, the houses tended more and more to reflect party positions as people were moving seats from one week to another and tended to go and seat with party comrades. So for example the House on the right side was known as the House of the NRM people. The executive committee was dominated by activists from the Democratic Party, which has been closely associated with the revival of royalism for the last few years. This partisanisation of the House system did not please the organizers and the Minister for Information of the Kingdom, who ordered they be dismantled, interestingly just after the return to multiparty politics in 2005.



2011 elections<sup>46</sup>. One of the kingdom's most powerful satellite organizations is Nkobazambogo, a students association launched a few months before the restoration, which aim is to sensitize students to the kingdom's issues and get them involved in cultural and social programs supervised by the kingdom from primary school to the University. It is one of the most powerful social organizations in Uganda today, being implemented in many schools around the central region. The young man on the picture wears the uniform of the association, in bark clothes: one can notice that it openly reminds the costume of students when they graduate, with the square cap.



IMAGE 4 - A MEMBER OF NKOBAZAMBOGO IN UNIFORM (COURTESY NKOBAZAMBOGO)

In the 1960's, students were demonstrating in their academic gowns in order to give more respectability to their cause<sup>47</sup>. Up to today, according to the secretary general of Nkobazambogo, underlining the students' status gives credibility to recriminations and is a protection against repression:

"The freedom of a student is not the freedom of a person who is out. I mean if the police comes out and sees kids in uniform with badges, it's not the same attack as a person who is... you know. (...) We are protected under those conditions. And we use them maximum. (...) Last year I organized a march, it was from the campus to the Parliament. I mean you can't organize it when you're coming from the villages. You know... The police person came, but they saw us in our uniforms, with small undergraduate guys and we marched it. And later on we converged, and generally we have that kind

<sup>46</sup> Namboozee won, Kasibante was first declared winner, then his victory was cancelled when the NRM candidate asked for a recount, after which he was declared the winner. The case is still pending though.

<sup>47</sup> K. Byaruhanga (2006), *Students' power in Africa's Higher Education. A case of Makerere University*, London, Routledge, p.55.

of... Even the Parliament was stopped and the Speaker said 'I have to listen to these people'. If it had been just other people we wouldn't have gained this attention<sup>48</sup>."

##### 5) "Enlighten the masses": *ebimeeza* as spaces of distinction and a school for leaders, the integration in a history of students' mobilizations

Bragging about one's education level and qualities as an intellectuals, despising the other members and mocking their "stupidity" is the most common strategy of distinction in force in the *ebimeeza*. Even if the University and the old figure of the "évolué" have lost momentum in Africa since the Academic qualifications don't fulfill the promises they used to<sup>49</sup>, the people who did invest in superior education had to find places where their qualities and qualifications could be of social and political value: the *ebimeeza* are such places. The fact that they can be the stage of one's intellectual valor partly explains their success. They remain as isolated islands where academic resources can still be a source of pride and recognition (on moral, intellectual as well as financial ways). They reflect the distress of a population of "alienated intellectuals"<sup>50</sup>, that is to say a gap between their expectations and the objective probability of reaching their dream position in society. *Ebimeeza* are places where they can be introduced as intellectuals and called "Honorable". As such, the *ebimeeza* can be articulated to a history of Ugandan students' mobilizations, which, even in the 1950's, the decade of anti-colonial mobilizations in Uganda, were disconnected from general political demands and linked to an expectation of recognition of their status in society and the threats to their living conditions<sup>51</sup>. In the political organizations of the 1960's, the students were expected to take a part in the "edification of the masses", to travel around the country to explain to villagers Obote's political doctrines<sup>52</sup>.

The fact is that employment opportunities have shrank for graduates for the last years. There are more and more universities since the liberalization of higher education in the 1990's. But in 2009, only 6000 job announcement were published in the press for graduates, for a number of 37 000 people who graduate from the University each year<sup>53</sup>. According to the national service of statistics, 1,3 million Ugandans are underemployed<sup>54</sup>: professions which are not valorized are occupied by University graduates<sup>55</sup>, and these positions are considered by these actors as a "purgatory"<sup>56</sup>. For the members of the *ebimeeza* who are in this situation, they want to preserve the quality of the open air talk shows, in order to preserve the fact that they can claim their intellectual character thanks to them. The trajectories and discourses of members illustrate this quest of recognition:

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Prince Wassajja, Kampala, 3/09/08.

<sup>49</sup> See R. Banégas, J.-P. Warnier (eds.) (2001), « Figures de la réussite et imaginaires politiques », *Politique africaine*, 82.

<sup>50</sup> M.H. Curtis (1962), « The Alienated Intellectuals of Early Stuart England », *Past and Present*, 23, p.25-43.

<sup>51</sup> See K. Byaruhanga (2006), *Students' power in Africa's Higher Education...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52.

<sup>53</sup> A. Izama, « Unemployment is a national emergency », *Daily Monitor*, 10/10/09.

<sup>54</sup> T. Butagira, « Unemployment, Poverty worse in towns – Report », *Daily Monitor*, 22/06/09.

<sup>55</sup> People who use the *boda boda* (moto taxis) in Kampala know that a number of them are driven by students who want to get enough money to pursue their studies or even teachers who don't earn enough.

<sup>56</sup> R. Chartier (1982), « Espace social et imaginaire social. Les intellectuels frustrés au XVIIe siècle », *Annales ESC*, p.389-400, see p.393.

P.S. was born in 1979 in the Central region in a ganda family with agricultural background. He speaks English and luganda. Helped by a rich uncle, he went to school in Kampala where he headed the debating society. He participated in several debate competitions up to the district and national levels. He then entered the University of Makerere to study finance. Even after he graduated, he spends most of his time on campus, being affiliated to a Church close to the University and using the students sociability spaces in order to make acquaintances and look for employment. He lives on short term contracts with NGOs, making consultancy reports, and considers he is being underemployed. When he is out of money he borrows from acquaintances and sells products from the family farm in Kampala. In parallel, he was elected in 2002 vice-chairman of the Local Council of his village up-country. After beginning to frequent the *ebimeeza*, he entered the Democratic Party. He was a year after nominated at the Buganda Kingdom youth council, according to him thanks to the reputation he got from speaking in public in the *ebimeeza* and the way he defended the loyalist agenda. He wants to become an MP and was an unfortunate candidate in 2006 as an Independent and then again in 2011 but this time with the support of the party. According to him he was defeated because of electoral frauds. PS has an intensive practice of public speaking in the *ebimeeza*, but only in the ones in luganda. Before they were banned, he used to go to three or four debates per week end. He was always seated at the front rows and registered almost every time to speak since 2008. His style is aggressive against the government and characterized by an intensive use of proverbs and idioms.

**“Q: What do you do? How do you make a living?”** That is a good question! (he laughs) They usually call me on short time jobs, they call me and tell me you are due to do some capacity building, you go there and they take you, they can give you some work for two weeks, then you save the money. (...) Sometimes we give them our CVs, academic qualifications, and tell them that if there’s anything available, please inform us. I’m trying now to get some permanent job. Because I have one degree, my first degree was here in Makerere University, and I majored in Finance. But getting a permanent job today is not very easy<sup>57</sup>.”

“I worked hard for the mayor of Kampala, I worked so hard, he could always call us, ‘I want you because you’re a speaker of *ekimeeza* please campaign for me, after debating at the conclusion you say people vote, you tell people to vote for me’, but when you go through, their phones are always off and when you tell them to meet you they give you an appointment and when you reach there the secretary tells you ‘he’s very busy wait, wait’. And for us, I went to school, I have my degree and I want to get a second one, I don’t have time to be used<sup>58</sup>.”

A.L. was born in 1984 in Masaka. His mother is Munyankole bank employee and his father a Muganda with a history of mobilization in the Democratic Party and the catholic establishment, also a businessman in the coffee sector. A.L. followed a catholic education and was a prefect at school. He converted to Pentecostalism in 2003, at 19. He graduated from Makerere in 2006 in economics. In 2008 he found a job in a consultancy firm. When he was a student, he was a member of several political parties (first DP, then FDC and finally NRM) and also got involved in religious students organizations. He organized workshops on the campus where he invited national leaders to address students. Today, he is a member of the Panafrican Movement, a Movementist organization close to a former political commissar of the NRM, veteran and cabinet minister, Kahinda Otafire, which organizes debates and seminars regularly. He followed a military and political training at the National Leadership Institute, the political school of the NRM. He has a very intense practice of the *ebimeeza*. He started going in 2005 and started speaking in 2006 after he graduated. He became the coordinator of the debates in 2008. He registers almost every week to speak since 2007. He uses a very researched and elegant vocabulary, a lot of international examples, scientific, historic and literary references, which give his interventions a very dense and sometimes a bit ludicrous character. He sees himself as a future leader (“My real goal in life is

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with P.S., Kampala, 23/07/08.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

national leadership”<sup>59</sup>) but he had a lot of disappointments with the political establishments and the different organizations he approached:

“We tried to sell the idea of an East African Federation to the opposition political parties. They never welcomed it. They tried to put us at the periphery. We did not like that. We are University students we must be put on board. We are a tank of ideas. They left us to the periphery. We looked at where could we sell our ideas. At least be part at what was taking place in the country, and the remaining organization was the [NRM]... They were very receptive. They were very hungry that cadres could do for them work. (...) We told them as University students we have ideas to sell out we want to contribute to the destiny of our country. So if these guys are ready to receive us why can't we... That was the trade<sup>60</sup>.”

F.S. was 23 when I met him. He was a seller in a shop in Kampala. He attends the *ebimeeza* very regularly but only spoke two times. He obtained his A levels but never got enough funding to go to the University. “I will go if I have an opportunity, he was telling me, that's why I'm fighting, that's my ambition”. He prefers the *ekimeeza* in English even if he is a Muganda, because “the people here are intellectuals”. He comes from a modest family, his father is a Local Councilor in a rural area close to Kampala. He has political ambitions, for example retake his father post in the LC. He expresses dissatisfaction with his life which he qualifies “a life of survival”: “Most of my friends have gone to the University, they are in second or third year, that are about to graduate. And some of them, as I see them, that's the kind of life I want for myself<sup>61</sup>”.

P. is a security guard in a private firm. He comes from Northern Uganda, is 35, married, and lives in a very small house in one of Kampala's slums. His discourse expresses how he wants to change his life:

“It's a hard job... But, can I say I'm now used to it. I don't find the difficulties I was meeting at the beginning. It was hard... The first time of my work, the assignment I was given to work in the water, Lake Victoria. (...) Sometimes you would see dead bodies floating on the water, and that one makes your life difficult again. Leave alone the work. There are so many things that can make you die in the lake. One of them is the wind. When the wind is blowing very strong, there's a possibility that your boat is turned. Another one is when you come across dangerous animals like hippos. They can overturn your boat and you die. Sometimes, your motor boat the fuel can get finished, and when the fuel is finished that is also the end of you if you aren't lucky and you are not provided with another fuel immediately. Because when the fuel it is finished, you can't move. You know lake is lake. You follow the direction of the water because you are not moving in the direction you want, it is the water which tells you the direction it wants. (...) **Q: A lot of Acholi people are doing security...** Yes, they are many. They are many of them. They are quite many. Although they are serving in different companies, but in the company I work, big number of them. **Q: Why is that?** One of them, I've told you there's a problem in the north, this thing of Kony's war has raged on for many years, and... so many people have run away from there... I'm not one of them! Because by the time I came here, the war was not as serious as it used to be, so that did not force me to come here. (...) when you compare the level of education in the North, with the one of here in the central, there's a big difference... There's a general marginalization, people of the north, are marginalized. They don't have better opportunities like people in the central have. (...) **Q: Your job you told me it was very difficult... Do you think about changing?** Yes I think I would tell without fear is that nobody wants to be a security guard. The way I see it. Having been there for quite a long time. Majority of these are looking for better things to do. So if there's an opportunity... **Q: What is your ambition? What do you want to do?** What I want to do...

<sup>59</sup> Interview with A.L., Kampala, 14/07/08.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with A.L., Kampala, 14/07/08.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with F.S., Kampala, 18/08/08.

In terms of what? **Q: Of profession...** Well personally... I want to talk as P., not as security guard. As P. I would like... First if I had the money I would first go back to school. Because where I have stopped is not something I would like to be. **Q: So what would you like to study if you had an opportunity?** Civil engineering. I like it and maybe the political science. Yes. Because first of all I like politics. Myself I like politics. Yes. **Q: Do you want to engage in a political career?** Very much. That's why you normally see me going there [at *Ekimeeza*]. Although at my level I cannot do anything to change anything, but at least what I hear from there makes me happy sometimes. I like politics<sup>62</sup>."

Bimeeza are places where people keep bragging about their political and intellectual capacities, as well as about their supposed popularity especially among those who are sometimes contemptuously called the "villagers", the "ordinary people" or the "local people":

"On *ekimeeza* you become so popular. I'm so popular... If you walk with me in town, and you see the people talk to me in town this other language because of *ekimeeza*. If you go to the village, every week end, they tune in to see who's debating. When I'm introducing myself I introduce myself, my name, and I don't introduce the area here in town, I introduce the area I come from in the village so that they know so and so is there representing us. So I go there at the *ekimeeza* and such people call us, that we have such and such problems and we know you are on *ekimeeza* please try to talk about this issue, our roads are so bad, you should talk about that issue because the politicians will be listening and the government will be listening, maybe they will work on that program. Actually I've become so famous because of *ekimeeza*<sup>63</sup>."

Orators justify their participation by saying their intellectual qualities need to be shared for the common good, because they have the capacity to "represent", to "enlighten" the "masses" and the "rural folks", and they need to "educate" the "public". This "mission" can even be presented as a self sacrifice, considering the "risk" they are taking<sup>64</sup>. A lot of them say they want to become MPs, "national leaders", and even that they see themselves competing for President one day. These speeches are usually accompanied by expressions of contempt towards these "masses" which they are supposed to enlighten, their ignorance, backwardness etc. This imaginary public is often called the "locals" by the orators.

Actually, these kinds of orators do try to engage in political careers and sometimes become candidates to an election. Majority of the time, they are nevertheless not elected. But *ebimeeza* are, just as debating societies in Britain or in the Empire<sup>65</sup>, places where one can try to build his/her political reputation, especially when one doesn't have access to traditional venues of political rise such as powerful kin or allies. *Ebimeeza* are integrated, nurturing and modifying networks of recognition and political breeding and mentoring.

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with P., Kampala, 19/08/08.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with P.S., Kampala, 23/07/08.

<sup>64</sup> Interviews with several orators, Kampala, 2005 and 2008.

<sup>65</sup> See A. Engel (1980), « Political Education in Oxford... », art. cit., p.267 where the authors recounts the story of a young student who won a competition at the Oxford Union in 1831 and was noticed by a Duke who offered him a pocket borough : « Through his eloquence and success in the Union, a young man without any strong political connections of his own was catapulted into Parliament at the age of 23 ». For an example in South Africa see W.K. Durrill (2000), « Shaping a Settler Elite : Students, Competition and Leadership at South African College 1829-1895 », *Journal of African History*, 41, p.221-239.

These ambitions are nourished by actual models of fulfillment. Some successful politicians actually frequented a lot the *ebimeeza* and present their rise as a result of that involvement, and it is widely believed that this is a fact. Among these, a lot were recruited by the Office of the President as advisors. Actually, when one looks at the careers of these successful politicians, it is easily noticeable that they had other assets, and that speaking in *ebimeeza* needs to be articulated to other practices of networking and reputation building, especially in terms of University diplomas and University students' mobilizations activities, but the *ebimeeza* did help to make them noticed by powerful mentors<sup>66</sup>.

*Ebimeeza* are considered as a "school of politics", of how to fulfill this ambition to become a leader, as one of the members explained to me:

"You know political science was part of the course I was doing, for my Bachelor ... So you know... For me I am somebody who's interested in politics... These places make a very good start for us... (...)When you've been attending this class frequently, it gives them actually a start to go, to get the confidence ... Here you learn a lot, from when the leaders are coming around, interact, make a connection. Then when you go to search any post in your area, it becomes a little bit easier<sup>67</sup>..."

In one of the questionnaires, a member said: "They should give chance to new comers to an opportunity to contribute in addition to the old members. More time should be added in addition to the two hours. One hour can be used off air." The majority of the orators didn't begin to talk right after they first came to the *ekimeeza*, they waited sometimes for several months before registering, because they wanted to gain confidence and to learn more about politics. As two of them were telling me:

"It took me 8 months to have the confidence to talk there. It took me 8 months. Because talking there you need research, because the people out there [the listeners] need researched views! It took me time... (...)**Before that you already had some experience of talking in public, if you were a student leader...** I definitely had, I had, but the people we started with, intellectually they were so ahead... These were people who were experienced, who had more books than me, you know, they were already bigger public figures than me, so you needed to learn, not just to talk for the thing of talking<sup>68</sup>."

"By then you could not compete with the people talking, you could also understand, first you sit down and realize. Because you could talk and people say you are talking non sense. Secondly they could not give you a chance. By then there were very many people to talk. And time we go, we understand, we started talking<sup>69</sup>."

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<sup>66</sup>Franck Tumwebaze is an interesting example in that sense. Born in 1975 in Western Uganda, he got a diploma in Mathematics from the University of Mbarara and then from Makerere. He then worked at the Uganda Revenue Authority while at the same time engaging in mobilization activities during the campaign for the 2000 referendum, still in Western Uganda, for the NRM. In 2001, he got a position in the Resident District Commissioner's office (representative of the president at the district level) and in 2002 he was recruited in the Research Department of the President's Office in Kampala. According to him, his use of the media was a key element in his political rise because it's thanks to his interventions in the *ebimeeza* that he was noticed by big shots inside the NRM and by the President himself. Interview with F. Tumwebaze, Kampala, 5/05/05.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with V. Jadribo, Kampala, 18/08/07.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with K. Makmot, Kampala, 29/07/08.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with A. Wandiba, Kampala, 24/07/08.

The repertoire of academic knowledge is extensively used by orators to prove their value. It was particularly obvious in the extract below. The orator is a cadre of a small opposition political party and was a candidate for MPship. He comes very often at Club Obligatto. Aged 30, former Guild president of Makerere, on this day, 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2008, he wears a jacket and a tie. The debate is about a recent agreement between several opposition political parties in order to beat the NRM in 2011:

**“Orator Asumani Basalirwa:** Mr Chairman... I requested to speak quite early because I want to set the level of debate (laughs). It’s deliberate Mr Chairman. And Mr Chairman... you know wisdom is like a goats’ skin, everybody carries its own (laughs). Mr Chairman... There is a lot of assumption... mixing issues... misinformation and misrepresentation... which in my view I don’t think it’s inadvertent. It is deliberate. Mr Chairman... I am a little bit privileged... to have participated, forming a party to most of these processes from the time parties, opposition parties thought about coming together, I have been involved at relatively high levels... Now the assumption I first want to, to, to deal away with... I will first of all speak for the Justice Forum where I happen to be attorney general (one person applauds). At that level Mr Chairman, we have had internal debate, within the party... when these ideas came out, we had opportunity to discuss, at party level. We had opportunity to disagree. We had opportunity to agree, and I’m sure other parties had the same position, and took the same train. That’s why Mr Chairman, for me I am happy that the Democratic Party requested to continue with internal dialogue. Because people would come and think this is an imposition on the masses. So that is the first impression I want to get away with. As far as some of us are concerned, internal consultation were undertaken, and some parties took it at more broad levels, I don’t know about others, but since we have representatives here, they will talk about it. Number two, Mr Chairman, because I have been present to most of these processes, I want to request that people accept, that for me I am going to speak authoritatively, not ex cathedra. Because if I speak ex cathedra, I will be rumor mongering (laugh)... But because the subject has come out, of course people will have opinion to make debate and comments on it, Mr Chairman in my view, and I think in the views of most of the people here, humanity has values. Whenever you are talking about humanity, you are talking about certain values (total silence of the audience). And Mr Chairman, in my view cooperation is one of the values of humanity. And it is also my view, that because it’s one of the values of humanity, just like stupidity, cooperation is even the supreme in humanity (small laugh). That’s why when you are behaving in a certain manner people will begin wondering whether you’re a human being or not (small laugh). And I’m trying to understand the concept of the people, the perception of the people, with regard to the term cooperation... And I’m not going to go into semantics Mr Chairman, those who want semantics are free to engage in it, I will leave matters of definition to those who pretend to be academicians (laughs). Mr Chairman... Ordinarily, this should not be news, ordinarily! That parties are coming together, should not be news... But because of you who control the media, Mr Chairman inclusive, you find it as news (laughs) And therefore you want to subject it to debate Mr Chairman! But me I think it is not news... **Chairman:** In your view what is news? In your view what is news? **Basalirwa:** What is new about parties coming together? What is new? (laughs, applauds) And what is new about us making this very same argument? The difficulties I have is that most of the pros and cons people are going to make some of us have made them at other levels, internally (laughs). **Chairman:** Yeah but you see, this kind of cooperation you are going into is absolutely new... What we have been used to is coalition, then those coalitions have failed, so this falls news...**Basalirwa:** I am surprised that Chairman... you are falling into the trap of the semantics... (laughs) Very very surprised! (laughs) But I hold you in high esteem (laughs) Let me proceed... (prolonged laughs) Mr Chairman why am I saying it is not news? When you look at this document, and of course I want to appeal to people to read it. Because Mr Chairman you would rather be ignorant for a second and be informed for the rest of your

life (laughs). People should read this document (he is holding a bunch of papers, we suppose it's the transcript of the agreement). When they read it perhaps their debate will change. Because some people are likely to come here and submit from a point of ignorance (laughs). And as I've always said, ignorance is not bad... if you use it as a resource to learn! (laughs prolonged) But if you use it as tool to perpetuate ignorance, that's a problem ! (laughs) Mr Chairman, I am saying cooperation is not new. Parties have cooperated before, and when you look at this document, compare it with the IPFC document, compare it with the document of the G6 submission, there is nothing new... Therefore it is a possibility that people will try to bring about old debates in this subject<sup>70</sup>."

*Ebimeeza* orators don't want to prove that common citizens are capable to handle political speech: they want to prove that they are not "ordinary citizens", that they are intellectuals capable of leading others. As such, they don't counter the NRM hegemonic model of the "bifurcated public sphere", a separation between a citizenship of "politics" and a citizenship of "development", but entrench it, only denying the side they are stuck into by the State: because even if they try so hard to distinguish themselves from "ordinary citizens" and adopt the academic format of talking about politics, the State and the higher elites are not ready to recognize the status of "real" intellectuals to *ebimeeza* speakers. This is precisely how the repression and the ban of the *ebimeeza* were justified by the government.

This attitude and these kinds of speeches during the debates, are accompanied by practices of distinction, which can be translated into techniques of the self (Foucault) such as a careful choosing of clothes, in order to appear, as P.S. says in the next extract, as "a real representative":

"Sometimes people put on ties, those who have political ambitions (...), they are ever in coats, and ties. I think there is no way when you see me I don't wear a tie. **Q: The first time I saw you...** Yes, yes. Because when I go to *ekimeeza* I know I meet some people who come from my home area. So I don't want them to think I'm shabby-shabby. (..) I want them to meet me when I'm smart, when I'm presentable. Sometimes when you put like this [he points at his tee-shirt], they think of you as someone who is incapable of leading a society. **Q: You always have to wear a tie...** Not always. You're supposed to put on a way that can make you to be a real representative<sup>71</sup>."

Orators want to use academic and parliamentary repertoires of oratory in order to distinguish themselves from what they call the "bakopi", in Uganda, the "common men", an expression that conveys a notion of despise against vulgarity and peasant manners. A *mukopi* used to be a "common man" as opposed to a chief or a royal before the suppression of the monarchies in the 1960's, now it is mostly someone who is ill mannered, who was not brought up well. Sometimes this counter-model is incarnated into ethnic stereotypes, especially against Northerners who have historically been politically despised and considered brutal. One never hears that on air, but contemptuous words such as below are not uncommon in day to day conversations:

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<sup>70</sup> *Ekimeeza*, 9/08/08.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with P.S., Kampala, 23/07/08.



“Even the *ekimeeza* in Obligatto it has started to become a bit abusive, especially people from the North. **Q: People from the North?** Even Members of Parliament, Fungaroo [MP coming from Northern Uganda who comes often to the debates], was becoming so, so rude<sup>72</sup>.”

“Some say you guys you engage in *ekimeeza* you are very petty you engage in petty issues... At one time a very very senior lady she works in the corporate world she said ‘eh *ekimeeza* has just become’... You know... She told something... She was tribal. She said that now it is for northerners, those who come from the northern Uganda... (...) She meant that it has tribalized, those are dominating are from the North, and... And also meaning that the thing... People are so petty. People are so personal. People don’t bring out substance<sup>73</sup>.”

This illustrates the degree of political and social ambition these actors carry. The expression of the hopes of using the *ebimeeza* as a step ladder to reach the highest levels of the State was not something exceptional or anecdotal. It was a structural tendency that I was able to observe for the 5 years I did research on these specific spheres of deliberation and oratory.

Some orators from the North actually present the *ebimeeza* as a way to counter the stereotypes against their identity:

“I want to tell you that the majority of the people in *ekimeeza* are Lwos. (...) The *ekimeeza* issue has really helped us, that first we used to be hated so much. Everybody would hate us, but today everybody is with us. These days people... You know we used to even have people who didn’t want to be called Lwos, the Acholis, no they are there, many of us... But you know the *ekimeeza* has made people know us, has made people realize that we were not the monsters that were put before them. Yes. Because when the government came in, the government, you know... told people these are killers, and the mentality was there a lot, until of late, things have started happening and ‘oh no these people are good!’ They are. *Ekimeeza* has demystified, though segregation is still there... (...) By that time people used not to listen to us. I remember back in 1996, when [DP candidate from Central] Ssemogerere was campaigning against Museveni, I remember the slogan was ‘Do you want to go back to those days?’, ‘Do you want to be killed again?’, ‘Do you want these Lwos to go back into town?’ so... The *ekimeeza* has helped us. People view us differently<sup>74</sup> ...”

This desire to distinguish oneself from the “local”, “rural” people, from the *bakopi*, these “common men” with “bad manners”, “school drop outs”, which are sometimes associated to Northerners, and to claim one’s sophistication and belonging to modernity and the elite, is comparable to the aspirations described by S. Newell in the cases of Ghana’s literature societies<sup>75</sup> and K. Barber Nigeria’s theatre troops. In that last case, in the theatre plays...

“... the disciplines of time and space associated with church and school were (...) taken up by aspiring lower-class and petty bourgeois western Nigerians with a view to self-betterment. They became, not second nature, but the token of an unrealized ideal of order, regularity and high status. So it was a project of self realization, deliberately adopted and adhered to<sup>76</sup>.”

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<sup>72</sup> Conversations with former members of *ebimeeza*, Kampala, September 2009.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with A.L., Kampala, 14/07/08.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with K.M., Kampala, 29/07/08.

<sup>75</sup> S. Newell (2000), *Ghanaian Popular Fiction. « Thrilling discoveries in conjugal lives » and other tales*, Oxford, James Currey, Athens, Ohio University Press, p.55.

<sup>76</sup> K. Barber (1997), « Preliminary notes on Audiences in Africa », *Africa*, 67 (3), p.347-362, quote p.352.

As a conclusion, one could state that the rules and procedures in force in the *ebimeeza* are the result of a negotiation between different political actors (journalists, the State, the kingdom, political parties, orators themselves etc.) who project in them their own imaginaries of democracy and modernity, which are sometimes shared, and sometimes different. One can notice the influence of the State and repression on the moral foundation of the legitimacy and ability to speak, as well as a mixture of historicities: the imaginaries of the Academy and the Westminster Parliament are mixed with the reinvention of the Buganda kingdom. Legitimacy and ability to speak are based on a scholar competence, according to the State, the speakers or even the actors engaged in the production of anti-hegemonic spheres of deliberation. Everyone shares the idea that formal education is the key to the legitimacy to speak, and, by extension, of a right to engage in “politics” as opposed to a local sphere of “development”.

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## APPENDIXES

### **Field work on *ebimeeza***

Before they were banned by the government, there were 10 *ebimeeza* in Kampala. As they all take place more or less at the same time in different parts of the city, I had to choose, and I decided to concentrate the field work on three of them, the oldest, the most populated, and the ones that were broadcasted on the most popular radio stations in terms of audience figures. I also went punctually to other smaller *ebimeeza*, which proved to be very interesting because they are used as stepping ladders and practice grounds by beginners. I also did field work on public talk shows in rural areas up-country (in Central and Northern regions), which I don't have space to mention in that paper.

To analyze the *ebimeeza*, I used 5 field work techniques: observations, analysis of transcripts of the shows, analysis of the archives of the debates, questionnaires distributed in the audience, and interviews with spectators, orators, organizers, journalists, politicians who attend the shows, sponsors etc.

27 formal observations were done, with the help of “ethnographic forms”, focusing on several elements but also leaving some margin of improvisations in order not to miss unexpected interesting elements. Specific attention was paid to the behavior and characteristics of the audience, the use of procedures and the recurrent forms of talk, the organization of the debate and their bureaucratic aspect, the respect or not of the rules, the debates on the rules, the content of the speeches, and last but not least the reactions of the audience to what was being said. I video-recorded the debates only twice. Video was useful in order to get more details on what had happened during an edition of the show and the general aspect of the audience and the speakers, but I didn't want to modify too much how people were acting and talking.

Recordings were mainly done by myself as the stations don't keep archives of the shows. 11 shows were entirely transcribed and decrypted by myself. Some in luganda and lwo were translated into English by journalists and a student that were remunerated in the process.

Some of the shows keep archives of the debates which proved to be extremely useful. These consist in lists of registration and lists of contributors, as well as topics (with suggestions of points to follow) and documentation produced and/or used by speakers and organizers. These archives reflected the orientation of the topics and the kind of procedures that are in force in the debates as well as how they are enforced. They also helped me in the process of drawing different profiles of the “members” and the evolution of certain figures over time, as they could be used to trace the careers of the speakers: when did one begin to register, what was the frequency of his/her interventions, was he/she registered in different *ebimeeza* in the city etc.

Interviews were conducted with more than 50 orators, spectators, organizers, “guests” (politicians mainly), both on their biographies and day to day political and social practices/way of life as well as on their opinion of the *ebimeeza*.

The questionnaires were distributed in 2008. In total, I distributed 500, in three different shows and on different days. I got 276 back (55,2 %), the great majority being filled almost entirely. Questionnaires, which were in English, have a lot of defaults in such a field and to approach such an object, which I don’t have space to list up here<sup>77</sup>, but this approach was also the only way to get massive and systematic information on the profile of the people in the audience.

#### **Examples of topics of debates for *Ekimeeza* in Club Obligatto**

President Museveni’s 11 points agenda: what are his chances of success?

The Supreme Court election petition ruling; how do we bring about everlasting political and electoral reforms?

The Domestic relations bill: how can it be designed to favor all sides in a relationship?

The Northern War: How can both sides ensure that this time, the peace process holds?

What is the future of multipartyism in Uganda?

Will Kampala ever turn into a modern city? A look at why cholera still attacks

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<sup>77</sup> This could be one of the points of discussion during the ECAS workshop. The limits and advantages of the use of the questionnaires are analyzed in my PhD dissertation: F. Brisset-Foucault (2011), *Prendre la parole en Ouganda...*, *op. cit.* p.92-94 et p.579-581. Questionnaires were not only a way to compensate the fact that my field research was done in a short period of time (6 months in total spread on several years), they were a way to get information from a different source than my own look, to get in contact with people from diversified background and different profiles than the ones I talked to myself, or the ones I was approached by when I was among the audience. The systematic approach that questionnaires allow is also interesting: it is not only a way to touch many people but to touch them in the same way, with exactly the same questions, at exactly the same time, and to have all this information on paper. I was convinced that the use of the questionnaires was the right call when I realised how the proportions in terms of ethnicity, diplomas and the intensity of the practice were different between my immediate entourage in the *ebimeeza* (mainly very educated, with a reasonable number of women, originating in their majority from Western and Central regions, with an important intensity in the practice of public speaking) and the general audience *as captured in the questionnaires* (less educated, entirely male, majority being from Eastern and Northern region in the case of the one in English, with the majority being only spectators and not orators).

The Kenyan referendum poll, are there any lessons for Uganda

Uganda's Human Rights record: how can it be best improved?

What challenges lie ahead for Uganda in 2005?

The New Cabinet appointments: what should be the minimum standards?

On Ekimeeza this Saturday  
TOPIC: THE NEW CABINET APPOINTMENTS: WHAT SHOULD BE THE  
MINIMUM STANDARDS?  
Issues to consider

- President Museveni is again being sworn in next week as President for the next five years days after which he will be expected to name a new Cabinet. Already there is speculation as to who may make it to the next cabinet but we need to reflect on the out going cabinet and its performance.
- The greatest disappointment that came soon after this cabinet was named was that some people who had already been censured by parliament were again brought back to Cabinet.
- The same accusations of corruption have again resurfaced in this cabinet with some ministers even being subjected to probe over financial mismanagement.
- Already there is preference for technocrats to run the different Ministries other than mere political appointees. Proponents of this argument have said that just like it was in Amin's first cabinet, technocrats should be considered for the post of ministers, as this would make the Ministries more viable.
- Some people have proposed that the new cabinet should be chosen on the basis of expertise and experience. For instance a Minister of Defense should be an expert in that field, so should the one of Health, Agriculture, Transport etc.
- The Issue of regional Balance is also being talked about here. Since government is formed on the basis of winner takes all, how should the North and East be covered considering their trend of voting in the February general elections?
- In the past there has been a complaint on the size of cabinet, which many say raises the cost of public administration. With a population of 26 million people and a GDP of 6%, can we afford a big cabinet?
- Another observation to make here is that much of the current cabinet was not returned during the elections and this means that a few of these ministers are likely to retain their posts. There is a proposal that President Museveni should form an all inclusive cabinet but in case some opposition members agree to serve in this cabinet wouldn't they be considered as people who have been compromised?
- So with all the above considerations what kind of cabinet would you like to see in the next five years?

NB: Please note that the *Ekimeeza* is a forum for Intellectual discussion, rather than emotional, unqualified outbursts; kindly observe this fact and debate accordingly. Thanks Producer.

IMAGE 5 - "ISSUES TO CONSIDER" DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE AUDIENCE BEFORE THE DEBATE BY THE RADIO PRODUCERS. EKIMEEZA CLUB OBLIGATTO. DATE UNKNOWN.

Extract of one *Ekimeeza*

23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2008, Club Obligatto, Live on Radio One

**Topic: The NSSF saga: Who should take the decision on how workers savings are invested?**

*The debate is about a corruption scandal involving the Minister for Security, Amama Mbabazi, who is suspected of having forced the National Social Security Fund to buy some of his land for a very high price.*

**Orator Lacambel** (talks very slowly): Thank you Mr Chairman and Honorable members. I sympathized with some of you who have so far spoken (laugh), because... You seem to be surprised that NRM is corrupt (rires, pause). Mr Chairman, I want to remind the Honorable members, that it is only in Uganda (pause) where (pause) prime government land... is given away... by the president of Uganda, by the way, the chief executive, to a private investor. That government department (pause) buy land from private individuals Ugandans, at exorbitant prizes... It happens only in Uganda (applause, people talk). Chairman... It is also only in Uganda that when such things happen (pause) life goes on normally (laughs). The Constitution for instance says (pause) the governor of the bank of Uganda will not be under (pause) the directive of an authority, or of anybody. But you know, a letter was written directing through the ministry of finance, he was still a minister directing to the governor of the Bank of Uganda to list the amount of money which you know, to be given to... somebody you also know, a private investor... (laughs) (someone: a private investor!) (laughs) Did you even hear rumors along, of impeachment laws are being mooted in parliament... (pause) Mr Chairman (pause)... It is also only in this country (rires) (pause, a woman's voice: that's our uniqueness)... where... (pause) nothing happens until something has happened, and you all just seat there, until I tell you to get annoyed and you even laugh about it instead of getting annoyed (rires). I will make just brief, brief points on this one. Number one... (pause) I want to blame FDC (pause) for the Temangalo saga. (pause) In 2001 and 2006, during the elections, an FDC candidate (pause, qqn: 2006 he was in Luzira)... An FDC candidate... challenged, now secretary general of NRM, Amama Mbabazi of not owning even a [???] in his constituency (laughs)! My understanding is that Amama Mbabazi looked at himself, the power around him, he did not only get annoyed by that statement (rire), he also developed this uncompromising and very dangerous appetite for grabbing... So the next election nobody challenges him as a poor person (a woman's voice: Yes!). Does it surprise you that the land you are talking about, is the land of Amama Mbabazi, if FDC candidate didn't challenge Amama Mbabazi of being poor, you never know, he might not have developed that dangerous appetite for grabbing (rires). **Chairman** : But surely he did not grab... he bought (Kayondo's voice : he bought) **Orator Lacambel** : Mr Chairman the times are now long, how much time you want to give me, I can explain away what you have just said, but because I'm not sure of whether you give me time or not, until you assure me I am going to (rires). **Chairman**: For the sake of Honorable Mbabazi's name, tell us how he grabbed that land! **Orator Lacambel** : Mr Chairman (laugh)... Until I learn... that Amama Mbabazi only realized that his land was sold, after his money was in the bank... (pause) Until you convince me that he learnt about the sale of his land at the amount you know, only after the money had gone in the bank, shall I explain what you want. (laughs) **Chairman**: No, but you are being unfair to Amama Mbabazi. You are saying he grabbed land... That is defamatory. He did not grab any land... (laughs) This radio station is not about spoiling others peoples' names! If you cannot substantiate... No, no, no, no, no, no. If you cannot substantiate. **Orator Lacambel** : Don't worry... I'm not in the mood of withdrawing I'm just explaining. And what you want me is to explain? He grabbed the land in Temangalo. I said appetite to grab property including the amount of money he's selling that land. First of all: was he aware? If he was aware that his land was going to be sold, are you sure he made a telephone call? to anybody ? (pause) Are you sure ? (rires) Are you sure he didn't make a telephone call and reminded somebody that "by the way don't forget, I'm the minister of Security and NRM secretary general". Are you sure he didn't? (laughs) If you can prove that he did not, I will prove to you that he didn't grab (rires). Mr Chairman, I personally have no faith... In NRM's willingness, ability, the capacity is there, but the willingness to fight corruption, we have evidence! This government has no will to fight corruption. Don't be deceived! I can see you're looking at me, but you also know that I'm telling the truth (laughs, applause) I therefore don't take people like Rwomushana seriously, unfortunately he is not here. When Rwomushana comes and says Jim Muhwezi is synonymous with corruption,

and he is not only a member but an active member serving NRM. What is Rwomushana talking about? If Muhwezi is so corrupt that he's synonymous with corruption, when does he walk away from NRM? Can he convince me he is not part of the corruption? Finally... I sympathized with David... Jamwa... [head of NSSF] (someone: a very good man) The bible talks about soulness and soulessness (rires) My prediction is that this money is going to be used... and eventually dumped (applaudissement). What also [???] to me is [???] hiding, in US, he's being looked... for by Interpol (rire), you needed to hear this woman in 2006 singing alleluia in prison, instead of being a Christian, instead of singing alleluia in prison, Jesus, where is she now? (laughs) You see when you are eating... in a group... (someone: you don't talk) That is the Baganda, I am from the north (laughs). You need to look around in case you are scattered now, which direction I am likely to run (laughs). Jamwa is eating with people who would run in the opposite direction compared to his, he may run in the East alone, [Jamwa's region] there will be those who will destroy him so that he doesn't reach Tororo as people run in the other direction... (laughs) **Chairman** : Lastly... (brouhaha) Time is catching up. **Orator Lacambel** : But Mr Chairman I said that is the last one, now you say this is the last one, you say now (he leaves the microphone, laughs, people choke with laughter during several seconds) **Chairman**: These are the views of and not the ones of Radio One. We are not responsible for that (laughs) ...”

**Ekimeeza - Radio One**

**Club Obligatto**

**9<sup>th</sup> of August 2008**

**Topic: “The Newly Formed Inter-party cooperation”**

**Orator Steven Asimwe [school teacher, NRM, 28 years old]**: (someone: chhhh) The cooperation... The cooperation is very, very fine (laughs), and I want to appreciate the nature and the gust which my colleague has established the moments of the paper (laughs). The working document yes, you see, some of us who have been schooling and understanding (laughs), if you say a party has a website, and I don't know whether it is also known in Bukoli (laughs), a website, (laughs). These are dynamics which you can establish... You are talking about bringing parties together, a cooperation. Mr Chairman, a cooperation is very, very good. Even when a rat is fearing to cooperate with a cat (laughs), because that cooperation can lead either one to grow fat (rires) or another one to die... (laughs) In that cooperation, you can cooperate, but the people who are cooperating may not survive in that cooperation (laughs, someone: yes!) Mr Chairman, when these people were trying to cooperate I was around Kamokya in Panafrica, and some guys from one party remained at Kamokya eating pizza, when the cooperation ended, they said we didn't know the time... (laughs) In that cooperation one MP remained in the tent, and there were journalists and they asked 'Where are your members? And he said they are coming, I am told that they are on the way', so the cooperation as they had the working document... Now... When you look at the cooperation... Lukyamuzi has been in politics so much... (Several voices at the same time: Honorable!) Honorable! I can even add doctor! (strong laughs) The question of the continuous... what happened is that the cooperation, you look at our neighbors there, and I want to agree with Basalirwa that you start early, in fact in our local language, they say a bad job you start very, very what? Very early so by the time it comes the evening you know what you have done. Now... I have heard serious DP president and DP legal... euh... guru like this man, a man saying 'no, we are not ready to be eaten'... Then I said 'when shall you be eaten? (laughs) When is the time to be eaten correctly? Because in 1960's, KY and UPC managed to eat you, in

1980 they were supposed to announce you as president, you arrived late and Muwanga did what he did (laughs), now up to now you are saying we shall be eaten...' (...)