

**Botswana Television (BTV) Negotiating Control and  
Cultural Production in a Globalising Context: A Political  
Economy of Media State Ownership in Africa**

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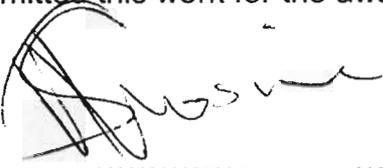
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## Declaration

I, Sethunya Tshepho Mosime, do hereby declare that this is my work, and that all other work has been fully acknowledged. I further declare that I have never before submitted this work for the award of a degree to any university.

Signature.......... Date 30 MARCH 2007.....

Sethunya Tshepho Mosime

Durban, March 30 2007

## **Dedication**

For Motswedi, *e a re go tlogelwa tsatsing, se ikise moriting.*

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I left behind my little baby girl Motswedi in Botswana to complete this thesis. This could not have been possible without unconditional support from my husband Lenano Mosime, Motswedi's nanny Thabo Molefe, and our families.

## **Abbreviations**

AAPC – African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps  
ABC – Abstain, Be Faithful, Condomise  
ACHAP – Africa Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership  
ADNA – African Directions News Agency  
AIM – Agencia Informação Moçambique  
ALDEP – Agriculture Arable Land Development Programme  
ANC – African National Congress  
AP – Associated Press  
AU – African Union  
BBA – Big Brother Africa  
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation  
BCCSA – Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa  
BCP – Botswana Congress Party  
BCSA – Botswana Civil Service Association  
BDC – Botswana Development Corporation  
BDF – Botswana Defense Force  
BDP – Botswana Democratic Party  
BEDIA - Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority  
BEE – Black Economic Empowerment  
BETACAM - Betacamcorder, Betacam tape, or a Betacam video recorder  
BFA – Botswana Football Association  
BFTU – Botswana Federation of Trade Unions  
BMCC – Botswana Media Consultative Council  
BNA – Botswana National Archives  
BNF – Botswana National Front  
BNYC – Botswana National Youth Council  
BNPC – Botswana National Productivity Centre  
BNSC – Botswana National Sports Council  
BOCCIM – Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry & Manpower

BOCONGO – The Botswana Coalition of Non Governmental Organizations  
BOFESETE – Botswana Federation of Secondary School Teachers  
BOJA – Botswana Journalists Association  
BOMEWU – Botswana Media Workers Union  
BOMWA – Botswana Women in Media Association  
BONEPWA – Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS.  
BONNA – Botswana National News Agency  
BOP TV – Bophuthatswana Television  
BOPA – Botswana Press Agency  
BPP – Botswana Peoples Party  
BSA – British South African Company  
BTA – Botswana Telecommunications Authority  
BTC – Botswana Telecommunications Corporation  
BTV – Botswana Television  
BULGASA – Botswana Unified Local Government Staff Association  
CAF – Confederation of African Football  
CBA – Commonwealth Broadcasting Association  
CBS – Canadian Broadcasting Service  
CEDA – Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency  
CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation  
CKGR – Central Kalahari Game Reserve  
CONSAS – Constellation of Southern African States  
CTB – Central Tender Board  
DABS – Department of Architecture and Building Services  
DBS – Department of Broadcasting Services  
DCEC – Directorate of Corruption and Economic Crime  
DIB – Department of Information and Broadcasting  
DIGIBETA – Digital Betacam  
DIS – Department of Information Services  
DSTV – Digital Satellite Television  
DV – Digital Video

DVCAM – Digital Video Cameras  
ENPS – Electronic News Production System.  
FBI – Federal Bureau of Intelligence  
FDI – Foreign Direct Investment  
FES – Friedrich Ebert Stiftung  
FESPACO – Festival Pan-Africain du Cinema de Ouagadougou  
FPK – First Peoples of the Kalahari  
FXI – Freedom of Expression Institute  
GATT – General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs  
GBC – Gaborone Broadcasting Company  
GBCTV – Gaborone Broadcasting Company Television  
GMBS – Gender and Media Baseline Study  
HIV/AIDS – Human Immuno Virus/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome  
HTCs – High Commission Territories  
IBA – Independent Broadcasting Authority  
ICASA – Independent Communications Authority of South Africa  
ICDB – International Children’s Day of Broadcasting  
IDM – Institute of Development Management  
ILO – International Labour Organisation  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
ISP – Internet Service Provider  
ITU – International Telecommunications Union  
ITV – Independent Television  
JAHABO – Journalists Against HIV/AIDS in Botswana  
LEGCO – Legislative Council  
MANA - Malawi National News Agency  
MISA – Media Institute of Southern Africa  
MSCT – Ministry of Communication Science and Technology  
NACA – National AIDS Coordinating Agency  
NBB – National Broadcasting Board  
NBC – Namibian Broadcasting Corporation

NDP – Botswana National Development Plan  
NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa’s Development  
NICs – Newly Industrializing Countries  
NIIO – New International Information Order  
NP – National Party  
NPC – National Policy on Culture  
NPR – National Public Radio  
NRF – National Research Foundation  
NWICO – New World Information and Communication Order  
OAU – Organisation of African Unity  
OB – Outside Broadcast  
OP – Office of the President  
PAC – Pan African Congress  
PANA – Pan African News Agency  
PAS – Pan American Satellite  
PEEPA – Public Enterprises Evaluation and Privatisation Agency  
PMS – Performance based Management Systems  
PSM – Public Service Media  
PPADB – Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board  
RAD – Remote Area Dwellers  
RB – Radio Botswana  
RB2 – Radio Botswana Commercial station  
RFPs – Request For Proposals  
RLGs – Radio Listenership Groups  
SABA – Southern African Broadcasting Association  
SABC – South Africa Broadcasting Corporation  
SACOD – Southern African Communication Forum  
SACU – Southern African Custom Union  
SADC – Southern African Development Community  
SADCC – Southern African Development Coordination Conference  
SADF – South African Defense Force

SAIMED – Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development  
SAMDEF – Southern African Media Development Fund  
SANA – Southern African News Agency  
SAPA – South African Press Association  
SAUDF – African Union Defence Force  
SBU – Schools Broadcasting Unit  
SDI – Serial Digital Interferer  
SI – Survival International  
SIDA – Swedish Development Authority  
SLOCA – Services to Livestock Owners in Communal Areas  
SMS – Short Message Service  
SOEs – State-owned enterprises  
SPEC – Science Pre-Entry Course  
TASS - Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union  
TT – Tautona Times  
UN – United Nations  
UNDP – United Nations Development Fund  
UNESCO – United Nations Education and Science Commission  
UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Fund  
URTNA – Union of Radio and Television Organizations of Africa  
UK – United Kingdom  
UNF – United Nations Fund  
US – United States  
USAID – United States Agency for International Development  
VBI – Vertical Blanking Interval  
VHS – Video Home System  
VOA – Voice of America  
VSAT – Very Small Aperture Terminal  
VTRs – Video Tape Recorders  
WUSC – World University Service of Canada  
ZANA – Zambian News Agency

ZNBC – Zimbabwean National Broadcasting Corporation

ZOU – Zimbabwe Open University

## **Abstract**

*Botswana is considered an exemplary democracy in Africa. It is imperative to assess how an enviable democracy could flourish when the most widely available mass media was not independent. The fact is, despite the fact that media has been at the heart of development in Botswana, it has often been ignored in local academic and popular discussions about democracy and governance. A 1994 seminar on the media in a democracy organized by the Mmegi Publishing Trust (Leepile, 1994), was one of the very few forums where the role of the media in Botswana was given any attention. Even then, most the presentations were not substantive, mainly providing basic information about media institutions in Botswana and laws that protect and threaten freedom of the media. Botswana's contemporary state – media nexus can only be understood within the context of a long history of media dependence and domination by neighbouring South Africa (Zaffiro, 1991) assisted by British colonisation. To appreciate the challenges of cultural production at Botswana Television (BTV) required a study of the problematic encounter between the quest for creative and professional freedom within BTV on the one hand, and the authoritarian gaze of state power on the other hand. BTV operated under an ill-defined broadcasting model, of a state bureaucratic arm, attempting to fulfil the ethos of public service broadcasting. Through the lens of the Newsroom, in-house productions, commissioning and procurement of foreign and local content, the study shows the subtle ways in which state ownership of the media compromises freedom of expression and freedom of information in Botswana. Yet, Botswana continued to enjoy that status of Africa's exemplar of democracy. Good governance indicators consistently gave media in Botswana cursory attention, thereby reinforcing state authoritarianism in Botswana. With a media dominated by state power, Botswana still emerged as exemplary. This complicated the quest for the ideal communication environment towards democratization in the Third World, particularly in a globalizing context. In situations such as that of Botswana, where the institutions that should protect the media from government control are either absent or weak, universal ideals on media freedom are often not enough. Media practitioners are more likely to find support in the local discourses, repertoires and cultures that call upon all, regardless of status, to tolerate opposition. A local tradition of the kgotla in particular, often heralded as Botswana's indigenous form of democracy, is placed in this chapter, at the heart of much of the freedom, limited as it may be, that BTV enjoyed.*

## Introduction

James Zaffiro provides the most sustained effort to explain the development of government-owned media in Botswana; *'Under the shadow of South Africa: Failure of Commercial Radio in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1936 – 1966'*,<sup>1</sup> *'Twin Births: African Nationalism and government information management in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1957 – 1966'* (1989), *'From police network to radio station of the nation'* (1991), *'Broadcasting in post-independence Botswana: the first 20years'* (1988) and *'Broadcasting reform and democratization in Botswana'* (2000). In fact, University of Botswana historian, Brian Mokopakgosi said in 1994 that, "to review a book on media in Botswana authored by James Zaffiro presents a difficulty of comparison, for Zaffiro and media research in Botswana are synonymous" (1994:643). Outside Zaffiro's work, Mokopakgosi knew no other research on media in Botswana, published or unpublished. More than ten years later, the situation was still almost the same.

The history of a media in Botswana, as Zaffiro correctly shows, is ridden with contradiction. Zaffiro's early works were more forgiving to government-owned media in Botswana, but by 2000, he was beginning to accept that media-state relations in Botswana were undemocratic, although he was optimistic the situation would improve (Zaffiro, 2000:89). In his earlier works, although Zaffiro argued that broadcasting in Botswana "has not yet fully extricated itself from its colonial beginnings" (Zaffiro, 1988:8), he saw Botswana as an exceptional country in Africa. He applauded the continued struggle of managers of government-owned media to apparently continue to serve the needs and goals of an independent non-racial, majority-ruled state within a conflict management, public relations based information strategy constructed at the eve of independence. They had adopted a colonial government machine where colonial administrators used the media to repress nationalist and anti-racialist political

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<sup>1</sup> Botswana National Archives, 11, 033

trends at the end of colonialism. The main point of departure between this thesis and existing works on Botswana's 'exemplary' democracy is that, once media is added to the matrix, the quality of our democracy is significantly altered.

Many of Zaffiro's work on the media in Botswana were written before the onset of majority rule in South Africa in 1994. There was a clear intention in these early works to contrast peaceful Botswana with the then apartheid neighbouring South Africa. Zaffiro tended to give the government in Botswana undue latitude and thus failed to problematise government-ownership of media in post independence Botswana. As Kenneth Good (2004) rightfully pointed out, times and situations change. The onset of democratic governments in the region, particularly in Namibia and South Africa has made it possible to more accurately interpret democratic institutions in Botswana (Good, 2004:4). Botswana was one of the last countries in southern Africa to establish a 'national' television broadcaster.

The 2003 Draft National Broadcasting Policy for Botswana contested that government radio and television services were not really national because reception was either poor or not possible at all in remote parts of the country. When it was officially launched on 31 July 2000, BTV was to be inundated by even more paternalistic state control than Radio Botswana, its precursor. Over the years, BTV defined itself in a number ways; as something of a public service broadcaster,<sup>2</sup> an emerging commercial station,<sup>3</sup> and sometimes simply as an informational arm of government.<sup>4</sup> Its precursor, Radio Botswana was heralded by Zaffiro in 1988 as a rare situation in Africa where the national broadcaster criticises government policies, furnishes airtime and coverage to opposition parties and serves the needs of rural listeners with programming in tune with

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<sup>2</sup> This is according to the former director, Andrew Sesinyi,  
[http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from\\_the\\_director.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from_the_director.html)

<sup>3</sup> Outlined in the BTV web page: [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding\\_principles.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding_principles.html)

<sup>4</sup> Botswana government web page:  
[http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry\\_of\\_state\\_president.html](http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry_of_state_president.html)

their life problems (Zaffiro, 1988:3). By his own admission, the assertion was based on an examination of government memoranda, parliamentary and press debates, contracts and offers of technical assistance, national development plans, and elite interviews with senior government officers.

Louise Bourgault (1996) identified several research agendas that have been pursued in mass communication research in Africa. Research may adopt a comparative systems approach on the structures of broadcasting and print media operating within given nations, looking at the relationship between mass media and the system of government within which it operates. Fewer studies look into the operations and the practice of media organizations and Newsrooms. Studies may also look into the role of the media in the promotion of the thorny concept of development. The way production teams go about their work and the way programmes are structured has also been examined in a few studies. Notably, research on the form and content of African television programming has been scarce (Bourgault, 1996: 61-62).

In many ways this study was very ambitious. It was the first study on both television in Botswana and BTV. Without an accumulated body of work on mass media in Botswana to speak to, the study of necessity had set the ground for the understanding of the various aspects of television in Botswana, rather than focusing on a single aspect. It combined several aspects of media research, the history of mass media in Botswana; place Botswana within the political economy of communication of the region; media regulation in Botswana; organisational subcultures at BTV; processes of cultural production at BTV Newsroom, in-house productions and commissioned productions. For a situated appreciation of the limits and possibilities for freedom of expression in Botswana, the thesis finally linked BTV cultural production to an indigenous discourse – the *kgotla*. Cultural production here refers to the means of producing, circulating and exchanging of meanings and images through the media (Hall: 209).

The thesis also decidedly attempted to move away from using Western lenses to understand the media in Africa, but not by failing to engage with Western ideas about mass media and its normative roles. In the same vein with Francis Kasoma (1996) and Francis Nyamnjoh (2005), the author firmly believes that media practice in Africa can have 'African ethical roots and still maintain global validity and flavour' (Nyamnjoh, 2005:90). About half of this thesis was dedicated to the historical roots of government control of the media, both before and after colonialism in Africa and Botswana in particular. It illustrated the ways in which British colonialism partly explains the media environment in contemporary Africa. The other half of the thesis looked specifically into the birth of BTV under this historical context.

The thesis is organized into eight chapters. The birth of BTV can best be understood from the birth of its precursors, radio and print. Chapter One juxtaposes Botswana's current success story, against a history of negligent British colonialism, threat of annexation into the Union of South Africa and brunt of apartheid. It is crucial to understand the history and development of broadcasting in British Colonial Africa as determined by the BBC and the British Colonial Office. In the specific case of Botswana, initially the British colluded with the South African government as the eventual annexation was a foregone conclusion. Seretse Khama, first President of Botswana, was to feel the full brunt of apartheid for marrying British Ruth Williams. Grand apartheid starting in 1948 made South Africa somewhat unpopular and paved the way for Botswana's independence. Around the same time, a nationalist awakening was taking place in much of Africa including Botswana. Bechuanaland colonial administration found this a threat without a government information service 'setting the record straight', and on the eve of independence, government-owned media was founded.

Chapter Two is on the theoretical framework, methods and methodologies that were employed during this research. It sets the background for the specific

enquiry into BTV. Cultural Studies is under attack from other disciplines for either encroaching into their 'turf' or failing to learn from them. This study is both in defence of Cultural Studies and a celebration of its multi-disciplinary approach. Sandra Harding (1987) calls for a distinction between "methods" as particular tools for research and "methodology" as theorizing about research practice. Some elements of participant observation, focus group observations, face-to-face interviews, meetings, spontaneous conversations, discourse analysis and context analysis were employed. Maintaining a healthy distance from the subject of study was to become the most challenging part of the fieldwork.

The study was purely qualitative, as it was not designed to measure phenomena, but rather to put together the political economy of communication within which BTV was born and the first six years of the station. The empirical data used for chapters on the Newsroom, on in-house productions and on commissioning is presented largely as narrative. This poses questions about what is traditionally called internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to how well data collected and presented was coherent and consistent with the research conclusions (Tonkiss, 1998:259). While internal validity was not a problem, narrative often poses a challenge of reliability or external validity, the extent to which data could be generalized beyond the particular social setting (Tonkiss, 1998:259).

Beyond colonialism, Chapter Three sets the birth of BTV in the context of regional and local politics in the post-independence period, towards a political economy of communication that emerged in Africa in the post War period. It demonstrates through the formation of national press agencies, the challenges faced by African countries, including Botswana, towards the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) during the Cold War. In southern Africa, there emerged at the turn of the twentieth century a political economy of broadcasting, where South Africa became a regional metropolis and the rest of the region became the periphery. The 1970s and

1980s was also a period when the Frontline states and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) made attempts to offset South Africa's dominance. In the 1970s, African countries, including Botswana, under the stewardship of the United Nations Education and Science Commission (UNESCO) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) attempted to create a News World Information Communication Order. The Botswana Press Agency (BOPA), established in 1981 as a central Newsroom serving the *Botswana Daily News* and the Radio Botswana News Desk was a product of this era. Rich ethnographic details from the Botswana National Archives were used to illustrate the Botswana government foreign policy during the Cold War, through the lenses of its media politics. The example of the advent of BOPA is used. The rich historical detail eventually illustrates the paradox that BTV emerged within, of a celebrated African democracy that contrary to expectations, persistently sought to control its mass media. History appears to have repeated itself, for, the birth of BTV was to meet similar challenges to its precursors radio and print, but for different reasons. BTV was born into an entrenched system of servitude to the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), ruling since independence. From as early as 1968, the BDP government often used foreign consultants to legitimise its control of the media, as will become apparent from the discussion of reports made by Information Consultants A.J. Hughes (1968), and C.N. Lawrence (1978).

Chapter Four explores the mirage of autonomy that eluded BTV in its early years. When the idea for television for Botswana was conceived in the mid 1980s, the idea was that it would be separate from government, although wholly funded. When the project started in earnest in 1998, the thinking was still that BTV would be some kind of parastatal. However, within months of the commencement of the projects, conservative sections in the Department of Information and Broadcasting began to lobby for government control. As a result, between 1998 and 2006, BTV regressed from enjoying more editorial independence to at its lowest moments, simply being the information arm of government. In the early days, BTV defined itself as a public broadcaster funded by government. Yet it

defied the quintessential model of a public service broadcaster, a public corporation that entertains, informs and educates the nation, at the same time keeping a certain independence from government (McDonnell, 1991:1,2). Later, it was to shift away from this position, to ambiguous models like public broadcaster, suggesting firmer belonging with the rest of the civil service. There were instances of direct government interference, where content was altered with instructions from outside the station's management. Government control was often not carefully structured; it occurred sporadically, with pressure coming from several conflicting sources and positions at the same time.

Chapter Five unravels the contradictory developments in BTV's journey towards establishing a working definition for the broadcaster. At the BTV, journalists and producers colluded with, resigned to or resisted state control. In-house productions tended to be affected differently by state power. Current Affairs programmes, *The Eye* and *Matlhoaphage* suffered more episodes of overt state interference than magazine, children, educational, sports and entertainment genres such as *Sedibeng*, *Mantlwaneng*, *Mokaragana*, *Sports Hive* and *TalkBack*.

Chapter Six looks into spheres of cultural production through television in Botswana, within and outside BTV. BTV could not fill up its schedule with 100 percent local programmes, and like most other television stations in the Third World, had to purchase foreign productions. Through in-house productions, licensing of local and foreign programmes, and commissioning of programmes from local producers, BTV attempted to straddle between the opposing forces of a nation-building exercise, and the expensive task of filling up a daily schedule.

Chapter Seven maps the wider media regulatory environment into which Botswana Television was born, between 1991 and 2005. Many actors shaped the regulatory environment within which BTV emerged, statutory and activist. Since the 1990s, several Acts pertaining to communication and mass media

were passed. Among them were the Telecommunication Act of 1996 that established the Botswana Telecommunication Authority (BTA), Broadcasting Act of 1998 that established a National Broadcasting Board (NBB) and Press Council of Botswana. In 2004, Broadcasting Regulations were released under the auspices of BTA. Civil society also played a major role through initiatives such as the Botswana Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Botswana Media Consultative Council (BMCC), Botswana Media Workers Union (BOMEWU), Botswana Women in Media Association (BOMWA), Botswana local independent producers associations, and numerous others, with varying levels of success.

Chapter Eight concludes by indicating new directions in the study of media in Africa and Botswana in particular from the rich historical account of events leading to the birth of television in Botswana. The thesis highlighted key moments in the period after it was decided that a television service for Botswana was necessary, to BTV's first formative years. The major question arising from the advent of BTV was the relevance of government ownership and control of the media towards democratization. The approach to the concept of democratization adopted in this thesis is one propagated by both Claude Ake (2000) and Francis Nyamnjoh (2005), that goes beyond majoritarian democracy, to consensual democracy. "This is a political culture which demands the involvement of everyone in promoting the common good...through...active involvement in the process of decision-making and community life in general" (Nyamnjoh, 2005:36). On the one hand, deregulation of mass media would mean giving that very important resource to profit making private hands. Democratic or civic participation in the U.S is increasingly suffering as the media is used to manufacture consent. Robert McChesney, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky have also shown how in the U.S, the media was getting richer at the expense of democracy. Citizens are increasingly addressed as consumers (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005). The alternative to private ownership, public service broadcasting, has its own set of problems. It is increasingly difficult for public service broadcasters to

justify their supposed closer affinity to civic participation and nation-building. In South Africa, the SABC mostly derives its funding from advertising, whereas the BBC has a long standing tradition of staying away from advertising revenues. BTV has often adopted the title of public service broadcasting, sometimes simply to point to the fact that it was run by the public service or under government. Other times public service broadcasting was evoked to suggest an intention to provide editorially independent, universally accessible educating, informative and entertaining content. Public service broadcasting is under fire both within Botswana and in the global context.

Some historical accounts begin from the pre-colonial legacy of face-to-face communication (Ziegler and Asante, 1992; Bourgault, 1995). In fact, Dhyana Ziegler and Molefi K. Asante (1992) are adamant that no understanding of the contemporary philosophies of mass communication in Africa can be achieved without a full appreciation of the role of traditional aspects of communication. While they appreciate the significant role of colonialism, they maintain that it is not entirely true that the press-government relationships were due to the colonial legacy.

As a way forward, the chapter ends by placing the *kgotla* indigenous democratic discourse in Botswana on a pedestal as the strongest guard against the possibility of more rampant editorial control by government on the media it owns. If Siebert, Petersen and Schramm's 'four theories of the press' (Siebert, et al., 1963) were to be applied, i.e. the authoritarian theory, libertarian theory, Soviet propaganda and the social responsibility theory, BTV would possibly transcend all four. Yet Botswana has been heralded the shining example of a democracy in Africa. *Prima facie*, this may lead to a conclusion that Botswana is an example that it was not always true that to protect democracy, neither the state nor the market should control the media. Botswana would be living proof that freedom of the media was not always necessary for democratization. There can be no democracy without pluralism – 'diversity in the media; the presence of a number

of different and independent voices, and of differing political opinions and representations of culture within the media' (Doyle, 2002a:11). In situations such as that of Botswana, where the institutions that should protect the media from government control are either absent or weak, universal ideals on media freedom are often not enough. Media practitioners are more likely to find support in the local discourses, repertoires and cultures that call upon all, regardless of status, to tolerate opposition. A local tradition of the *kgotla* in particular, often heralded as Botswana's indigenous form of democracy, is placed in this chapter, at the heart of much of the freedom, limited as it may be, that BTV enjoyed. The *kgotla* can be compared to Jurgen Habermas' conception of a public sphere, a forum of face-to-face (Habermas, 1989), open and tolerant debate in pre-capitalist Europe.

## **Chapter One**

### **Broadcasting in Africa in the context of British colonialism, apartheid, and legitimization of the nation-state**

#### **Botswana Television in context**

This study of television broadcasting in Botswana analyses the interconnection between 'regulation' and 'production' moments of the circuit of culture (Thompson, 1997:3) at the state-owned BTV. The single channel, fully government – funded, 'public service broadcaster' (Hunt Report, 1999) was officially launched on 31 July 2000 after several delays. The 1988 International Telecommunications Union (ITU) report had recommended a fairly small scale commercial station. Studio Hamburg and Croton reports also supported the ITU proposal. For this reason, the early days of BTV were clouded with the possibility of being created as a separate entity from the Department of Information of Broadcasting (DIB). The project leader, Kevin Hunt and other expatriates appear to have been looking into giving responsible positions at BTV to freshly recruited younger people. Hunt was thinking of a government funded public service broadcaster. It would also imply the broadcaster provides a universal service of education, information and entertainment while retaining editorial independence. Public service broadcasting informed by the example of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) would suggest that the state and the media were separate entities. Very early on into the project, the longer serving and conservative staff of DIB began to lobby for government ownership and control of the station. In that way, positions would be allocated according to seniority and long service with DIB. Continued state ownership of the service was motivated by more than internal power struggles. As the study will illustrate, there was strong resistance

on the part of the state to let go of this potentially powerful media. BTV remains unlicensed by the semi-independent National Broadcasting Board (NBB), while the national radio service is. Reasons given were that BTV was a state broadcaster.

### **An economic success story and a tragic hub of HIV/AIDS, unemployment and poverty**

Botswana is an economy of extremes; high HIV/AIDS prevalence, high rates of absolute poverty, unemployment and yet phenomenal economic growth. In 2000, it was estimated that over 35 percent of adults in Botswana had HIV/AIDS (Hope, 2001). The small population of 1.6million is one of the hardest hit countries in the world by HIV/AIDS (NACA, 2002)<sup>5</sup> but according to the 2003 World Fact Book,<sup>6</sup> Botswana also had one of Africa's most progressive and comprehensive programs for dealing with the disease. At the 2006 national Budget Speech,<sup>7</sup> Minister of Finance, Baledzi Gaolatlhe reported that

The Sentinel Surveillance study for 2005 has shown encouraging results that HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-49 years has decreased from 37.4 percent in 2003 to 33.4 percent in 2005, while HIV prevalence among the group aged 15-19 years, has decreased from 22.8 percent in 2003 to 17.8 percent in 2005 (Gaolatlhe, 2006).

In 1993/94, the number of people living below the poverty datum line in Botswana was estimated at 47 percent.<sup>8</sup> The IMF 2006 country report for

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<sup>5</sup> National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA) (2002), Second generation HIV/AIDS surveillance: A technical report, November, 2002.

<http://www.naca.gov.bw/documents/Dec%202002%20Surveillance%20Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> World Fact Book (2003) <http://www.bartleby.com/151/bc.html>

<sup>7</sup> Budget speech 2006 Delivered to the National Assembly on 6th February, 2006 by Honourable Baledzi Gaolatlhe Minister of Finance and Development Planning Website: [www.gov.bw](http://www.gov.bw) Printed by the Government Printer, Gaborone

<sup>8</sup> Government of Botswana/UNDP National Workshop on Poverty, 9 – 10 February 2000, <http://www.unbotswana.org.bw/undp/docs/National%20Poverty%20Workshop%20Report.pdf>

Botswana noted that the improvement in Botswana's social indicators had not kept pace with its strong economic growth. Poverty remained relatively high with nearly a quarter of the population living below US\$1 per day. Unemployment also remained stubbornly high at over 20 percent of the labor force. The distribution of income was also reportedly highly skewed.<sup>9</sup>

Although much improvement had been made since independence, (Tsie, 1996) many parts of the country did not have electricity, good roads, good health and education facilities, and information technologies such as telephones, internet, facsimile and other communication facilities. It was estimated that in the 2003 World Fact Book that in 2002 in the whole country there were 252,720 radios; 142,400 2002 main telephone lines and 435,000 cell phones (mobile phones). Internet subscribers were 60,000 and the daily Newspaper circulation at 7 000 or 29 per 1000. Television ownership was estimated at a mere 15 percent across the entire population of nearly 1.6million (World Bank, 2004),<sup>10</sup> although in terms of signal availability, according to the 2006 budget speech

Master Plan for the national Radio and Television Transmitter Network coverage has been completed to establish current coverage of both radio and television, and to propose additional facilities required to cover the remaining parts of the country. Currently, about 81 percent of the population has access to good quality Medium Wave and about 77 percent has access to Frequency Modulation radio signals; while television is accessible to about 64 percent of the population (Budget Speech, 2006).

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<sup>9</sup> IMF Country Report No. 06/66

<http://www.bankofbotswana.bw/files/attachments/2005%20imf%20article%20iv.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, ICT at a glance, [http://devdata.worldbank.org/ict/bwa\\_ict.pdf](http://devdata.worldbank.org/ict/bwa_ict.pdf)

United Nations Development Programme put the literacy rate of young adults in Botswana at about 90 percent.<sup>11</sup> In 2003 alone, the July 2003 UN Economic Report singled out Botswana as Africa's overall number one performer looking at the legal system's ability to effectively enforce contracts, predictability of laws and regulations, transparency, the quality of the civil service, access to and reliability of telecommunications, and transport and electricity. Botswana also had made notable efforts to promote women's access to education and health, and moving towards gender equality in employment. World Economic Forum Africa Competitiveness reports have consistently ranked Botswana's public institutions as the best in Africa in terms of their quality, low levels of corruption and respect for the rule of law (see appendix 1).<sup>12</sup>

The Economic Freedom of the World 2003 Annual Report ranked Botswana alongside Norway and Japan as having among the world's highest levels of economic freedom.<sup>13</sup> Transparency International consistently rated Botswana the least corrupt country in Africa and the developing world, and among the best in the world. The 2005 rating also placed Botswana as the least corrupt country in Africa, at least in so far as public perceptions.<sup>14</sup> The 2003 United Nations Human Development report ranked Botswana sixteenth in the world in terms of its total percentage of "females serving as legislators, senior officials and managers", but in 2006, the ranking had regressed to 54<sup>th</sup> out of 75 countries.<sup>15</sup> The Global Competitiveness Report 2006-2007 ranked Botswana 81st, second after South Africa in sub Saharan Africa. Botswana had

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<sup>11</sup> President F. Mogae's Voice Of America news conference 13, November 2003, [http://www.botswanaembassy.org/111303\\_1.html](http://www.botswanaembassy.org/111303_1.html)

<sup>12</sup> World Economic Forum, <http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Africa%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Economic Freedom of the World: 2003:11 Annual Report, Exhibit 2: Summary Economic Freedom Ratings, 2001, <http://www.freetheworld.com/2003/1EFW2003ch1.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2005 AFRICA,

[http://www.transparency.org/news\\_room/latest\\_news/press\\_releases/2005/cpi\\_2005\\_18\\_10\\_05](http://www.transparency.org/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2005/cpi_2005_18_10_05)

<sup>15</sup> Human Development indicators country fact sheets 2006,

[http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_BWA.html](http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_BWA.html)

Succeeded in using its wealth from key natural resources to boost the growth rate. Key to Botswana's success have been its reliable and legitimate institutions, the prudence of government spending and public trustworthiness of its politicians. The transparency and accountability of public institutions have contributed to a stable macroeconomic environment, efficient bureaucracy and market-friendly regulation (World Economic Forum, 2006).<sup>16</sup>

Botswana has been labeled a shining exemplar of democracy in Africa, particularly since the period of unrest in much of southern Africa when South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique were experiencing massive internal conflicts (Meyer, Nagel and Snyder, 1993). When freedom of the media was excluded, as in the 2000 democracy World Audit report, Botswana ranked second most democratic after South Africa in Africa. However, when freedom of the press was included, although still ranking quite high, Botswana was outdone by South Africa, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia and Ghana. She was at the same place with Benin at the fifth place in Africa.<sup>17</sup>

### **Statutory protections of freedom of expression in Botswana**

Media freedom in Botswana is not expressly guaranteed by the constitution, "but is merely to be inferred from the general freedom of expression provisions" (Fombad, 2002:654; SADC Media Law, 2004:21). Section 12(1) of the Constitution provides that "Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold his opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas and information without interference (whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons) and freedom from interference with his

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<sup>16</sup> World Economic Forum, [http://www.weforum.org/en/fp/gcr\\_2006-07\\_highlights/index.htm](http://www.weforum.org/en/fp/gcr_2006-07_highlights/index.htm)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.worldaudit.org/press.htm>

correspondence". Immediately thereafter, limitations to this freedom are set out, including interests of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health (section 12(2)). Besides the constitution, these freedoms are reiterated in several other important documents such as the *'Long Term Vision for Botswana for the year 2016, Towards Prosperity for All'*. "Botswana will have developed its communication capacity, particularly in the electronic media, radio and television. Botswana will be informed about the rest of the world. All Botswana will have access to the media through national and local radio, television and Newspapers" (National Vision 2016:7). It also says, "The society of Botswana by the year 2016 will be free and democratic, a society where information on the operations of Government, private sector and other organisations is freely available to all citizens. There will be a culture of transparency and accountability" (National Vision 2016:7).

### **Botswana: An authoritarian or developmental state?**

Henderson made a list of progressively changing descriptions of Botswana overtime: "a poor state; a client state; a hostage state; a Bantustan; a landlocked state; a neo-colonial state; an administrative state; a model state; a small state; a non-aligned state; a front line state; a democratic state" (Henderson: 1988:219-220). There are two opposing schools of thought pertaining to the nature of the Botswana state; a positive one that it is developmental state, and a critical one that it is a liberal authoritarian state. Due to its economic success and regular and free elections, Botswana has been labelled a developmental state (Edge, 1998; Tsie, 1998; Maundeni, 2004a). Among others, Balefi Tsie, a Botswana Political Scientist bases his position on the poverty that Botswana emerged from at the end of colonialism, and the economic growth it has archived since. When Botswana gained independence in 1965, it was expected at the time it would end a Pan African outpost surviving on international aid and charity (Tsie, 1998:7). Upon independence, the newly formed Botswana state immediately had a mammoth task of turning around the second poorest country in the world after

Bangladesh in 1966, with an estimated gross national product (GDP) of USD 60 million, (P300 million) consisting mainly of beef exports to Britain and South Africa. Botswana was only able to eliminate its dependence on British grants-in-aid by the 1972/73 financial year, a year that came to be known as the year of Botswana's second independence. For Tsie, it was the strong presence of the state rather than private capital that played a major role in creating economic growth that has landed Botswana the status of a developmental state (Tsie, 1998:7-9).

Similar to Botswana, South Korea emerged from a war-destroyed improvised economy in the mid-fifties and in 1996 became middle income economy. Tsie attributed the changing fortunes of Botswana's economy and political stability to being a developmental state compared to the soft/weak and or patrimonial states found elsewhere in Africa. He also looked at sound management of resources. Botswana's political elite such as Seretse Khama removed powers of chiefs and traditional leaders in land allocation, mineral rights, development planning, and collection of stray cattle among other controls, to reasonably competent and honest bureaucracy. Yet by the same token, he also attributed the effectiveness of the same bureaucracy, in the absence of strong civil society on traditional and tribal customs that provide a means of mobilising and expressing opposition. Thirdly, Tsie attributed Botswana's success to a pattern of capitalist accumulation that judiciously combined private capitalism with state intervention (Tsie, 1998:1,2,14). Wayne Edge (1998) also attributed Botswana's success to being a developmental state, akin to other developmental Asian states of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and China (Edge, 1998:333, 334).

As human development indices and other indicators celebrate Botswana as one of the best run country in the world, some scholars have demonstrated that there are reasons to be sceptical of Botswana's success story, particularly with regard to freedom of expression. Kenneth Good (1992; 1996; 2000) and Ian Taylor (2002; 2003), particularly argue that Botswana is a liberal authoritarian state.

Statutory protections of media freedom, direct or implied, have seldom stopped states, particularly in Africa, from violating this very important right. Botswana is no exception. Kenneth Good, persona non-grata in Botswana since 2005,<sup>18</sup> described the Botswana state differently, as an authoritarian liberal state. Like advocates of the developmental approach, Good acknowledges the strong presence of the state in national development rather than private capital. However, he does not see this as a positive and applaudable state of affairs, particularly in so far as it negates the principles of popular participation and openness (Good, 2004:4). The Botswana state historically has utilised legal instruments to restrict information and control opinion (Good, 2004:9). According to Good, as early as 1967, Seretse Khama was using the law to suppress oppositional voices. Using the Penal Code, sedition, defamation and contempt provisions, Khama ordered the police to raid the offices of the opposition Botswana National Front (BNF) to seize copies of their Newspaper, *Puo Phaa* – straight talk. Charges of sedition were brought against founding member and leader Kenneth Koma and four other member of the party. Under Presidents Ketumile Masire and Festus Mogae, the situation of freedom of expression further deteriorated. The independent press only began to appear in Botswana in 1982. This was following the recommendation of the 1978 C.N. Lawrence Report that a Botswana Newspaper Trust be established because “it was both undesirable and unnecessary for the government to be burdened with the ownership and management of all the media of mass communication”.<sup>19</sup> Good also noted that by 1995, five journalists and two editors of a local Newspaper had been deported. A South African refugee-journalist, Mxolisi Mxgashe was imprisoned and then deported for reporting that the Botswana Defence Force had responded slowly to a South African Defence Force attack in 1985. Zambian journalist John Muleka was deported in 1987 after two months as editor of the

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<sup>18</sup> On Friday 18 February 2005, University of Botswana Politics Professor, Kenneth Good, was given 48 hours to leave Botswana as a persona non grata. The reasons were not given, but it was speculated that the government of Botswana took the action because of his strong attacks on Botswana's perceived exemplary democracy.

<sup>19</sup> The Botswana Newspaper Trust, 1980:1

same Newspaper as Mxgashe – the *Botswana Guardian*. The state used the Immigration Act, section 7, which allows the President to declare a visitor or foreign resident of Botswana a prohibited immigrant, without giving grounds of the decision (Good, 2004:9). The Managing Director of the Newspaper, William Jones came under immense pressure to ensure his paper was not perceived by government as left-wing, biased and antigovernment, and 1986 forced his editor, Kgosiinkwe Moesi to resign (Good, 2004:11).

Editor of the Gazette, Malawian Alaudin Osman received threats of physical violence and deportation for running a story on property speculation and self enrichment in a future development of the government enclave among high ranking officials, including Minister responsible for media P.H.K. Kedikilwe and soon to be Vice President Peter Mmusi. Students were also sometimes harassed. In 1994, campus residence of University of Botswana student Busang Leburu was raided by the police acting on the penal code and criminal defamation for having formed an Anticorruption Campaign (Good, 2004:12).

As Joseph Diescho (1997:77) put it, “the process of alienation that started with colonialism continues today in Africa under the aegis of state security and national patriotism” (Diescho, 1997:77). The National Security Act of 1986 was used against government journalist Samuel Mbaiwa in 1987 for incitement, following a Radio Botswana story on public unrest around the disappearing of a young girl in Gaborone. Under the same Act, in 1994, freelance journalist of the *Mmegi* Newspaper, Prof Malema was allegedly beaten and detained by members of the Serious Crime Squad of the Botswana Defence Force and editor, Titus Mbuya was also questioned after the Newspaper revealed confidential details about negotiations during a manual workers strike (Good, 2004:13-14). Yet the same government was passive, and even negligent when in 1990, the then (South African Defence Force (SADF) established a weekly *Newslink Africa* – an intelligence and propaganda publication in Gaborone, right under the noses of government and its intelligence. The SADF managed to

convince the government the publication was bona fide. It was investigative journalism in Johannesburg that *Newslink* was funded and controlled from Pretoria that led to its closure (Good, 2004:15-16).

## **The early history of broadcasting in Bechuanaland**

As this chapter will show, attempts by the modern state in Botswana to control media to legitimise its authority are directly due to the crisis of legitimacy that besotted the British colonial administration on its last days. On the eve of independence, Bechuanaland Protectorate colonial Information Officer A.H. Donald began to see a government information service as a necessity, presumably to interpret the policy and actions of the government to the people; as a continuing service of information and public relation and campaigns and concentrated publicity on particular subjects; to encourage and assist people of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to take interest and responsibility for economic, political, cultural development; to advise government on public opinion and public relation; develop and exploit media to assist District Administration and departments in performing duties; and to publicize the protectorate outside its borders.<sup>20</sup> Following the A.H. Donald Report of 1961, an Information Branch of government was established as a tool for managing the nationalist political awakening. Through careful management of media, authorities hoped to guide the territory peacefully towards independence and harmonious entry into the Commonwealth family. They hoped to promote a stable, moderate politics and market-oriented economic development (Zaffiro, 1988:7).

Raymond Williams (1974) explained how a unique set of circumstances ensured the BBC started off independent when it could easily have become a state – owned broadcaster as was typical in Western Europe. Before the 1926 BBC

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<sup>20</sup> Notes from Alan H. Donald – "Report and proposals for the establishment of an Information Service in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. January 1961. Botswana National Archives, S.582/9 (1c)

Charter, all transmitters and receivers had to be licensed by the state Post Office. The decision by competing broadcasting manufacturers, the Post Office and the armed Services Committee, to set up an independent monopoly with guaranteed revenues from the sale of licenses, was made partly feasible by the pre-existing cultural hegemony of a compact ruling class. Also, unlike in the United States, manufacturers of equipment had not become too powerful (Williams, 1974:27-29).

The first radio signal was received in Bechuanaland in 1927. In contrast to Britain, radio broadcasting in the then British Bechuanaland and the rest of the British colonies, served mainly as a vehicle for colonial administration and policing the protectorate from 1934. On 18 May 1934, a Bechuanaland Protectorate Resident Commissioner justified extension of this service to include broadcasting in the Protectorate so the administration would be able to communicate to and from Mafeking to various outstations in the Protectorate including Ghanzi, Maun, Serowe, Tsabong and Lehututu.<sup>21</sup> The service would be kept at a basic minimum to avoid requesting funds from the Colonial Development Fund.<sup>22</sup> Soon after it was used by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association to solicit labour mainly for South African mines. During the Second World War period, radio served to spread British propaganda about the war. Not much development happened to enhance the output of radio for the benefit of audiences (Zaffiro, 1991). After independence, it serves as a hegemonic state apparatus for the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP).

British colonialism was imposed on the Batswana when the British declared Bechuanaland their protectorate by Order-in-Council in January 1885, to keep the territory from falling into German rule. Immediately thereafter, the British could not care if Bechuanaland became part of the Union of South Africa or dominated by mining concessions for Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa

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<sup>21</sup> Botswana National Archives. S. 370/10 (7)

<sup>22</sup> Botswana National Archives. S. 370/10 (1)

Company. During this time of uncertainty, *diKgosi* – traditional chiefs often bent backwards to protect British Protectionism of Bechuanaland. The Protectorate was forced into a labour reserve for South African mines through the imposition of the Hut Tax in 1899, and *diKgosi* enforced the payments from their people. The people of Botswana – *Batswana* were dispossessed of their land. In accepting British 'protection' Paramount Kgosi Khama of the BaNgwato nation was advised by London Missionary Society's John Mackenzie to offer large tracts of land to the British (Ramsay, 1998:68). D. Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1987:103-106) explained that World War II was seen by *diKgosi* as an opportunity to declare their loyalty towards the Queen. They hoped that after the war, the British Parliament would be less likely to sanction the transfer of Protectorate to South Africa. Many BaTswana men in the Protectorate were against joining the war effort and being listed into the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (AAPC). Tshekedi and other *diKgosi* insisted that their men be involved in the war, as a 'Bechuanaland Protectorate Military Labour Corps', but for many months Britain showed no interests. If *diKgosi* insisted on BaTswana men joining the war, the colonial government told them they would have to enlist through the South African Union Defence Force (SAUDF). As labour became critical, Britain changed its position and by the end of World War II, 10, 027 men from the Protectorate, about 20 percent of the adult male population, were recruited into the force, often brutally made to do so by *diKgosi* (Kiyaga-Mulindwa, 1987:105).

The Protectorate suffered debilitating droughts. In terms of social, economic and institutional development, Bechuanaland was one of the most neglected of British colonies, and it was the only colony ruled from outside its borders (Tsie, 1998, Somolekae, 1998). Until 1963, license fees from the protectorate were paid to the South African Postmaster and forwarded to the SABC. "Apart from a short period during the 1930s, no recurrent expenditure subventions were received by the protectorate government from Britain between 1912 and 1956" (Jefferis, 1998:34). Prior to the 1950s, almost no resources had been invested in its political or economic development. Prior to the 1950s, almost no resources had

been invested in its political or economic development. Notwithstanding, British colonialism was perceived the lesser evil compared to incorporation in to South Africa and the full wrath of its capitalist interests. "At least until the last decade of the colonial era, nationalist sentiment was commonly equated with the retention, rather than rejection, of the British occupation" (Ramsay, 1998:101).

### **'Historical roots of South African domination on radio development in pre-independence Botswana'**

Bechuanaland Protectorate was effectively subjected to two colonial powers, South Africa and Britain with South Africa domination out-pacing the British in certain crucial areas of policy and administration. Willie Henderson (1988) characterized Bechuanaland Protectorate as some kind of anarchy, 'the challenge of the chiefs was defeated, no treaty rights between the local rulers and the Crown were accepted as existing, foreign policy was motivated by the issue of incorporation into the Union of South Africa and domestically, the High Commissioner was constrained by native law and custom (Henderson, 1988:224).

James Zaffiro (1989) examined the historical roots of South African domination on radio development in pre-independence Botswana. During this time, the eventual annexation of Bechuanaland into the Union as part of the Cape Colony was a foregone conclusion. The protectorate was reduced to a labour reserve for gold and diamond mining, mainly of the British South Africa Company of Cecil Rhodes. For many years before the South African Nationalists introduced 'Grand Apartheid', racial discrimination in 1948, colonial administration was content to receive News coverage about the Protectorate from South African and Rhodesian press (van de Veur, 1995:171). Colonial policy towards the other High Commission Territories (HTCs) of Basutoland and Swaziland was also that they would eventually become part of the Union of South Africa.

When in 1936 the SABC was created from former independent African Broadcasting Corporation, it was given a total monopoly of radio broadcasting which included the High Commission Territories under the Broadcasting Act of 1936. Under the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, SABC became responsible for collection of listener license fees through the Postmaster General of the Union. Bechuanaland was also virtually a monetary/fiscal province of South Africa. She was a member of the Rand Monetary Area. It was not until 1972 that Botswana began to collect data on its own foreign trade. Interest rates, exchange rates, and the level of foreign reserves were determined by the Reserve Bank of South Africa. In 1976, ten years after independence, Botswana introduced its own monetary policy (Tsie, 1998:7).

### **The 'Seretse crisis': Bechuanaland under the shadow of apartheid South Africa**

Seretse Khama, who was later to become independent Botswana's first President, was the heir to the BaNgwato nation in Bechuanaland. He married white British Ruth Williams in 1948, the same year that Dr Daniel Malan of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party was voted into power by South Africa's white minority. Malan instituted apartheid, formal separate development for the different races. In her new book, 'Colour Bar', historian Susan Williams (2006) recounts a story of deceit and racism by governments of South Africa and the United Kingdom that surrounded Seretse's marriage to Ruth. Tshekedi Khama, holding the fort for the expected return of Seretse Khama to complete his Law studies and return to be paramount Kgosi – Chief of his Bangwato nation, was deeply disappointed at his nephew's decision to marry a white woman. When Seretse arrived with his wife in Serowe, Tshekedi went into voluntary exile. The apartheid government in South Africa used this to argue that, even natives themselves approved of apartheid. In Bechuanaland, Ruth was warmly welcomed by the Bangwato people, but barely accepted by the white minority. The couple was only allowed

into a Whites only cinema in Palapye, because Seretse was future Kgosi. However, Seretse's impending ascendancy to the throne posed a diplomatic threat between the South African separatist government and the UK. If Seretse became Kgosi, the South African government would have to officially recognise him and therefore his marriage, which greatly offended the position of the government of Dr Malan against mixed marriages. It was also likely to offend the many separatist white South Africans. On October 31 1949, Seretse and Ruth were declared prohibited immigrants in South Africa. A judicial inquiry was instituted by the Colonial government to decide if Seretse could be Kgosi, although the Bangwato nation had declared that they accepted him and his wife, and wanted him as Kgosi, against the will of Tshekedi. Even an African National Congress (ANC) founding member from Bechuanaland and editor of *Bantu World*, Selope Thema, sat as key witness on Tshekedi's side against Seretse becoming Kgosi. His argument was that Ruth was not of royal lineage, and that the colour of the children born to Seretse and Ruth would not be appropriate for future heirs to the throne. Ruth became pregnant and had their first child in 1950. To appease the South African government, that same year the British government tricked Seretse into going back to Britain, and upon his arrival, was informed that he was banished from Bechuanaland for five years. Seretse spoke to the media, *Movietone*, about being tricked by the British government. He was eventually allowed a brief return to Bechuanaland, whereupon he was reunited with his wife, reconciled with Tshekedi, and moved to London with wife and new baby (Williams, 2006).

Seretse and Ruth's marriage was not only a political spectacle, it was also a media spectacle. Whereas Ruth said about the lack of activity in Bechuanaland, "there are few, if any, organised sports. No radios or gramophone..." (Williams, 2006:82), her own movements and family life attracted much media frenzy. News of their marriage had been widely covered. In the early days of their marriage, Ruth was often forced to be in disguise to avert the prying eyes of the media (Williams, 2006:53). According to Williams, Seretse's statement to the media in

Britain about being exiled by the British government for marrying his white wife on 7 March 1950, led to probably the biggest ever international media spectacle in the history of Bechuanaland and present day Botswana. Ruth's friend Doris Bradshaw wrote in a letter to friends in Britain, "You never saw such comings and goings...aeroplanes galore with hundreds of reporters and photographers from all over world". A British correspondent for the British *Daily Telegraph* abandoned a mission to Cairo and flew to Serowe (Williams, 2006:135).

The oppressive stance of the colonial government over Seretse's marriage only served to strengthen the nation's love for their Kgosi, and to sow seeds of distrust and disdain for British colonialism in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The incident also eventually only served to intensify international pressure on the British government to give its colonies independence. According to Neil Parsons (1987), the Seretse 'crisis' helped change tribalists into nationalists – it spurred younger, educated BaTswana to seek change of governance from Colonial administration and traditional diKgosi. They found the courage to speak, and this included women. Seretse appealed to the commoners when his own uncle Tshekedi and other royal elites would not support his marriage. International media attention on the story of an African 'chief' that married a white woman also sparked more open debate about race and colonialism, and when the Nationalist Party official adopted racial discrimination, it became apparent to London that Bechuanaland would have to gain independence. By 1960, Resident Commissioner for the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Peter Fawcus had no option but to prepare the Protectorate for independence after fifty years of political and economic neglect (Zaffiro, 1989:51).

From 1953, the colonial government came under increasing pressure from the emerging cadre of nationalists, especially following what historian Neil Parsons (1987:132) referred to as the 'BaNgwato [Seretse] crisis'. The idea that people had the right to form their own organisations to present their grievances to the colonial government began to take root during this time. The earliest political

parties were founded by some of Seretse's supporters. Leetile D. Raditladi founded the earliest precursor to party politics known as the Bamangwato National Congress – it was unsuccessful and largely ignored by the colonial government (Parsons, 1987:130). Raditladi was also at the heart of the earliest labour organising – the Bechuanaland African Workers Union in 1954. He later formed the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party in 1959. Raditladi was opposed to the Legislative Council (LEGCO) because it favoured the old guard – Europeans and diKgosi. More of Seretse supporters, K.T. Motsete together with P.G. Matante and Motsamai Mpho formed the Bechuanaland Peoples Party, later Botswana Peoples Party – the longest surviving political party in present day Botswana. The BPP also opposed the LEGCO for reserving separate seats for Africans, Europeans and Asians. It spoke out for immediate independence and demonstrated against unofficial but prevalent racial discrimination that was obtaining in the Protectorate. Co-founder Motsamai Mpho had recently been deported from South Africa for ANC activities; Phillip Matante had affiliations with the Pan African Congress (PAC) (Murray, Ramsay and Nengwekhulu, 1987:172-176). The colonial administration was worried about the influence of Black Nationalist movements from South Africa into the territory. Historian Neil Parsons (1987) showed that until 1955, the colonial administration still wanted the rule of traditional Chiefs – *bogosi*, and opposed democracy in the Protectorate.

### **The BBC, the British Colonial Office and Mass Media in Africa**

The kind of mass media that emerged in many parts of Africa was in most cases was determined by the colonizing powers of the countries. For Anglophone Africa, the Plymouth Committee, set by the British government in 1936 under the Earl of Plymouth, recommended steps on how to accelerate the provision of broadcasting services in the Colonies. It worked closely with the BBC and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA), The BBC concentrated mainly on Anglophone Africa; and Francophone African broadcasting services similarly

had links with the French Radio and Television Organization (Wilkinson, 1972:176).

The Second World War was to significantly slow down the roll out of broadcasting services envisioned by the Plymouth Committee, but Wartime reporting by the BBC had to an extent created a need for News among the few Africans that had access to radio. For instance, during the war, a broadcasting station was set in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia to stimulate the war effort and to convey orders to the native people in the event of a grave emergency (Armour, 1984). The secondment of Oliver J. Whitley of the BBC in 1946 to the Colonial Office, working closely with Head of BBC Colonial Service John G. Williams was the most significant step towards a clearer broadcasting policy for the colonies. From the onset, there was disagreement within the Colonial Office and Colonial governments, whether broadcasting was very necessary in the colonies and if it should be run by governments or handed over to commercial companies. The stronger sentiment was that government control of the mass media was the best option for the colonies against private ownership of the media (Armour, 1984; Wilkinson, 1972).

Up to independence, print and broadcasting services were geared towards the white settlers and colonial administrators in Africa. With literacy levels still very low and socio economic hardships during colonialism and early independence days, very few Africans had access to mass media (Boadu, 1981:197). BBC programmes for Africa were mainly in English but in a few cases there were limited broadcasts in indigenous languages. Hausa, Swahili and Somali services were introduced in 1957 and were on air for one hour a day. The largest coverage of Africa was provided by the English transmissions of the BBC World Service, originally the Empire Service in 1932, then the General Overseas Service in 1947 and was re-named the BBC World Service in 1965 (Wilkinson, 1972:182-183).

Charles Armour (1984) noted that the Colonial Office favoured inter-territorial organization wherever possible, although in most cases the colonial governments would decline to work in that way. A BBC broadcasting survey by a certain W.E.C. Varley in 1946 for instance, proposed to the Colonial Office that African broadcasting in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland should be from Lusaka and broadcasting for Europeans from Salisbury. East Africa would be covered from Nairobi. His consideration was based on the suitability of the climates on both areas to Europeans – not too hot, population density and availability of trunk telephone system, road and rail communications. For some colonial governments such as Nyasaland, broadcasting was simply not a priority while others like Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar preferred separate development (Armour, 1984).

The set up of broadcasting services in the colonies was usually that programmes were run by the government Public Relations or Information Departments, and Posts and Telegraphs was responsible for the technical side (Wilkinson, 1972:177). The BBC trained African journalists, helped set up broadcasting services and produced programmes for listeners in Africa. Head of the BBC African Service in 1972, J.F. Wilkinson, estimated that by 1972, several hundred BBC staff had worked in Africa and over 2000 Africans had come to the BBC for training and experience. The BBC seconded many of its members to Africa to develop broadcasting from the early days to the present. They served in many capacities including senior positions such as director-general in countries like Ghana and Sierra Leone. There were engineers, News editors, gramophone librarians, studio operators, accountants, copyright experts and administrators on secondment in African broadcasting services. They were also involved in countries like Gambia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and Lesotho. Wilkinson noted that whereas in 1927 there was not a single public service radio anywhere in Black Africa and no African owned a radio set, by 1972, 44 years later, there were 43 national sound radio services, 21 television services and nearly 15 million radio sets and 250 000 television sets.

The 15 million sets were however, shared among a population of 265 million potential listeners. Demand for radio picked up during the Second World War as 'people everywhere wished to know how the war was progressing' (Wilkinson, 1972). The largest audience of the BBC any where in the world outside the United Kingdom, to this day, as a percentage of the adult population is found in Africa (Mytton, 2000:22).

### **Different cosmologies, different agendas: histories of mass media in the west and Africa**

After decolonization, the British interest in reporting Africa declined, in-depth reporting became only sporadic and there was a lack of full time correspondents in Africa. Editors became more reliant on secondary sources and News agencies like Reuters and *Agence France Presse* (Kershaw, 1968). Africanist critics like Richard Kershaw, former editor of *Africa Confidential* pointed out that, the target audience was often the Whites living in Africa and to those outside the continent, that Africa was a violent continent and that Africans were incompetent to govern themselves. Francis Nyamnjoh (2005) asserts that colonies experienced 'next to nothing' (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 47) of the Western broadcasting models; the idea of media as a vehicle of free flow of information was not until the end of colonialism perceived as relevant for the colonies. Colonial administrators were found to be far more heavy handed than would have been tolerated back home in the metropolis (Nyamnjoh, 2005:45). Especially interesting was the ways in which Britain, a colonial power, conceived the role of broadcasting in its colonies radically different from at home. The arrival of broadcasting in Africa was different from either capitalist or communist Western media experiences.

As Francis Nyamnjoh points out, while literature on patterns of media control in postcolonial Africa indicated a shift to centralised broadcast systems at independence, state-control of the media was in fact a colonial legacy. Postcolonial leaders continued with the highly centralized colonial model, using

nation-building as an excuse (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 47-48). Along with Achille Mbembe, Nyamnjoh also warns about comparisons of media experiences between Africa and the west, that they must refrain from analogies. Such kind of comparison only tells us what the African experiences *are not*, and not what *they actually are* (Nyamnjoh, 2005; Mbembe, 2001). To better appreciate the skewed flow information that existed between Africa and the rest of the world requires a comparative history of the emergence of broadcasting between Europe, America and Africa. Media at the metropole and the colony emerged out of different contexts. It is thus necessary to Ralph Engelman's (1996) account of the history of public radio and television in the United States shows that commercial broadcasting has always dominated the media landscape in the US. Broadcasting started in the US at the turn of the 20th century but it was only in 1967 that the US enacted a Public Broadcasting Act. Engelman called it a legislative victory, after nearly half a century of promising initiatives dashed by political defeats. He likened the role of Former Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover, in the early history of American broadcasting to that of Lord Reith to the BBC, in so far as defining the role of the state in the early days of broadcasting. Lord Reith is considered the founding father of public service broadcasting in Britain. Yet the two men had opposing views about the role of the state. Where Lord Reith saw the role of the state as of partially funding broadcasting but maintaining a necessary distance to allow critical citizen engagement with government, Hoover defined the role of the state simply as of regulating a free market place for the media. This is not to say concerns about of public access in the media were unknown in the US, but commercial broadcasters for a long time successfully lobbied against state funded media which they argued would frustrate the advertising supported media and therefore frustrate democracy itself. In the US, for a long time non commercial broadcasting stayed marginal and experimental, with the few licenses being awarded to religious and educational institutions.

Pacifica Radio on KPFA-FM was established by a Lewis K. Hill in 1949 as the first non-profit community-based radio station, strongly influenced by the BBC model and often using BBC content. For the next ten years the station was to remain the sole listener-sponsored station in the US. From the early 1960s, the station came under vicious attack by government for promoting communism, America's biggest enemy and the cause of the Cold War until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The station had among other things aired views of leftist thinkers like the black leader W.E.B. Dubois and had in 1963 invited a panellist of gays for what was then considered the most open and extensive discussion of homosexuality. With its turbulent history of law suits and investigations by the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI), Senate inquisitions, dynamite bombing of its transmitters by some angered conservative members of the public and other manners of harassment, the KPFA-FM in many ways inspired a broad community broadcasting movement in the US (Engelman, 1996).

National Public Radio (NPR) became more visible and influential in the US from mid 1980s and was later joined by the American Public Radio. Public television was started with funding from philanthropic Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, first as non commercial television and later public television after the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act. Government funded the early days of public broadcasting, helping expand the services so that by 1978, it could reach 80 percent of homes in the US. Censorship pressures were present. Oil interests in Saudi Arabia led the government to pressure public broadcasters not to air *Death of a Princess*, in 1980. It was a dramatized true story of the execution of a Saudi princess who had a love affair with a commoner. The programme was eventually allowed to be broadcast, but 19 public broadcasters did not air it. Public television underwent a lot of criticism from inception, and a 1979 Carnegie II report found it flawed, financially, organizationally and in terms of its creative structures (Engelman, 1996:185). Public television in the US did not emerge to provide cultural uplifting of the masses as was the intention of BBC. However, it shared a similar view of audiences as citizens rather than mass markets. Both

public television in the US and public service broadcasting in Britain sought to serve the individual and encourage active constructive participation; but in the US, this was never nearly as successful as at the BBC.

When in 1927 Radio Act that institutionalized commercial broadcasting in the US, that same year, the BBC was launched on non-commercial basis. A chronicle of the history of the BBC by James McDonnell (1991) starts with the Crawford Committee that conceived BBC as a national resource, a public corporation that would nonetheless keep a certain independence from government. McDonnell says of the first Director-General of the BBC John Reith, later Lord Reith, that he viewed broadcasters as having a moral duty to be instruments of enlightenment. He found the public taste too fickle and uncertain to be taken as a guide to programme-making...hence the moral duty for programme makers to set standards of informational, educational and entertaining programmes that the public would acquire a state for over time. Through successive Director-Generals, the BBC shifted away from avoiding broadcasting anything 'hurtful' as Reith had wanted, to upholding tolerance as an ideal. Programmes began to be designed to challenge, shock and provoke under the leadership of Hugh Greene and later under Director-General Charles Curran, the BBC found a middle ground to serve as unbiased, impartial and promoting choice – being creative but remaining on safe ground. The onset of the Second World War created a need for BBC to change from being a monopoly as the validity of News from a single source came under immense pressure. The arrival of ITV in 1954 as a non state funded public service broadcaster in the post-war period broke the BBC public service broadcasting monopoly. The biggest challenge for the BBC however, was new information technologies such as direct to home satellite technology and the video cassette recorder in the late 1970s. The arrival of cable television begged for a rethinking of the roles of the regulatory authorities and public corporations as to whether television could be treated the same as its predecessor. Cable television was more expensive and to recover costs, it was argued that BBC should take a limited amount of advertising. On the side of the Thatcher

government, the language shifted from broadcasting as a major force in national cultural life to a major concern with the economic efficiency of broadcasting as an industry (McDonnell, 1991).

### **A.H. Donald 1961 Report and Proposals for the Establishment of an Information Branch for the Bechuanaland Protectorate**

It was a nascent African Nationalism but more crucially the Cold War that was decisive in firmly placing broadcasting under colonial governments. The governments had not anticipated the pace at which Africans began to demand self rule. From the late 1940s to the late 1960s, many colonies were to agitate for and obtain independence. Initially some of the nationalist leaders were dismissed as trouble makers. The 1951 elections in the Gold Coast giving Kwame Nkrumah an overwhelming majority was to start a race against time among colonial governments to ready colonies for self government. In 1949 the desire to take speedy counter measures against Communism provided a powerful, immediate inducement to enhance UK funds specifically for broadcasting developments (Armour, 1984:362). The role of the media in colonial Africa was initially envisaged as improving communication between governments and the governed and to enlighten and educate the masses as well as to entertain them (Armour, 1984:360).

The late colonialism government information policy for Bechuanaland, between 1955 and 1966 was designed by colonial administrators to check anticipated popular unrest, communist subversion and nationalist agitation (Zaffiro, 1987). From 1961, each of the High Commission Territories (HTCs), Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland, was allowed to establish their own broadcasting services. This was after their Resident Commissioners issued a joint statement calling for the immediate end of the policy of deferring to Pretoria in Broadcasting matters (Draft National Broadcasting Policy, 2003). In a lengthy despatch to the High Commissioner, Sir John Maud, Resident Commissioner Peter Fawcus

wrote that the colonial government needed to be prepared on a broad front to meet threats to racial harmony and security and prevent a situation where the use of force might be necessary.<sup>23</sup> However, it was the change in government in South Africa in 1955, that led Britain to favour independence for the Protectorate. Hardliner racist and republican J.G Strijdom took over from D.F. Malan. South Africa began to weaken its links with Britain, and Britain began to see economic opportunities on the beef and mining industries in the Protectorate (Parsons, 1987:130).

Twenty seven years after the introduction of police radio services, on the eve of independence, the Colonial administration suddenly found an urgent need to establish government-owned Information Services in 1961. Major Alan H. Donald was recruited in 1960 for the position of Information Officer. He argued it necessary that there be a government media that countered "intimidation, distortion and downright lies". According to him, nothing the authorities did was for the good of the African in so far as these African 'racialists'. They were preaching to the uneducated particularly rural Africans that everything from the white man was untrue. The credulous rural Africans were taking the word of these false prophets as true. If left to flourish, the colonial administrators feared the increased activity of subversive organisations was likely to embitter race relations. It was therefore, found necessary that in order to preserve racial harmony, the government be in close touch with the people and provide an adequate Information Branch. A government-owned mass media service for the Protectorate was conceptualized (Donald Report, 1961).

On June 27 1961, Donald wrote from the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration offices in Mafeking in South Africa, to the Finance Secretary of the Bechuanaland Protectorate High Commission in Capetown applying for a special

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<sup>23</sup> Dispatch dated 24 January 1961, Botswana National Archives S.582.9 (1a)

warrant for R16 000<sup>24</sup> (P9 400) to establish Information Services for the Protectorate.<sup>25</sup> A government-owned media started in 1962, initially broadcasting for two hours in the evening. The question of how a government-owned broadcaster ought to handle News and or party News arose as early as 1963. Colonial Government Secretary A.J.A. Douglas recommended after noting the advantages and disadvantages of how to make News objective, that; government should broadcast objective News of significant political meetings, policy statements, resolutions, etc. He recommended that government refrain from any political comment. He also decided against allowing parties to buy time to broadcast their views and policies.

It was ironic that the very same British government, would, as early as the 1970s, hardly a decade into independence of many African states, begin to view government control of the media as a 'constant problem'. As the new African governments began to control especially Newspapers, Head of the BBC African Service in 1972, J.F. Wilkinson, for instance celebrated the fact that, at least the African radio listener is in the happy position of being able to tune his own station, his neighbouring African stations to Moscow, to Peking, to Deutsche Welle, to SABC, to Voice of America (VOA), to the BBC – and then form his own opinion as to the truth of any situation (Wilkinson, 1972).

### **The lesser evil between communism and apartheid: Post-independence relations between South Africa, the west and its neighbours**

The post War period and the intervening Cold War that symbolically ended with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Bloc in 1989 was dominated by

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<sup>24</sup> All monetary values are given the Botswana Pula (P) and either the US Dollar (USD) or British Sterling (GBP). For purposes of consistency, the exchange rate was fixed at 1:5 to the USD and 1:8 to the GBP. The fixed rate was derived from the average exchange rates between 2001 and 2006. The South African Rand was converted at 1:1.7 to the Pula

<sup>25</sup> 'Application for special warrant for R16 000 for establishing Information Services for Bechuanaland Protectorate', Botswana National Archives, S.582/9 (17a).

characterizations of the world into two bitterly opposed political positions; communist or democratic/capitalists. Very often the communication environment in both the US and Britain was characterized as libertarian, pluralistic and 'tolerant' while the media in communist countries was aggressively attacked by the Western bloc as totalitarian, state propagandist and an enemy of democracy (Bennett,1982:36), although scholars like Colin Sparks (1998) were to show that such a characterization was very much propaganda more than reality. Just as in the so called democratic environments, media workers in say Berlin and Prague explored ways in which groups that were previously denied access were given the voice; state media workers were often unable to toe the party line. Sparks suggested that perhaps 'communist societies were not alternatives to capitalism but an especially horrible variant of it' (Sparks, 1998).

J.O Boyd-Barrett (1982) argued that there could be no real understanding of the media unless priority was given to an understanding of the fundamental relationship between 'developed' and 'developing' economies. Barrett's position was that it was not always very clear that mass media in developing countries was a vehicle of cultural dependency on the more developed. Although not determining, South Africa's apartheid policy was a significant factor in relations among southern African countries and between each of the states and South Africa, even after many neighbouring countries gained independence (Sejanamane, 1994).

In the global balance of forces, South Africa was neither a former imperial power nor a super power, it was a peripheral country located far away from its major trading partners. It was of limited significance to the world's symbolic economy and had to work hard at being internationally connected (O'Regan, 1998). Within southern Africa, the situation is completely reversed. In spite of its apartheid policy, because of the Cold War, South Africa was in a curious position vis-à-vis Western superpowers and fellow southern African states. For the West, South Africa was an ally against the perceived 'communist total onslaught', and yet

increasingly embarrassing one as pressure mounted to impose economic sanctions on it for racial discrimination. The Cold War led to the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 which resulted in the banning of left wing Newspapers. The apartheid government enacted a number of Acts to curtail reporting of liberation struggles, including the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956, and much later the internal Security Act (No 74 of 1982) which prevented publication of alternatives to apartheid policies, and the Protection of Information Act (No 84 of 1982) which gave Minister's powers to declare any information as forbidden and any place as a prohibited area (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1987:100). The end of the Cold War in 1989, the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners from prison in 1990, the 1994 non racial general elections and the taking over of government by the African National Congress marked a new era in the political economy of the region. In the South African media environment per se, the waves of change meant partial lifting of the emergency media censorship (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1987).

According to Khabele Matlosa, (1994) South Africa's apartheid policy was a source of disdain for the region. Under two successive Prime Ministers, H.F. Verwoerd and P.W. Botha, South Africa tried to form a Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS), intended to be an anti Marxist economic bloc of 'moderate' countries including South Africa, Namibia, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and the Bantustans. CONSAS never took off as the other countries were uncomfortable with apartheid. Instead, these countries formed first the "Frontline States" in 1974 and in 1980 the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), later the Southern African Development Community (SADC). South Africa did maintain and expand economic relations within the region through treaties such as the Southern African Custom Union (SACU) involving the high commission territories of Lesotho and Botswana and the Common Monetary Area Agreement (Matlosa, 1994).

Statutory domination by South Africa during the colonial period was only part of the problem. For a long time after Radio Botswana was launched, South African and Rhodesian radio stations, print and later television were to continue to enjoy much following in Botswana. This resulted in a situation where the government of Botswana was more interested to make connections with international media than with neighbouring South Africa. In 1974, a certain Tawana of the SABC approached Information and Broadcasting to assist them in gathering material for a weekly half hour report in *Setswana* on Radio Bantu. He would be bringing a tape recorder to Gaborone from Mafeking once a week to talk to a few local reporters. John Ewing of Information and Broadcasting thought such an arrangement could help to keep informed the *Setswana* listeners of Radio Bantu, both inside and outside the country.<sup>26</sup> The reaction from P.C Steenkamp of the Office of the President was an outright refusal,

Radio Botswana can be heard in most, if not all, of the *Setswana* speaking areas in South Africa, and therefore, the 'Radio Bantu Newsreel' does not fulfil any useful function as far as we are concerned. The tape recording of stories from our reporters is, therefore not to take place.<sup>27</sup>

The launch of a state run commercial and youth orientated radio station RB2 in 1992, the licensing of the first two private commercial radio stations in 1998, (Thapisa, 2003) increasing number of private Newspapers and the launch of BTV have to a large extent improved the situation. However, South Africa continued to dominate in television, leisure magazines and other forms of new media in spite of successful efforts in local radio and print media to attract more of the local consumer, as evident from the growing numbers of people subscribing to the South African pay television, MultiChoice, and the proliferation of South African popular magazines in Botswana. South Africa's predominance over the region and Botswana in particular extended beyond the media. When Cable and

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<sup>26</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (16)

<sup>27</sup> Letter dated 24 September 1974, Botswana National Archives, OP/25/7/1 (17)

Wireless Communications Worldwide made proposals for the development of external telecommunications in Botswana, one of the greatest concerns was the predominance of South Africa in both communications traffic and commercial activity.<sup>28</sup>

### **Government control of mass media in Africa today**

✳️ Dyhana Ziegler and Molefi K. Asante (1992:29) explain the prevalence of government control of the media as partly a historically necessary, protective reaction to the existing pattern of multinational control of the economies of most African states. Although it is true that few private citizens in most African nations could afford to operate large scale media systems; in the area of mass media, Africa was for a very long time not considered a viable market. It is only at the turn of the 21st century that Africa is emerging as an emerging global player. Southern Rhodesia is one of the few instances in southern Africa where a government justified state control of broadcasting media as restoring balance with the country's 'monopoly' press. From 1891, the Rhodesian Herald and the Bulawayo Chronicle were controlled by the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company, a subsidiary of the conservative Argus Press of South Africa (Windrich, 1979:523). Robert Mugabe's newly installed government soon after independence was to also take issue with the South Africa ownership of dominant print media. Although it was never successful, government acquired majority shares in the Rhodesia Printing Company and set up the Zimbabwe Media Trust with the intention that it would save the dominant press from the South African company, other commercial interests and the state itself (Chimutengwende<sup>29</sup>, 1997; Mararike, 1997:59). Government control of the media was therefore by and large difficult to justify, beyond the fact that first the colonial administration and next the new African governments wanted to use it as an

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<sup>28</sup> Botswana National Archives, BNB 9089

<sup>29</sup> Mr Chen Chimutengwende, former Honourable Deputy Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunication in Zimbabwe, as the guest of Honour at the Opening Session of the Media and Communication Symposium at the University of Zimbabwe on 22 August 1993.

ideological apparatus (Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller, 1987; Zhuwarara, Gecau and Drag, 1997).

Bourgault argued that the slow development of a vibrant mass media can be blamed on both the former colonial powers and later the emergent African elites, who equally held indigenous African institutions and cultures in contempt, seeing them as backward and primitive. Colonizers introduced separate developments between them and the colonized and only later in the day of colonialism was a small educated African elite allowed to emerge. It was some of these emergent African elites that were to lead the newly independent African States. In Bourgault's view, the African elites were often alienated both from the westerners whose lifestyle they tried to emulate and the peasants of their own societies whose plight they had hardened towards. African elite responded to postcolonial encounter differently, hence some governments and individuals have contributed more than others to the welfare of their fellow citizens. "It was up to Seretse and the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) to establish an internal validity of a system of government that was after 1965 no longer to be based on the hereditary principle and regional separation" (Henderson, 1988:225).

This chapter showed the continuing pursuit of control at the expense of the ordinary citizen between colonial and independent Africa. Colonial administrators repressed voices of dissent when Africans began to demand political independence. Instead of nurturing the revolutionary spirit that brought in independence, postcolonial African states had adopted a similar culture of paranoia against any sentiment even remotely perceived to challenge the status quo, just as the colonizer had done. Official opposition came to be seen as a luxury that the new nations could not afford (Moyo, 1992). In 1989, the President of Botswana, Ketumile Masire told the nation that democracy would not suffer due to a decreased number of opposition seats in Parliament (Nyathi-Ramahobo, 1999:99). In 2006, Vice President and President in waiting Ian Seretse Khama warned the nation that supporting opposition parties was tantamount to inviting

civil wars (BTV News, 2006). In the West, as Eric Hobsbawm (1994) and Anthony Giddens (1999) would have us believe, nations as imagined communities are losing their hold on the imagination, or that the era of the nation is over. In Africa and indeed in Botswana, inventing a unified national identity remains very much a preoccupation of the new states – as a direct result of colonialism. The historical domination of Botswana by neighbouring South Africa, appears to have in many quarters, created empathy rather than critical analysis of the state.

## Chapter Two

### **Power and the research practice: Theoretical framework, methods and methodologies of studying government-owned Botswana Television (BTV)**

In 1999, scholars of Cultural Studies in Africa began to ask critical questions pertaining to the nature of Cultural Studies in the continent. Keyan Tomaselli (1999) asked, "[d]oes an African [C]ultural [S]tudies exist? If so, is it a unified field of study?" When attempting to answer the question, Tomaselli found that while in the developed world, Cultural Studies theories and paradigms mutated, changed and reconstituted initial emphases to suit the contexts, in Africa, even the works that claimed to be about Cultural Studies in Africa failed to mention local scholarship, philosophies or concepts. First World frames tended to predominate, often unproblematically applied in unreconstituted forms to local contexts (Tomaselli, 1999:10). In the same vein, Francis Nyamnjoh (1999) also found Cultural Studies in Africa to be dominated by Western theories and practices. Instead of an *African Cultural Studies*, what was emerging was at best *Cultural Studies in Africa* (Nyamnjoh, 1999:26). Tomaselli took the position that there can never be a single African Cultural Studies, just as there was no one Cultural Studies internationally (Tomaselli, 1999:10). They both agreed however that, there was need for Cultural Studies to appropriate a uniquely African perspective, reflecting upon African culture(s). This need not be a total rejection of the colonial encounter, but rather a coming to terms with cultural hybridity that resulted from colonialism and local cultures (Nyamnjoh, 1999:28).

Lindsay Pentolfe Aergenter (2000) also found that much of the postcolonial and feminist criticism reinscribed the very manichean oppositions imposed by colonisation itself, by failing to recognize the larger historical context of cultures of the oppressed, their traditions and languages. Observing works of writers in

southern Africa, Aegerter found that, the stories told showed that the colonized people did not live their lives only in response to oppression, they lived in spite of it. In situations such as that of Botswana, where institutions that should protect the media from government control are either absent or weak, universal ideals were often not enough. Media practitioners were more likely to find support in the local discourses, repertoires and cultures that call upon all, regardless of status, to tolerate opposition. Before the onset of Western type mass media and its repertoire of pluralism and open debate, diKgosi – traditional leaders in Botswana were already subject to public criticism, at the kgotla. First President of Botswana, Seretse Khama, was able to appeal directly to the people at the kgotla in Serowe, and also took advantage of the tradition the kgotla – of open debate, to solicit popular support for his marriage to white British woman Ruth Williams.

Similar questions arise about a Political Economy of media, whether or not there exists a unique African Political Economy of Communication or the media. The case of Botswana at best shows that, while the origin of these disciplines is undeniably Western, they have found different geographical articulations and fragmentations in different socio-historical and cultural contexts (Tomaselli, 1999:8). Although not shy to draw on Western definitions, theories and ideas when necessary, Nyamnjoh called for recognition of cultural pluralism by a greater mobilization of African concepts. Disciplines must '*find suffrage in Africa*' (Nyamnjoh, 1999:16).

In 2001, Tomaselli and Hopeton Dunn (2001), among others, called for an engagement with the media in southern Africa that related to broader issues and emerging trends of globalisation and localization. There is a dearth of works on the media in Africa that are sensitive to context, history, geography and national development periodisations in post-colonial contexts. Many of the works relied on received Western theories of political economy, which over-emphasize structure to agency. Tomaselli and Dunn challenged scholarship in the region to go

beyond country specific case studies, and provide methodological and theoretical contributions for the emerging regional and global context, thereby contributing to a political economy of media communication in Africa. Mainstream political economy of media communication would have it that, "in countries where the market is strongly controlled by government interests, the tendency will be for both private and public media to gravitate towards a careful and safe middle ground from a content point of view" (Barker, 2001:17). Botswana, in growing contrast with new developments in the southern African region, is witnessing increasing rather than relenting direct control of broadcast media by the state. In August 2006, Minister of Communication, Science and Technology, Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, presented the draft National Broadcasting Policy that introduces community broadcasting, to the Botswana Parliament. The model was met with much furore and foray among most Members of Parliament, many arguing it would incite ethnic tensions or even civil war, as happened in Rwanda. The draft policy was subsequently withdrawn.<sup>30</sup> The situation is markedly different for print media compared to broadcast media. Private print media is often said to be partisan (Tetty, 2001; Berger, 2002). In the case of Botswana, Patrick Molutsi and John Holm (1990) noted caution even among private newspapers when reporting about government, for fear of legal and financial sanctions. Notwithstanding the problems of partisan or cautious media coverage, private media has enjoyed more freedom of expression. Thus, what emerges from this study, is not a coherent body of knowledge that may be called a Political Economy of the media in Botswana, but a particular articulation or disarticulation of such a Political Economy.

### **Power and the research practice**

Studies on power and the research practice often portray the researcher as inherently an instrumentalist who builds social relations of friend, neighbour, or

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<sup>30</sup> Mmegi, 18 August 2006

advisor with the research subjects, only to collect data that will then be used for strictly personal, professional and academic gains. The researcher is also often an outsider, coming in to render the unknown familiar (Amit, 2000:3). In this particular research, the tables were turned. Researching a government institution at home in Botswana was a reversal of conventional research where subjects were willing sources of data, approached as individuals or small groups. Vis-à-vis the researcher, BTV was an institution closely guarded by both state power and gate-keeping by management and staff of the station. Historically, governments have effectively kept ordinary citizens at bay, and except for Acts and Policy documents, most of the information about the workings of governments, written or verbal, is often categorized as 'confidential' and 'not for public consumption'. This secrecy is often defended on the bases of national security, which Noam Chomsky (1991:2) observed rarely survives scrutiny. Gaining access into a government media institution was not easy; it was a process of constantly negotiating power dynamics, discerning unwritten protocols and hierarchies and observing them, being observant without seeming to spy, and being inquisitive without seeming to judge. The chapter also explores the methodological tensions encountered in researching BTV as a site of power.

This chapter is about both methods and methodologies. Sandra Harding (1987) and Ann Gray (2003) make a distinction between "methods" as particular tools for research and "methodology" as theorizing about research practice. It details the variety of methods that were employed during the research process. However, 'Methodologies' rather than methodology is used here to highlight the duality of methodology that the research encountered. The encounter between BTV and the researcher was one of continuous negotiation and mutual determination. Primary data collection, punctuated by writing and a visiting fellowship, was carried out between October 2003 and July 2006.

A Cultural Studies approach was adopted to explore methodological encounters experienced in researching government ownership and control at BTV. American

anthropologist Richard Handler's (1993) review of Cultural Studies concluded that, while anthropology and the new kid on the block, Cultural Studies, look at similar kinds of issues, they remain distinctive disciplines that can learn something from one another. He was wary of such works as John Fiske's on 'The culture of everyday life' (Fiske, 1989) that, while borrowing from anthropological works, he could have used a little ethnography to avoid romanticizing and simplifying otherwise complex social categories such as race and nationality. The rebuttal from John Fiske, in Gray (2003:17) and other Cultural Studies scholars was that Cultural Studies explored meaning making in relation to the construction of social and cultural identity. As such, "this requires periods of intense investigation into meaning production, rather than extended periods of observation" (Gray, 2003:17).

Methods entailed participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and informal conversations. In a truly Cultural Studies tradition, participant observation was approached not simply as spending extended periods visually observing phenomena, but also included listening to people in close conversational interviews (Gray, 2003:17). It was done in three main areas of local content production at BTV; the Newsroom, in-house productions, particularly *TalkBack* – an HIV/AIDS educational programme, and procurement process for local and foreign programmes. Time was also spent in the engineering section and the cafeteria. Interviewees were snow ball sampled, depending on their roles in the construction of BTV, both from within and outside BTV. Questionnaires were in most cases given to participants in advance to allow them to reflect on the questions asked. The focus groups were not selected by the researcher. She strategically attended group meetings such as editorial meetings at the Newsroom, *TalkBack* validation meetings, and Programmes Selection Committee meetings and fit in her own questions within the discussions. Individual interviews were done on the bases of the availability of respondents in between assignments for the BTV staff, and perceived interest on particular areas as in the case of BTA, MISA, BMCC, and local producers. To

locate local producers, a list provided by the BTV Commissioning Editor was used to send emails and short message texts to would be interviewees. It was noted that the few local producers that agreed to be interviewed were predominantly the ones that had won Commissioning tenders.

The research process was not defined only by the researcher; it was also defined by differing approaches to cultural production attempted at BTV. Television production employed similar methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and also shooting of images and people. In the Newsroom, powerful people in the country were often the subjects. Ordinary people only occasionally appeared in News. For an HIV/AIDS edutainment programme such as *TalkBack* the subjects were predominately school children and more ordinary people. The use of the same tools such as the camera differed radically from the Newsroom to *TalkBack*. The chapter also explores and theorizes these differences. It goes beyond detailing the researcher's data collection processes, but also the data collection processes of the host institution.

The key role players were followed up as far as the researcher could. Structured and unstructured interviews were conducted with current and former managers of BTV and production teams of BTV to obtain their views on issues such as editorial independence, responsibilities and constraints of the media in Botswana and BTV in particular, and their perceived role in local discourses of democratization and nation-building. There were also interviews with stakeholders in the broadcasting environment outside BTV, namely the National Broadcasting Board; The Director of the Botswana Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, the Press Council of Botswana; The Botswana Telecommunications Authority; former and current managers of BTV, The Botswana Media Consultative Council; the Botswana Women in Media Association; local film and video producers; University of Botswana academics; and the only independent television station, Gaborone Broadcasting Company. Whenever possible, interviews were recorded on cassette-tape and transcribed.

Some key people could not be reached. They include the first Project Manager for the setting up of BTV, Kevin Hunt, the BBC team that came to help the station launch, and the first manager of the Newsroom Chris Bishop could not be reached.

Secondary data on media in Botswana and the setting up of BTV was obtained from the Botswana National Archives (BNA), Botswana Press Agency (BOPA) library, local Newspapers, Botswana policy documents and drafts, Parliamentary Hansards, and unpublished dissertations done on television and mass media in Botswana. Of great importance were reports furnished by former Director of DIB, Ted Makgekgenene, without which some of the very important detail would have been absent. Robert Gray provided important internal email correspondence that was exchanged between him as one of the early project managers, and other managers.

At the risk of failing to maintain a healthy distance from the subject of study, there was an underlying effort during the research process, to locate the researcher as constitutive of, and constituting the research experience and therefore findings (Gray, 2003:1). In the process of carrying out the study, both researcher and subject matter of the research had to constantly navigate on-going disciplinary wars. The most important challenge that this section reveals is the crises of methodology for a multi disciplinary field as is Cultural Studies. The study was based very much on experience in the field, a data collection process that Anthropology claims as its quintessential hallmark (Walsh, 1998:218).

As such, although anthropological methods were very useful, this study maintained a clearly Cultural Studies approach. Cultural Studies emphasizes the value of direct observation of production within a media institution as essential for an understanding of those involved in media production hence reduced reliance on conspiracy theories (Deacon, et al 1999). Gaining access into a government media institution was not easy. It was a serious undertaking that required as well

as the researcher to constantly negotiate power dynamics, discerning unwritten protocols and hierarchies observing them. It was about knowing when to probe and when to stay away, observing but not being obtrusive, being inquisitive without seeming to be judgemental. At the same time, one had to be careful not to lose focus of the research agenda in the constant juggle with power relations. The methodology was explored through encounters with the research site; seeking and gaining access into the site of fieldwork and doing the actual data collection.

At the personal level, the researcher undertook doctoral research in the hope to find a disciplinary home. At the beginning of the millennia, there was a concern in the Department of Sociology of the University of Botswana where the researcher is a staff member, that the department was suffering a crisis of identity. The whole notion of multi-disciplinary studies was under question. Anthropology and Development Studies in particular, were in some quarters perceived as the undesirable elements in the department that needed to be weeded out as a matter of urgency. One side argued that only people with a Masters degree in Sociology should be considered for the department. With a combined Bachelors degree in Sociology and Political Science, and a Masters degree in Social Anthropology, it was felt by some in the department that without a graduate degree in Sociology, the researcher was among those threatening the integrity of both the department and Sociology as a discipline. For some, like Dr Monageng Mogalakwe (in person conversation), the source of unease was Anthropology's alleged role as the handmaiden of colonialism. Although Anthropologists such as Adam Kuper (1973/1996) and Ernest Gellner have vehemently defended Anthropology from perceptions that it was a sequel to colonialism, a nagging negative view of the discipline remains.

The ambivalence towards Anthropology among states in post-independence Africa has been noted. In some instances, it was incorporated into Sociology as a subordinate discipline, (Vawda, 1998:9). In defence of anthropology, Kuper

showed instead, that colonial governments could not be persuaded to fund Anthropological research or make use of the findings in governing the colonies. In the case of Botswana, from the 1920s to the 1940s, Isaac Schapera worked for many years with the colonial administration within Bechuanaland and in the Union of South Africa carrying out censuses and advising on claims of chieftainship (Kuper, 1973/1996:98). While Schapera's *A Hand Book of Tswana Law and Custom*, compiled for the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration (1955/1994) remains the most comprehensive work in that area, Anthropology remains a marginalized and often disdained discipline at the University of Botswana. By 2007, there was no department of Anthropology, or hardly any courses offered on the subject.

Others argued that the department could benefit a lot from other disciplines, especially Anthropology. The researcher was advised by some well meaning colleagues to pursue a postgraduate degree in Sociology in order to avoid becoming a victim of the lack of definition. However, she chose researching an institution that the department had historically ignored; mass media and cultural communication. When the final proposal was presented to the department, many analysed its methodology section to judge if it was 'sociological'. Dr Munyai Mulinge, one of the colleagues actually commented by saying, "having read your methodology, I am now convinced that your study is sociological, just under a different discipline". Mogalakwe's fatherly advice was that the researcher consider going to the US to study 'proper' Cultural Studies.

### **Researching government in Botswana: Politics of access into Botswana Television**

"Observation, inquiry and data collection depend upon the observer gaining access to the appropriate field and establishing good working relations with the people in it" (Walsh, 1998:221). Access into BTV was difficult at three levels; obtaining permission for entry into the facility; gaining acceptance to be able to

carry out the actual research and getting into and comprehending television speak and technology. Deciding the physical geographic site for fieldwork, once a study area has been identified was deceptively the easiest part of research. In the case of the relationship between the media and nation building in Botswana, deciding on BTV was easy. For its iconography, BTV was hard to resist. It was a new significant landmark. BTV was the latest addition to government-owned media. The Mass Media Complex, which housed BTV together with the government-owned printing press and Radio Botswana was the largest new development in Gaborone at the turn of the century in Botswana, occupying about 1km<sup>2</sup> of land. The whole complex was built in reconstituted stone and glass, which invented an immediate aura of history juxtaposed on modernity.

A library search on studies on government in Botswana revealed that they mostly assessed the impact of government policy on livelihoods; education, health, land rights, land use, economic production, gender relations, poverty, welfare, and access to resources. Very few studied the internal functioning of government departments or sections that made and implemented the policies. The majority of studies on the insides of government were consultancy reports commissioned by government itself under the auspices of various philanthropic organisations. With specific reference to BTV, in January 2005, the Thomson Foundation was commissioned for an 18-month joint training programme with the US-based International Center for Journalists.<sup>31</sup> They submitted an evaluation report at the end of the period. Findings of the report, which apparently led to the dismissal of former acting General Manager Kesholofetse Phetlhu, have not yet been availed to the public.

A preliminary visit to BTV was made in December 2002, before the actual research in November 2003. Researching BTV from within required obtaining access to enter facilities, observe the production processes and interview workers (see appendices 2 and 3). Government and especially management of

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<sup>31</sup> [http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/newstf/archive\\_home/archive2005/jan05.htm](http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/newstf/archive_home/archive2005/jan05.htm)

the station reserved the right of admission. It was necessary to establish contact with the gate-keepers even before formulating the actual research design. If it turned out that researching from the inside would not be permitted, the research design would have to be adjusted accordingly.

The first gate-keeper to be approached was the then General Manager, Simon Moilwa. The Capital and largest city of Botswana, Gaborone had a small population of about 200 000 (Botswana Population Census, 2001). It also had a very small elite circle. An unknown student seeking an appointment with the General Manager of BTV was unlikely to obtain it. It was necessary to establish connections so as to 'get in'. It became necessary to seek assistance of an older friend holding a senior position in the civil service. He called the General Manager and although they were not personally acquainted, the General Manager found it necessary to oblige the senior government officer. Although the General Manager could not honour the appointment, he granted provisional access by asking one of the senior reporters to give the researcher a guided tour of the facilities. The tour presented a new set of issues about access, access into television technology, television language, and politics of the broadcaster in the Botswana landscape. The tour guide inquired about the purpose of the research. The initial verbal proposal was that the research would to assess how 'fairly' BTV allocated different voices air space and the degree of editorial independence the station enjoyed. There was clear reluctance on her part to be party to uncovering of embarrassing information about the functioning of the government facility she was sure the research would reveal. Reassurance was necessary to explain that the purpose of research was not to reveal scandals, while at the same time not promising that the research would not be critical of the station and its workings. She expressed reservations about the decision by the General Manager to permit a researcher into a government establishment. To play it safe, she focused the tour on the equipment rather than the politics of the station.

Eleven months later in August 2003, with an approved research proposal, the researcher came back to Botswana for the actual data collection. In Botswana, no research can proceed without a written research permit from the government. Bureaucratic red-tape delayed the research considerably. It took from August to October 2003 to locate the right office to process the permit. Permits used to be granted by only one office, but around that time, a new system had just been put into practice where every Ministry provided research permits for topics relating to its jurisdiction. Ministries had not yet put structures in place for processing research permits. Eventually the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology, Marianne Nganunu issued her first ever research permit to the researcher (see appendix 4). She had delegated the Director of Information and Broadcasting, Habuji Sosome, to check the proposal.

### **Of gaining acceptance and surviving the gate-keepers**

A research permit did not guarantee unimpeded access. Simon Moilwa who was General Manager<sup>32</sup> had since died, and a new Acting General Manager, Kesholofetse Phetlhu had just assumed office. She was not keen on the research and hoped to fend the researcher off by demanding official paperwork for the proposed research. She had not expected that the research permit would have been obtained and was evidently surprised that it was. The next attempt was to question if the permit had been given in consultation with the Director of the Department of Broadcasting. The Director had been delegated by the Permanent Secretary to read and approve the research proposal. Sosome confirmed knowledge of the research, which made the next encounter with the General Manager dramatically more positive. From dismissive disinterest, the Acting General Manager switched to immediate availability for an interview that lasted two hours.

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<sup>32</sup> Simon Moilwa, may his soul rest in peace, died after a short illness in August 2003.

During the interview, reasons for Phetlhu's reluctance to assist became apparent. She felt that there is a misconception that because the station was government funded, it was therefore government controlled. Nonetheless, she would have preferred for BTV to become a parastatal – government funded but run by an independent Board of Directors and management. She argued that, television worked in a dramatically different way from radio and print, and could not function efficiently under government. She also felt BTV could not handle all local content by itself; she saw the need to promote local film production, although she was sceptical of the availability and standards of local producers.

From this interview on, more gates into BTV were opened. The researcher was introduced to the Head of News and Current Affairs, Felicitus Mashungwa, who in turn introduced her to the News and current affairs team as a kind of intern. This was not exactly true but it helped the researcher to find a space that was not awkward to observe from. As an intern, she would be assigned someone to understudy who would show her the ropes. Research started in earnest at a BTV Newsroom daily editorial meeting on 29 October 2003. About twenty reporters, producers and editors and a few members of the technical crew were attending on this morning. Several of them were familiar from the preliminary visit the year before. As best as possible, under immense pressure not to be understood to be there to police their work, the research topic and methods were explained. The explanation was received with curiosity and suspicion. It became apparent that the ethnographic method was going to be very useful. There was no hurry; there was enough time to 'get into the field'. Cultural Studies is critique of everyday life – an investigation ...of what is available as culture to people inhabiting particular social contexts, and of people's ways of making culture (Lefebvre, 1990; Morris, 1997:43). Michael de Certeau (1974/2001) in 'Culture in the Plural' advised correctly that "culture needs to be understood not as a monument celebrating human mastery of nature but to the contrary, and more modestly, as collective ways or manners ...shared by people", and for that matter, that the principal task of Cultural Studies entailed elaborating codes that develop specific ways of

inventing life as it is lived from year to month to day and hour and minute (de Certeau 2001: 151).<sup>33</sup>

It was locating a space to observe from, that was the most important yet most daunting aspect of the fieldwork. The Newsroom was an open space, with workstation demarcated by personal computers. The researcher had to be as unobtrusive as possible, yet visible and accessible. The most logical place to start at was with assignment desk and the acting assignment editor's office. The assignment editor could not even spare a moment as she juggled transport arrangements and organized equipment for reporters to go on stories. It was clearly a bad time. The researcher then went to make small talk with some of the reporters, producers and editors. Outside the formality of the boardroom, a number of the members of the News and Current Affairs approached the researcher with issues that they thought she needed to know. Most were personally known to her from years as a student at the University of Botswana. Interestingly, a severe lack of editorial independence at the station was the first thing they shared about their conditions of work under government. One mentioned that on occasion, the Minister had himself personally come to the station to get a programme cancelled. The producers of the programme had to write numerous letters of apology and it took several months for the matter to be laid to rest. Self-censorship was therefore found a necessary precaution to avoid similar experiences at BTV.

As a result, interviewing people who worked for government was most importantly about breaking through the wall of self-censorship they constantly strengthened between them and outsiders. Outsiders were often treated as other journalists looking for a scoop. No one wanted to be quoted in the papers about the problems facing BTV. As the then Head of Graphics later said to the researcher when asked for an interview, the fear of participating in interviews was because there is much scandal happening at BTV that nobody wanted to be

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<sup>33</sup> de Certeau, M., (1974/2001) *Culture in the plural*, University of Minnesota Press:Minneapolis.

the one responsible for making it public. The sentiment was very prevalent at BTV. Often this left the researcher feeling totally inadequate and uninformed even as she had chosen a method that she hoped would get her into the inside. The 'inside' proved to be an illusive space that could only be reached by BTV staff and which an outsider could only get a glimpse of, but could never get to. While there was much talk of scandal at BTV, the actual daily work at the station seemed most of the time mundane and lacking in controversy. Journalists spent much time listless and seemingly bored by their work. Scoops were few and far between. There was always someone hinting that things were not as they seemed. This only served to make it more acutely clear the almost impossibility of participant observation as a way of 'total immersion' into the environment (Harding, 1987). As result, the researcher had to continue with a full awareness that only a partial understanding of BTV could ever be archived.

### **Ethnography and research oriented relationships: maintaining boundaries**

Ethnography, by its emphasis on establishing relationships, is inherently about impression management (Walsh, 1998:226). Reporters, managers, producers and technicians were to become 'friends' and acquaintances, perhaps for life. Relationships forged for research purposes were at once real and artificial. Many ethnographers would have difficulty using terms such as informant, respondent or research subjects for people they have come to be confidantes with, friends, neighbours, advisers (Amit 2000:3). Anne-Marie Fortier (1998) observed also that relationships in the field are artificial for the fact that they were established for interests external to the subjects of inquiry – career oriented, economic concerns, interests of those sponsoring the study and so forth. "To put it crudely, deception and role playing are part and parcel of participant observation" (Fortier, 1998:55). Some ethnographers argue on ethical grounds that deception should be avoided if possible, but telling the whole truth about research may not be wise or feasible (Walsh, 1998).

Two months into the almost daily visits to BTV, the researcher came to be an accepted face of the News team. In fact, her absence rather than her presence came to be the unexpected. She was even included in the 2003 Christmas gifts exchange. Yet, during the same December, the researcher was one of the key suspects in a witch hunt for the originator of a malicious email copied to management. The email provided ratings of ability among BTV journalists. It was generally perceived to be accurate, although disconcerting for those painted as trouble makers. People named in it were afraid that management would take the allegations seriously and use it as a yardstick. Some had been labelled anti-government. Many suspected that it was an undercover job instructed by management to spy on its reporters. The informer would have to be a member of the Newsroom, or at least someone who had been around long enough to know the character of all the reporters so accurately. This is where the researcher came in as a suspect, along with two other 'outsiders', new managers recently appointed.

In time it became clear that, the more the researcher became part of the routine of the television station, the more time spent there, the more difficult it would be to separate the roles of researcher from that of colleague. She was introduced into the Newsroom as a kind of intern. Occupying the category of intern helped find a more comfortable position to observe from. An intern would at the end of their stay be able to do things like covering stories on their own. She would be assigned to one of the more seasoned journalists to take her through the practice at BTV. In addition, the observed could appropriate the researcher on their own terms. As interpersonal relationships with the News team developed, the researcher shifted gradually from strictly being an observer to being a participating observer. She had to confront the ambiguity of participant observation, her own idea about what she was doing and how the others perceived that role.

In spite of every intention to maintain position of observer rather than intern *per se*, in order to 'fit in', she was often expected to perform the role of reporter. One close episode was at the Office of the President. An unexpected situation presented itself. It was 17:30 and there was a 18:15 meeting on the same day between the President and an international lobby group for laws that protect media freedom. BTV had for some reason not been able to get a notice about the meeting ahead of time until the President's Press Secretary called to confirm they would be covering the event. All reporters on duty that day were either finalizing their stories for the *Setswana* bulletin at 19:00, or out in the field. Having been undergoing 'training' for a while, the researcher was approached to cover the story on her own.

Despite the clear conflict of this kind of request with the methodological position of observer, and practitioner, it felt selfish to refuse to help out after the News team had so welcomed her into their daily routine. The assignment required very little journalistic practice. The camera person would get there and shoot the short welcome and introduction of visitors, after which the visitors would go for a private meeting with the President. The researcher would then write a short piece about the purpose of their meeting with the President. Fortunately for the researcher, they arrived at the Office of the President too late. With this experience also came the clarity that the Office of the President of Botswana was of highest priority at BTV. Failure to appear even at short notice to a call from this office was the highest neglect of duty. In researching the rich 'cultural script' that was BTV, the researcher was an active participant in the construction of the social world that was the subject of her research, which Walsh right notes, is often overlooked in the pursuit for 'objective truth' (Walsh, 1999:219).

## **Organisational subcultures, cultural production and power: cultural production and power: The Newsroom vs *TalkBack*.**

It is now widely accepted that it is impossible and even futile to study organisations outside the cultural context within they emerge. This includes the internal 'cultures' and 'subcultures' that facilitated relations among employees, between them and their supervisors, and between them and other organisations and society at large. In the broadest sense, culture refers to different 'ways of life' of among others factors people of different countries, ethnic groups, tribes, social classes, counter-cultures and sub-cultures. du Gay, Hall et al., (1997) have suggested that, in order to gain a full understanding of any cultural text or artefact, it is necessary to analyse processes of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. These are key moments in the circuit of culture. Organisational subcultures rather than cultures was used to distinguish the micro level personal interactions with the workplace that are the focus of this study, to the more institutional or macro level studies on organisational behaviour. Wright stressed both the ideological and everyday individual lived experiences of the workers as important in understanding their productive process.

To compare if issues of editorial independence and control affected all sites of production at BTV the same way, processes and politics of production at the Newsroom were observed and compared to another site of in-house production, *TalkBack*. Television production at BTV employed methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and photo journalism. It was to come out from observation of *TalkBack* that sites of cultural production at BTV encountered the state – power – media nexus differently. Where the Newsroom was constantly watching its back and at pains to steer away from trouble with politicians and the state, *TalkBack* enjoyed a more relaxed production environment. *TalkBack* was an interactive programme aimed at building teacher capacity to educate students

on HIV/AIDS and related subjects (UN Botswana Report, 2004).<sup>34</sup> The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) sponsored programme won an award for innovative use of the new media at the 2004 Highway Africa New Media Awards annual ceremony held in Grahamstown, South Africa (*Mmegi*, 22 September 2004). It initially involved expertise from Brazil under South-to-South Cooperation. It is a collaborative project between the government of Botswana through the Ministry of Education and BTV, working with the United Nations Fund (UNF), UNDP and the Africa Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership (ACHAP). *TalkBack* was live and interactive, broadcast weekly on BTV and said to be the brainchild of Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP Administrator. UNDP provided the project management. It employed technology by using short message service (SMS) of cellular (mobile) phones by viewers to interact with the presenters in the studio during presentation. *TalkBack* was very popular in Botswana, particularly among teachers and students (UN Botswana Report, 2004). In an interview, senior producer for *TalkBack*, Solly Nageng explained that the programme was initially just for one year but the main stake-holders, Ministry of Education and ACHAP were still keen to continue with it. It started its third year in March 2006 (Interview with Nageng, 2006).

By the time the researcher sought permission to observe *TalkBack*, issues of access were no longer cumbersome. A letter was written to acting General Manager, who then communicated the request to the Head of Productions and a senior producer of *TalkBack*. The researcher was invited to attend 'validation meetings', where the faces behind the programme came to discuss weekly programmes. In comparison to News, where most of the stories were on official events, *TalkBack* was more about ordinary people negotiating life skills in the age of HIV/AIDS. The team was also much smaller and very closely knit. The Validation Committee, comprised of the BTV *TalkBack* production team, local script writer Linda Pfothenauer, and representatives of the outside stakeholders, the Ministry of Education and UNDP. *TalkBack* shared camerapersons,

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.unbotswana.org/bw/undp/news\\_230904.html](http://www.unbotswana.org/bw/undp/news_230904.html)

picture editors and technical support with the rest of the other productions at the station, although ideally the production would at least have a designated cameraperson. This was impossible due to shortage of staff (Interview with Nageng, 2004).

When interviewed, one of the producers of *TalkBack*, Morwalela Kesalopa explained that from the beginning, they went around schools doing a situational analysis of teachers needs towards handling HIV/AIDS in the school curricula. Different schools were found to be challenged by HIV/AIDS differently. A school in a poor Remote Area Dweller (RAD) community like Sojwe, inhabited mostly by Basarwa – the San had different challenges compared to a school in a city suburb. Sojwe had boarding facilities. The problem according to teachers in Sojwe was the culture of early marriages among girls, often to much older men. This forced them to drop out of school. Early sexual activity among students in the hostels was also reported. The teachers needed help on addressing the peculiarities of the cultural contexts within which they disseminated HIV/AIDS education (Interview with Kesalopa, 2004).

One of the assignments that the researcher observed was at a school called Moeding College in Otse. The topic of the production was “delaying sex”. Moeding College had a group of students calling themselves the ABC Club, whose main objective is to abstain from premarital sex. They intended to delay sex until they were financially, spiritually, emotionally, physically and socially able to face the implications of sex. The production team included a producer and an assistant producer, the cameraperson, the researcher and a driver. A teacher that was the main contact person at the school had assembled the Club members to showcase a ‘normal’ weekly meeting. *TalkBack* had a studio segment which normally invited ‘experts’ to comment on views expressed from the field. The proceedings of the meeting would be used as a background for the studio discussion. To supplement the face to face interviews, the producer and

cameraperson went around making 'cutaways', scenes of the school environment.

There was nothing 'natural' about the Club meeting that day. For television, it was observed that students were forced to repeat comments and questions several times. A dummy session initially arranged in the staff lounge but due to a power cut in the school, the meeting had to move outside in the garden. Once outside the students had to redo discussions until the very enthusiastic and uncompromising cameraperson and producer were satisfied that the issues were well articulated. After the group session, some students were interviewed individually. The producer, in a firm teacher like way, instructed the students to answer all questions looking directly at her, for she represented the viewer at home. The camera was set up behind her. For the benefit of viewers, students were asked to start their answers with the questions asked so that when the producers' prompts were later edited out, the viewer could follow what was being addressed. Inevitably, many of the students would keep forgetting to start with the question, which meant starting all over again. Students began to get agitated, and one young girl complained that they were not used to 'acting' for television.

It was also observed that the photography of *TalkBack* was radically different from that for News. The cameraperson was enthusiastic and uncompromising in the angles and shots he wanted for the clip. He went to every length to get an interesting and creative shot. By comparison, camera work for News was much more reserved and conservative. Mostly, a BTV News cameraperson simply located the best place for a tripod stand and tried to get out of the way as much as possible. At the Newsroom, a cameraperson's subjects were often figures of authority. A figure of authority was unlikely to repeat statements for the sake of the camera, although there were instances when a speaker did agree to be interviewed in both *Setswana* and English for the two bulletins. Authorities could be more forgiving to a reporter who asked uncomfortable questions, but they

were more unlikely to cooperate with a cameraperson who came up close, shooting from behind their back, below their chins, under their arms. They would almost definitely not take kindly to being asked to stand still for up to five minutes to give the cameraperson that creative shot. At *TalkBack*, the cameraperson and the producers appeared more uninhibited, and in control vis-à-vis their subjects. The cameraperson could crawl and bend and in the opinion of the researcher even sometimes downright make subjects uncomfortable if it benefited the excellence of the shot. It seemed that he often took advantage of the fact that most of the subjects were younger and excited about the prospect of being on television than about invasion of their personal space. Some of the subjects in *TalkBack* however, were not students, but ordinary people from the community.

One of the occasions the researcher observed was the cameraperson shooting images of women digging a trench. He was on a special assignment for a programme on women and work. On the way back to the station from another assignment, he spotted the women. Although he was exhausted from the last job, when he saw the women, he felt the pictures would be too powerful to miss. Seeing women with shovels digging up earth re-energized him, and he approached them for a possible shooting. One the women was nearly successful in encouraging others to refuse to be captured. She insisted that it would be foolish of them to be captured doing demeaning work which was not befitting for women. Her argument was that the well paid cameraperson was going to make fun of their pitiful situation. "What is in it for us, earning a dollar a day under the scorching sun, to allow you to use us for your work? What will the country benefit from laughing at the foolish women of Molepolole who dig trenches when better jobs could be created for them?" Some of the other women weighed this against the once in a lifetime possibility of appearing on television and so agreed to be shot. The cameraperson went into his job with reckless abandon, going down on to the earth they were digging out in his Versace Jeans and sun glasses, and designer shoes. He crawled, bent, squatted, stood, run, and faced his camera in all possible angles, and used every available resource to improve his shots. One

woman was asked to hold still to a shovel while he shot from between the handle of the shovel. Another stood still as a beautiful shot was taken from under her chin, and yet another was given playful chase for another amazing shot. Their work temporarily stopped as they watched and became part of the spectacle. He was engrossed like that for almost half an hour. From the session, he was so energized that the team went into the next small village for another possibility of a woman doing unusual work. He spotted two young girls pushing barrels of water in wheelbarrows. This encounter was less obtrusive as the girls were asked to keep pushing the barrows, and followed them from close behind along the winded footpath, going home. The researcher observed that a production like *TalkBack* nonetheless did not happen in a power vacuum. Whereas in the production of *News*, the people covered were usually powerful figures compared to reporters, editors and producers, at *TalkBack* the power relations were often reversed in favour of the producers, thus allowing them more leverage to unleash their creativity.

### **Production, the researcher and the panoptic**

Helena Wulff (2000:150) speaks of 'layers of acceptance, zones of access', by which she means the physical panoptical tools found on sites of fieldwork, such as security and research permits, and the more intangible openings and dead ends permitted by subjects of research. Researching a government institution that was involved with gathering data entailed not only a constant pursuit of access and acceptance on the part of the researcher, but also a constant play of ease and strain around the researcher on the part of BTV producers. At the Newsroom, there was a greater concern to 'impress' the researcher and do and say 'the right thing', parallel to the manner in which the journalists tried to impress the government by saying the right thing. The power relations vis-à-vis the government were projected to other encounters with outsiders. With *TalkBack*, there was less 'production correctedness', the camera work and

interviewing in the presence of the researcher, tended to reflect a similar lack of concern with the panoptic or surveillance (Foucault, 1977).

### **Data Analysis: 'Personal narrative as Sociology'**

This study did not attempt to establish patterns or measure prevalence of any of the emergent themes as is the case for most social science research. The thesis does not have a specific chapter for 'data analysis', because there were no rigid boundaries between 'data collection' and write-up. Analysis was continuous as was data collection, and it occurred at every stage of the research process. A conscious decision was made by the researcher to move away from what David Walsh (1998) refers to as 'scientific' methods of social science research. These "are based upon a universalistic model of science, emphasize its neutrality and objectivity, attempting to generate data untouched by human hands" (Walsh, 1998: 217). Although qualitative research methods emerged to address this positivism of quantitative methods, in the end, it seems ethnographers and other users of qualitative methods remain uncomfortable with their data. "Perhaps the most important response issue concerns the accuracy of data obtained from interviews" (Bernard, 1994:233). Qualitative researchers still go back to 'counting fieldnotes' and turning 'quality into quantity' (Johnson and Johnson, 1990).

Surveys are especially popular because they establish 'significant' trends based on 'representative' samples (Laslett, 1999). A study of television from the inside in Botswana required what Ruth Teer-Tomaselli in personal conversation with the researcher loosely identified as a kind of 'critical narratology'. However, narratology would imply that the subject of inquiry was a taxonomy – the many layers within the structure of narratives (Darby, 2001), which is not the aim here. Here is an attempt to claim the autobiographical or even anecdotal, as legitimate methodology. Many people were interviewed, not to identify general patterns as in a survey, but to recount and put together in a theoretically meaningful way, their individual accounts about the birth, and these the early days of a national

television broadcaster. It bordered between oral history and what Barbara Laslett (1999) calls 'personal narrative'. In her essay, *Personal narrative as Sociology*, Laslett claimed the place of personal narrative as legitimate social scientific inquiry (Laslett, 1999). Narrative or conversation often suffers from a perception that it is trivial or anecdotal – merely talk (Silverman, 1998:261), vis-à-vis the number crunching surveys. However, as Laslett argues that, "personal narratives provide unique perspective on the intersection of the individual, the collectivity, the cultural and the social" (Laslett, 1999:392). While the sample of oral histories and narratives included can in no way be considered representative statistically, much can be learned about how individual actors, within institutional and historical contexts, (Laslett, 1999), in the case of BTV, to survive cultural production under the gaze of state power. Personal narratives are most commonly used for testimonio and life history – biographies or autobiographies (Beverley, 2000). Using oral narratives for the study of organizations is relatively uncommon.

## Limitations of the study

This study did not cover all aspects of broadcasting arising from the birth of BTV. Further research is needed particularly on media economics of BTV. Although the actual impact is yet to be felt, commoditization of culture represents enormous challenges for a latecomer into television broadcasting in the region and globally as is BTV. Although BTV started with state – of – the – art digital technology,<sup>35</sup> historical dominance by South Africa with regard to broadcasting policy (Zaffiro, 1991), and the competition from other up and coming players in the SADC region, threw Botswana and BTV at the deep end of competition. In its early days, BTV concentrated on improving its quantity of local content to appease local viewers. The intention was simply to fulfil the 60 percent local content mark set by the NBB. As it grows beyond the novelty era, BTV will have to look into both cultural regulation – protecting its cultural production from being swamped by foreign competition, as well as de-regulation – breaking into the cultural global market. According to Kenneth Thompson (1997:2), modern governments battle to balance between protecting identity representations within their borders, and opening their economies to open market economics that threaten local cultural industries.

The 1978 Lawrence report resulted in a merger between the units of Information Services and Broadcasting into the Department of Information and Broadcasting (DIB) in 1981. BOPA was established as the central News pool for both the printing press and radio. In 2003 DIB was down-sized into two separate departments once again. Media economics took a backseat to internal power struggles within the management of the departments. Broadcasting and Information operate under a weak economic logic. They lacked definition of their core tasks and they lack skilled manpower. They were failing to take advantage

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<sup>35</sup> In fact Botswana Television was at one stage been named Africa's most advanced digital technology television station.  
([http://www.africafilmstv.com/pages/profiles/Botswana\\_p.htm#\\_Toc23141366](http://www.africafilmstv.com/pages/profiles/Botswana_p.htm#_Toc23141366))

of the economies of scale and scope in their favour. More research is necessary to draw up the economics of a government-owned media industry.

Further research is required on the consumption of television in Botswana. A few indicators exist. Audience reactions to some of BTV's programmes has caused the station to either reschedule or altogether remove certain programmes. A certain Lucky Phillip Ramotlhabane sent 'a big thank you' to BTV for removing a cheap American soapie, 'Passions', in an opinion letter to *Mmegi*. "In fact, BTV Channel Controller Kitso Mosiemang said that it would be more expensive to continue airing the programme looking at the fact that they would have to buy the rights from the current holder etv than directly from the United States where the programme is produced" (*Mmegi*, 23 February 2006). The online edition of *The Voice Forum*, an interactive opinion forum, revealed some viewers concerns about BTV programmes. They complained about multiple re-runs, stale programmes like Sesame Street episodes from as long ago as 1994. They felt that the Channel Controller, Kitso Mosieman should go back to teaching as she was failing to turn around BTV (*The Voice Forum*, 2006).<sup>36</sup> It appeared however that, although viewers were unhappy about the foreign content procured, they were much happier about in-house production. After its first anniversary, Thapelo Ndlovu of the *Mmegi* Newspaper compiled 'audience ratings' that showed that viewers rated programmes as follows; *The Eye* – excellent, *The Echo* – very good, *Sports Hive* – very good, *Sedibeng* – very good, *Worship* – average, *Mokaragana* – average, *Flavourdome* – excellent, *What's the score* – excellent, and only *Mmualebe* was rated below average.<sup>37</sup>

The only sure way to establish the value of BTV to the nation of Botswana would be to perform audience reception analysis. Audience research is beyond the scope of this study. According to its Strategic Plan for 2006-2016, BTV was still in a process of performing a comprehensive audience survey by the end of 2007,

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<sup>36</sup> The Voice Forum,

<http://www.thevoicebw.com/phpbb2/viewtopic.php?=&sid=94f54b9655b53c9c2968...>

<sup>37</sup> *Mmegi/The Reporter*, 7 August 2001, Arts page 3

in order to 'provide quality and informative content on issues of national interest', (PMS Strategic Plan 2006-2016:11). In 2002 Professors APN Thapisa and ER Megwa did a study which among other things sought to find out what Batswana thought about BTV. The Terms of Reference for a 2002 Thapisa and Megwa study were,

how the public view, read and listen to the Department of Information and Broadcasting products and services; a survey based on personal and in-house interviews; how those products and services are utilised if at all; the expectation of the public of the Department of Information and Broadcasting; data should also indicate public ratings of DIB products and services, versus the private media.<sup>38</sup>

The audience survey targeted 'critical areas', (Thapisa and Megwa, 2002:6) major cities and towns along the most populated eastern margin of the country, including Lobatse, Gaborone, Mahalapye, Francistown, Selibe-Phikwe, Serowe, Molepolole and Kanye. It also included 'non critical areas' (Thapisa and Megwa, 2002:7), big 'rural' villages of Gantsi, Gweta, Hukuntsi, Kasane and Nata. The study showed that radio ownership was very high across the country, over 90 percent in rural villages, urban villages, town and cities. Television ownership was high in cities at 79 percent, but could be as low as 33.5 percent in rural villages with populations of over 5000. Most small villages and settlements in Botswana did not have a single television set.

### **Television viewing**

More than 64 percent of respondents in the Thapisa and Megwa study said the watched television daily, and there was no significant difference across gender

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<sup>38</sup> Department of Information and Broadcasting, Final Report. Report on the national survey on print and electronic media in Botswana. TB2/5/19/2001-2002 By Profs. APN Thapisa and ER Megwa, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2002.

and age for groups between 15 – 45 years. Sixty percent of men compared to 68 percent of women watched television daily, suggesting a bias of television programming towards women. BTV was watched by 72 percent of those with access to television. They also watched other channels including Gaborone Television (GBC), South African SABC 1,2,3, BOP TV and e.tv and channels provided by the MultiChoice pay-television subscriber bouquet, DSTV for sports, music, documentaries, cartoon/children programmes, News channels including CNN, BBC, SKY and Euro-News. In fact, for those with access to other television stations, especially South African, they preferred them over BTV (Thapisa and Megwa, 2002:72). Eighty percent of those that did not watch television had no access to it. A third of BTV viewers watched it because it was their national television station, and about 20 percent did so because it showed local programmes not shown on other channels. About 16 percent were forced to watch it as it was the only television station they received. Only another 16 percent watched it because they liked its programmes. Fourteen percent did not like BTV programmes (Thapisa and Megwa, 2002:29 - 35).

At its inception, the station was greeted with what amounted to a national euphoria – feeling that it was the first national television, a national resource reflective of the diversity of the nation. Expectation was that it was fair, impartial and objective and independent of government interference. Most people knew that it was funded by public funds but did not appear to kow-tow to government officials. Public attitude towards BTV at its inception was very positive because of the perception of independence particularly free from governmental control. There was also general perception that because it would serve as a public broadcaster fair to all, its staff should not be treated as civil servants in the way they were appointed, promoted or remunerated. However, and regrettably, this positive perception, it seems, has begun to wear off. This is a result of BTV sliding into what a participant described as a 'government-say-so' station. This has been a source of concern to most of the participants who

feel strongly that Botswana needs an independent broadcaster, be it commercial or public...There should be more educational programmes and fewer soaps and more youthful presenters...BTV should have a channel similar to CNN or BBC dealing with News as they happen and talk shows. Broadcasting times should be increased. There should be cartoons as well. There should be more live coverage of Parliament and more coverage of local issues (Thapisa and Megwa, 2002:67-68).

According to the study, Botswana did not favour government ownership of the media. Some of the comments from the respondents were, 'we like our BTV of old' and 'we want it back, referring to the first year of BTV's existence before Chris Bishop left BTV News and the station. There were also complaints that BTV did not represent local communities, "create space for issues affecting communities and giving people opportunity to talk about these issues and how they should be dealt with...and to provide information about what is happening in rural areas, de-urbanise its News...assist the nation and the government to deal with the discontent and disaffection apparent in the country...provide balanced coverage of all political parties and their activities" (Thapisa and Megwa, 2002).

## Chapter Three

### ***'From police network to radio station of the nation' to television station of the nation: The birth of television in Botswana***

#### **The eve of independence and the idea of a government-owned Information Branch**

Kenneth Good (1992) says of the decolonization of Bechuanaland that it was "as firm as it was brief" (Good, 1992:72). When the independence of Bechuanaland became eminent, Colonial administration began to lobby for a government-owned Information Branch. Initially there was strong support for a government controlled but commercially operated broadcasting service. London had agreed with Pretoria to preserve a regional monopoly for SABC. An uneasy administrative situation emerged between the High Commission's office in Cape Town, Resident Commissioners in the HCTs and entrepreneurs seeking permission to set up commercial broadcasters. Attempts within the HCTs to allow commercial broadcasting were perceived by the government of the Union to violate SABC sovereign right to determine all broadcast content for South Africa. Complicating matters further for Bechuanaland was that it was administered from within the Union in the Imperial Reserve at Mafeking. Resident Commissioners felt they should be able to issue broadcasting licences. The High Commissioner on the other hand tried to maintain conformity in communication policy matters between the Union and HCTs. Beginning 1957, requests for private radio concessions were viewed by London, the High Commission in Cape Town and the Resident Commissioner in Mafeking. In 1958, local colonial authorities of the protectorate were allowed for the first time to collect license fees, although 90 percent still went to the SABC. In January 1960, changes were made to the Bechuanaland Posts and Telecommunications law section that covered radio

licensing, authority and collection of receiver fees. It was not until 1963 that full authority for collection of fees was at last given to the Bechuanaland authorities, and not paid to the South African Postmaster and forwarded to SABC (Zaffiro, 1989, Zaffiro, 1991; van de Veur, 1996).

It appears however that, the struggle by Resident Commissioners to obtain authority to licence commercial broadcasters was more about protesting against domination by Pretoria than a real concern for the welfare of the Protectorate. As independence for the Protectorate approached, the language of the colonial government began to justify government monopoly of broadcasting than encouraging other players. As heir apparent to the Khama III dynasty, had he not married a white woman, Seretse's support from the colonial government was almost always guaranteed. The fall-out between the British government and the Union of South Africa and the imminent independence for Bechuanaland changed Seretse's fortunes. He was preferred over the radical nationalists of the older party, the Bechuanaland Peoples Party. Good insists that, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) under Seretse became the colonial government party. It was given the monopoly of resources and apparatus of the state, and allowed to disseminate its policies using government resources (Good, 1992:73). Major A.H Donald, recruited specifically to start off the government information service in 1960, was opposed the introduction of privately owned commercial radio, although a number of interested parties had approached the colonial administration. The newly elected BDP government continued this colonial legacy, no commercial radio service was allowed for 32 years after independence. The first commercial radio station, RB2 was introduced in 1992 and was government-owned. Private commercial stations emerged for the first time in 1998 with the licensing of two Gaborone-based commercial stations; Yarona FM and soon after Gabz FM.

Mass media was perceived as necessary to present the government's case to the people through carefully designed strategy of political information

management. In 1962 a BBC team was sent to facilitate the launching of the radio service operating from Lobatse, the first administrative capital of the protectorate. In 1965 on the eve of the first general elections of the soon to be independent Botswana, the radio service was moved from its pilot location in Lobatse to the new capital, Gaborone. The following year in 1966, it was formally re-launched as Radio Botswana after a record sixty hours coverage of the independence week (Draft National Broadcasting Policy, 2003:10). This was the beginning of government-owned media for independent Botswana.

Government-ownership of media started just before the end of British colonialism in 1962, and was to become the most dominant to the present, with government owning both the national print and broadcasting services. Since the Donald report of 1961, a key function identified as central for the government-owned mass media was 'to encourage and assist people of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to take interest and responsibility for economic, political, cultural development'. In 1962, the colonial government's newly founded Department of Information started a monthly culture and feature magazine, '*Kutlwano*', which survives to the present (Rantao, 1994). After independence, the sentiment that government control of the media was necessary for the development of the country was reproduced in a 1968 A.J. Hughes and the 1978 C.N. Lawrence reports on the functions of government-owned media. Information consultant A.J. Hughes' "Report on the Information Functions of Government" presented to the government of Botswana in 1968 pretty much reproduced the same sentiments about functions of a government-owned media as conceived by Alan Donald in 1961. Hughes quoted from the Development Plan covering 1968 that "the government recognized that the traditional attitudes and practices of the most majority of Batswana will have to change before a real break-through in the development of the rural economy is possible" (Hughes, 1968).

## **The 1968 A.J Hughes Report: Entrenching government control in post-independence Botswana**

Sociologist Daniel Lerner wrote in 1958 that it was required to bring on board the “isolated and illiterate peasants and tribesmen” (Lerner, 1964: 411). The post war period saw a surge of international campaigns on the role of various mass media forms in the process of making Africa modern (West and Fair, 1993). The government of Botswana also sought the advice of media consultants Hughes and later Lawrence, on how mass media could assist towards modernization of Botswana. The two consultants, and others after them, saw role of the media as to introduce modernity to the illiterate, backward, unsophisticated, simple minded peoples of Botswana on matters such as health care, hygiene, better farming methods

I believe that a blanket coverage of the country with cheap cyclostyled materials of basic information and education attractively ...leaflets would be in *Setswana*...distributed freely...ideally a leaflet on baby care should reach every woman of child-bearing age – if she cant read it, someone she knows will read it to her (Hughes, 1968:21).

In 1968, RB was on air for a total of fifty hours a week, and two thirds of the programmes were in *Setswana*. The Hughes Report on the information functions of government was commissioned by the government of the Republic of Botswana through the auspices of the Ariel Foundation. It covered many aspects of the role of government-owned mass media including the type of content, expectation on staff to realize their duty was first to the government, the need for Botswana government propaganda, newsworthiness, evils of advertising and popular culture, policy direction and quality and training of staff. Hughes' official terms of reference were

To make a comprehensive survey of the present information functions within government, including all ministries and media; to assess the impact that the information functions are making on the people and to make recommendations for the improvement, expansion and future orientation of information work, bearing in mind the need to make the most economical use of the available resources.<sup>39</sup>

The Hughes report, dated 7 March 1968, began by a quote by the first president Sir Seretse Khama. Perhaps then, it was not by coincidence that the tone of the whole document became very authoritarian and except at the very end, read like a directive from the President himself. It mainly attacked the “unfortunate” tendency among staff in broadcasting to regard themselves as an independent body operating on public service corporation lines instead of functioning in their role as part of government’s publicity machinery (Hughes, 1968:17). It soon became evident that the unwritten terms of reference were that he should reprimand government paid journalists of the Department of Information and Broadcasting. He was to inform them in no uncertain terms that the establishment firmly belonged under government, that it was an instrument not only of the state, but of also the ruling party. Their job was not journalism, but government propaganda,

There are misconceptions among some civil servants that they should not push government policies too vigorously because this amounts to involvement in politics. The fact is that to fail to promote the government line represents an attempt to dabble in politics. Civil servants must in activities support and promote official policies (Hughes, 1968:8).

Furthermore,

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<sup>39</sup> A.J Hughes (1968) Report on the information functions of government. Commissioned by the government of the Republic of Botswana. March 1968. Gaborones. Botswana National Archives. BNB 2005

The government of Botswana is a political government elected by a political process to carry out political measures. No – one, least of all those that are its civil servants, should do anything to divert the political direction of government. In fact, public relations and the spread of information should be a continuous process for which any Motswana in a position of responsibility ...must consider himself responsible at all times. A circular should be issued under the highest authority pointing out the need for Permanent Secretaries and senior government officers to be continuously aware of the public relations aspect of their work (Hughes: 1968:11).

Hughes arrived in Botswana on Jan 22 1968 and submitted the report by March 7, 1968 – spending most of his time in Gaborone – but he made visits to Lobatse, Kanye, Palapye, Mahalapye, Serowe, Francistown and Mochudi. He interviewed more than 200 persons individually and as groups. He met the President, all government Ministers and permanent Secretaries, many heads of departments and all senior officers in the Ministry of Home Affairs which at the time housed the government mass media, Department of Information and Broadcasting. He also spoke to MP's, civil servants, town and district councillors, officials, tribal authorities, chiefs, headmen, farmers, businessmen, traders, trade union and party officials, teachers, clergymen and representatives from women's organizations. The voice of the elite was given more priority.

Hughes quoted from the Development Plan covering 1968 that "the government recognized that the traditional attitudes and practices of the most majority of Batswana will have to change before a real break-through in the development of the rural economy is possible". Although Hughes advocated for the public service broadcasting ideal of universal broadcasting coverage in Botswana, he found universal access of print and film in 1968 a luxury and quite unnecessary for the sparsely populated regions apart from the eastern belt with most of the

populations. He totally obliterated the role of indigenous minorities in governance and development. He saw no need for government to extend its resources to them compared to other ethnic groups. They were not perceived worthy of the expenses on mass media because they lived in smaller groups; were not so well educated; were less amenable to persuasion; their land did not have the same potential for development and furthermore, the full participation of these citizens was not seen as vital to the state as the need to create a national consensus and spirit of development in those parts of the country where most people lived. Hughes, however, advised that the medium that could be economically exploited in the under populated areas was radio. No chances could be taken with people living in large groups which he said were more volatile and more vulnerable to destructive propaganda. They were on the other hand also more amenable to change and would be more amenable to information and assist their own development (Hughes, 1968:6).

The threat of external media on the internal nation-building project of Botswana was ever present. Characteristically, since nation-building is also an inherently ethnicity-centred project, Hughes could not steer clear of ethnic politics. He advised that there be a limited broadcast in Kalanga, for the country's largest minority group listened to Rhodesia Radio, something that could be a setback to the creation of a solid national identity (Hughes, 1968: 8). He recommended that reporters who worked in that area had a command of the Kalanga language. Lydia Nyathi-Ramahobo (1999) undertook an important study on the implementation of the Language Policy of Botswana in 1988 where she revealed that the government of Botswana mainly communicated to the general public in English except on radio (Nyathi-Ramahobo, 1999:99). Job advertisements were mainly in English, emphasized a good pass for English, even when the job did not require language skills. In contrast, more radio broadcasts particularly of the Ministry of Agriculture were in *Setswana*. Media communication in Botswana today continues to fail to adequately represent local languages, particularly minority languages.

In 1968 there were no technical facilities for professional film production. Television on Botswana ground was in 1968 limited to rare visits by foreign News teams. Hughes was caught between totally disregarding the possibility and usefulness of visual media for Botswana and appreciating it. So limited were Botswana's external publicity and public relations resources and so influential was television in the West that, according to Hughes, a single thirty second appearance by the President on a syndicated network programme could be a most important contribution to the country (Hughes, 1968:13-14). On the other hand he saw filmmaking as an attractive but extravagant pastime. He approved of the idea of dropping expenditure on a film unit, because, to serve a useful purpose, it would have to produce four or five major films a year and a regular News reel. Together with the cost of cinema vans operating filming could easily swallow the whole of the information budget.

Besides expenses, was the question of consumption. Hughes argued that there was evidence to show that unsophisticated audiences took several years to grasp the conventions of cinema such as distortions of time and space; and often missed the point of the film (Hughes, 1968:24,25). At the same time, projecting images required facilities. There were a few halls showing British, American and other feature film. Information Services had two mobile cinema vans, the Ministry of Agriculture had one. Some schools had projectors. "Apart from two or three outdated productions and some amateur agricultural filmlets, any material shown were foreign and with a few exception were of doubtful relevance or suitability" (Hughes, 1968:9). He was also worried that the films that people in rural areas were exposed to by embassies and religious groups seeking to put forward their own propaganda could make them less willing to watch government slide shows.

Although Hughes was adamant that film/television if done by government would be frivolous, he encouraged the government to persuade filmmakers to come to Botswana especially considering that the then apartheid government in South

Africa had tightened and limited access. Botswana could put in place only minimum controls on filmmakers. Botswana according to Hughes had the same climatic and scenic advantage as South Africa. Botswana would gain some publicity through the feature films and documentary productions. Two years after Hughes report, the Government of Botswana put in place the very same controls through the Cinematograph Act of 1970.

By 1968, there had been a notable and rapid build-up of the technical facilities and output of Radio Botswana, although Botswana had not at the time secured membership with International Telecommunications Union. Localization of jobs in government media was well advanced. Training and quality of staff was still very low, there was no training plan – training occurred on an *ad hoc* bases. Hughes suggested a training plan. He found the quality of especially the field staff extremely low

There appears to be little awareness among the staff of Radio Botswana as to what they are there for, they seem, on the whole, to be happy if they can fill the hours of transmission with programmes. Those who do have some wider ideas of what their job is have the wrong ideas. Radio Botswana is not a public service broadcaster like BBC. It was a government department and its job was to assist the execution of their various functions. Under no circumstances was it to be used to embarrass, frustrate or oppose the government which it is a part (Hughes, 1968:30).

Hughes could be said to be to Radio Botswana what Lord Reith was to the BBC, its gate-keeper. He had little regard for entertainment generally, hence he called for a re-assessment of the role of radio and to give it broadcasting a clear policy where it would be used as medium of information and education. Entertainment programmes, such as music, he felt had no place in the programme schedules as of right but rather should justify themselves to the extent that they captured

and retained an audience for information and education programmes. He was even sceptical about the use of soap opera for education. Classical music, of minority interest even in Western Europe, with no widespread appeal was also not necessary. He found broadcasts of no information function to a drastic negative effect in listenership and therefore not to be broadcast by Radio Botswana. Hughes approved of quiz contests – with schools and other institutions competing and cultural magazine programmes to encourage local musicians, poets and writers.

On foreign content, Hughes found very few of the feature tapes supplied by foreign organizations and used by Radio Botswana relevant to the country's needs, save for international News particularly provided by the BBC. Advertising to Hughes was likely to result in consumption of apartheid from neighbouring South Africa. Although advertising and commercial radio could be justified on revenue grounds and in publicizing Botswana externally, it had its dangers. Unsophisticated people could be unduly susceptible to radio adverts. Whatever checks and controls enforced, the basic fact was that advertisers sought to induce the buyer to purchase their product, not to make a rational choice. In a country with a high standard of living this may not be a problem. But for people living at a subsistence level, the purchase of less useful, less needed or less nourishing goods could be a matter of life and death or at least good health and poor health. Hughes also maintained that simple people could also believe that adverts on government radio had the approval of government (Hughes, 1968).

Hughes was worried that apartheid propaganda could come into Botswana through adverts prepared in South Africa. The content could contain an implicit acceptance of the racial structure of the then separatist society there. He however conceded that marginal backing of apartheid could be considered a lesser evil looking at the financial rewards – and that if commercial broadcasts were in *Setswana*, the racial issue would perhaps not arise. On the definition of News, Hughes warned that there was no such a thing as impartial News

broadcasting. BBC contained British propaganda. Voice of America contained American propaganda. Radio Moscow News contained Russian propaganda, but it was all the more effective for being covert. The selection of News order and juxtaposition of items and the style and vocabulary used all have propaganda effect. Botswana equally had to have News broadcasts which reflected the needs, the interests, the achievements and the aspirations of the people and their government.

It was only at the end of the report that Hughes was to express his reservations about government control of the media that his terms of reference required him to endorse. For example he expressed the needs for a Newspaper that would offer alternative News to that of the *Botswana Daily News*. Although he accepted that to a large extent the funds would have to be sourced from government, he recognized that as literacy increased, there would be a growing interest in what he called public affairs. These were matters outside narrow daily lives and independence the government News engendered (Hughes, 1968:45). An independent paper would not undermine the government efforts, but unlike the *Botswana Daily News*, would not be dedicated to the government line. He suggested a few possibilities; such as international Newspapers being encouraged to set up in Botswana such as the Bantu Press or Argus Group, both South African. He also suggested a purely local commercial company – perhaps with government holding some equity or other interest. ‘Tswana African ownership’ of the media, which would be ‘genuinely public’ according to Hughes was made practically impossible by the company existing condition [of poverty]. He also suggested that perhaps one of the existing institutions – a political party, cooperative movement, trade union, could own the paper. Only as a last resort would he want this Newspaper to be government owned, but if that be the case, he appealed for occasional criticism such as readers’ letters. To this day, the *Botswana Daily News* does not have an opinion column.

Most importantly, government mass media, by Hughes, was perceived as a tool to inform citizens of the new nation of Botswana, and that only the BDP government was their trustworthy source of information that knew what was best for them. Resources including the police service were to be used to sell both party and its government – the party flag and that of the country must be used side by side, he said, (Hughes, 1968:14). Ten years later in 1978, another report by C.N. Lawrence reiterated similar sentiments. Lawrence was brought in to guide the department in establishing a News agency. From this report, again there was the salient voice of disapproval from the political leadership regarding the conduct of civil servants at (Department of Information and Broadcasting) DIB who thought job was journalism. It however, appeared that despite the best intentions by government to control it, media in Botswana could never be totally controlled by the state, hence the need for constant threats under the guise of external expertise.

It appears that not even Hughes could totally conceive of a mass media service that was only accountable to the government. Upon his recommendation, to promote a broader sense of public ownership and accountability, a radio Botswana Advisory Committee was established in 1968, as a non-statutory body to advise the Minister responsible on matters relating to content and language. This body included prominent members of the opposition and other independent activists" (Draft National Broadcasting Policy, 2003:11). Another recommendation that was taken from him was that the department of Information and Broadcasting be transferred from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the office of the President, after a separate proposal to create a new Ministry of Information was rejected.

### **The 1978 C.N Lawrence Report**

Ten years after the Hughes report, another inquest was instituted known as the 1978 Christie Lawrence Report for the Commonwealth of the Republic of

Botswana by the Consultant on Information and Broadcasting Services.<sup>40</sup> Much of its findings were to define the course of the Departments of Information and Broadcasting for the next three decades. It set out what was for the next three decades to become the core business of the Department of Information and Broadcasting (DIB); an information service for government whose mandate was “to win and retain the consent of the people to the policies, aims and actions of the government,” (Lawrence, 1978:20). In 2005, the official website of former DIB still defines its mandate in the same terms.

The report sought to advise on policy options for government media; assess the effectiveness of the organisational structure of the then DIB; assess recruitment of staff; assess training needs; assess possibilities of merging information units of other ministries with the department and to assess how the department could perform better at projecting a positive image of Botswana. It solicited views from government Ministers, Members of Parliament, government officials, non-governmental organisations and members of the public on the services of the government-owned radio and print media.

The public complained among other things, of the poor Radio Botswana signal, lack of News about other parts of Botswana other than Gaborone, low command of *Setswana*, the official vernacular among presenters, and poor and late circulation of the much sought after *Botswana Daily News*, government’s free daily Newspaper. Lawrence rated 30 percent of the staff at the time untrainable and lacking in motivation and professional example. When BTV turned five years on July 31 2005, reporters still complained not only of lack formal training in journalism, but also lack of on the job training. In an interview with the researcher, an editor said, “we need an experienced person to teach us basic journalistic skills such as script writing and exactly how a Newsroom operates” (Interview with BTV reporter, 2006).

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<sup>40</sup> Lawrence, C., (1978) Report for the Commonwealth of the Republic of Botswana by the Consultant on Information and Broadcasting Services, Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. Printed by the Botswana Government Printer, Gaborone.

By and large the Lawrence report endorsed a top-down one way model of communication, which persists to this day in both the departments of Information and of Broadcasting Services. Lawrence recommended regular meetings between the Director of DIB and the Minister of the Office of the President. The meetings were deemed necessary to help 'Cabinet to have prior advice about public opinion and likely public reactions'. This suggested that Lawrence was aware that one of the roles of the department ought to have been to solicit the public's opinion on issues of national concern which could then be utilised by decision-makers (Lawrence, 1978:29). The report never spelt out very clearly what the public ought to expect from DIB. It never articulated the relationship between the media and the public.

A lack of clarity about whether media and state power should be separate is perhaps the most enduring and most far reaching of the limitations of the Lawrence Report. The Lawrence report at some moments suggested DIB could do with less interference from government Ministers and ministry officials and be an agent of change of the people's modes of thought. Yet again in 1978, Lawrence did not see the possibility of Botswana's national media becoming independent of government for a foreseeable future. He saw no likelihood that DIB could be able to generate sufficient independent income. He argued that it was also not certain that financial independence from government would necessarily prevent interference. At the time, the only possibility in sight that Lawrence saw feasible in the future was for DIB to one day become a separate Ministry. This would be ideal, he said, because it would make tighter political control easier on this very important service. At that time though, he found the department too small to run as a separate Ministry. He thus thought it useful and beneficial for the department to remain under the Office of the President. The arrangement he argued accorded it prestige of direct Presidential authority, placing it within the core of the administration as well as giving its director a voice at Cabinet level (Lawrence, 1978:29). Such reports as the Hughes report of 1968

and the Lawrence report of 1978 did become policy. Zaffiro (1988) found that nearly all of the basic recommendations contained in the Hughes report were accepted by the President and, in an important Cabinet Directive, Ministers were instructed to report within one month how they planned to implement them (Zaffiro, 1988:13). The Lawrence report was also to make major waves in the broadcasting policy environment. "Language taken from the Lawrence report found its way into the relevant pages of the National Development Plan for the 1979 – 85 period" (Zaffiro, 1988:45). Consultancy reports such as these dominated the early history of government media policy in Botswana. Foreign experts, changing government Ministers and Permanent Secretaries responsible for the Department of Information and Broadcasting, and the senior management of the department shaped this early period, which from the language of the reports, was a period of institutionalising a BDP hegemony.

### **Beyond colonization, domination by South Africa and BDP hegemony**

The history of government-owned media in Botswana can be understood through colonialism, domination by South Africa, and the invention of a BDP hegemony. While very determining, they were mitigated by other factors, including the sections of Information and Broadcasting's own internal politics and growth, and at a world scale, the Cold War. The UNESCO, the Non-aligned Movement, the OAU debates on the Western-bias of information and communication, as well as the on-going Cold War sparked a lot of interest among News agencies to offer better reporting on Africa, sometimes at a fee.

### **Botswana's media policy during the Cold War**

The Botswana government appears to have had adopted a somewhat neutral stance during the Cold War where it allowed News agencies from both the Eastern and Western blocs. In 1971, a Moscow based News service, Telegraph

Agency of the Soviet Union, (TASS) expressed interest in offering a News service and all required radio-teletype facilities for direct reception of the TASS English language transmission. They also offered technical assistance in installing equipment and training technical personnel at a charge of 3-4000 in local currency a year.<sup>41</sup> The Chinese Hsinhua News Agency expressed interest in covering Botswana from about 1973. At the end of 1975 they proposed to allocate a permanent correspondent to Gaborone and was granted permission by the government. Chen Yi-fei was accepted as the resident correspondent on April 1976.<sup>42</sup> In 1974, Head of Foreign Relations Department of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation wrote to Information and Broadcasting in Botswana, seeking that a correspondent of their French speaking radio in South Africa, South West Africa, Rhodesia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Angola be accredited as a correspondent in Botswana.<sup>43</sup> The Swedish Development Authority (SIDA) also assisted some journalists from the country to visit Botswana in 1974.<sup>44</sup>

Cold War politics could not always be ignored. A TASS correspondent, A. Rachkov, requested permission to cover Botswana for the Soviet News agency. He wanted an interview with the President, to visit the Orapa diamond mine, the Selibe-Phikwe copper-nickel plant and the Lobatse abattoir as economic progress stories.<sup>45</sup> The Administrative Secretary of the Office of the President, L.M. Mpotokwane, referred Rachkov's request to the Head of the government Intelligence unit.<sup>46</sup> Rachkov was based in Zambia and had sought access into Botswana through the country's High Commission in Lusaka. The view of the High Commissioner was that Rachkov's story would improve on the limited coverage of Botswana within the Socialist world.<sup>47</sup> The Intelligence unit found no

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<sup>41</sup> Letter to A.M. Mogwe, Permanent Secretary to the Office of the President from L. Zamyatin, TASS General Director. Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/I (2)

<sup>42</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (47)

<sup>43</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/I (12)

<sup>44</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/I (18)

<sup>45</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (60)

<sup>46</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (61)

<sup>47</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (63)

security objections,<sup>48</sup> and Rachkov was granted permission. This however, did not settle well with Western economic interests in Botswana. The Mining Commissioner, D.G. Minnes strongly objected to the proposed visit to Orapa, citing security reasons. He argued that no useful benefits would be derived by Botswana from the TASS visit except to compromise the security of the country's main source of income, diamonds.<sup>49</sup> The Group Secretary of the Anglo American Corporation and the local subsidiary De Beers Botswana Mining Company, H.F. Rose also objected strongly, calling the TASS correspondent a non essential visitor. De Beers preferred that the TASS correspondent only meet with the Resident Director of the company in Gaborone and be shown a film on Orapa.<sup>50</sup>

The government took an unexpectedly stubborn position on the matter, considering that diamonds were then becoming the country's most important export. Large Kimberlite diamond deposits had recently been discovered and fast becoming Botswana's highest foreign exchange earner (Tsie, 1996). Mpotokwane maintained that Rachkov's visit was indeed necessary. The TASS correspondent was not a tourist on a sight-seeing excursion, but offering an important service of covering mining, an essential aspect of Botswana's development. On the question of limiting numbers of people entering into the mines, Mpotokwane reminded the mining executives that very few journalists requested to visit the mines. He reminded them also that, only a year ago in 1975, they had without difficulty granted the *National Geographic* magazine permission into the mine.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps Minnes had not expected the government to take on such a strong position on a visit from a side they assumed was an obvious enemy, as they quickly withdrew their objection to the proposed visit. They claimed the initial refusal was motivated by technical considerations, which were never specified. It was therefore quite bold of the Botswana government to strongly oppose mining interests in favour of media freedom.

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<sup>48</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1 (67)

<sup>49</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1 (74)

<sup>50</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1 (75)

<sup>51</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1 (76)

## **A price tag for coverage in foreign media**

The African Directions News Agency (ADNA) in 1977 offered Botswana to correct distortions of Africa in the Western press for a fee of USD600 per annum.<sup>52</sup> Africa Guide in England also proposed to sell Botswana to the outside world of businesses and diplomats at a fee.<sup>53</sup> An Italy-based Wright International offered to produce film, photographic and News propaganda material for distribution in the US.<sup>54</sup> Third World Media Limited approached the Office of the President with a proposition to supply Botswana with a weekly package of five to seven articles on a wide range of social, political, economic, educational and development subjects at a cost of USD 2000 (P10 000) per annum.<sup>55</sup> Doremus and Company International was another interested party, offering to assist the Third World in communicating to the publics that are important to them in America.<sup>56</sup>

Major events like Botswana's independence anniversary in 1976, sparked increased interest from foreign journalists to do stories on African countries. A Cape Town based advertising agency, Bernstein, Kennedy and Associates, claimed that a word association test conducted in South Africa about what image sprung to people's minds at the mention of Botswana was the word 'casino'. The company offered to promote a better image for Botswana that would encourage trade interests to Botswana such as ten years of independence, a new currency and the annual international trade fair.<sup>57</sup> Often the Botswana government declined these offers, citing lack of money for these kinds of advertisements.<sup>58</sup> The *Times of London* offered to do a special report to coincide with the 1978

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<sup>52</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/I (151)

<sup>53</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (133)

<sup>54</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (131)

<sup>55</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (178)

<sup>56</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (179)

<sup>57</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (90)

<sup>58</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (136, 92)

independence anniversary for GBP 4 032 (P32 000). Government declined because the report would not be of substantial benefit to Botswana.<sup>59</sup>

## Foreign reporters in Botswana

Journalists from within the region sometimes also showed interest to cover stories on Botswana, but were often prevented from doing so by poor planning, a lack of resources and not being taken seriously by governments. C. Chipanda of the *Times of Zambia* made a request in 1976 to do an article on Botswana for the 10th independence anniversary. Chipanda had hoped to interview the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. He agreed in principle but made a long list of work responsibilities that would prevent him from meeting Chipanda. Poor planning also worked against him; he wanted to visit the dominant economic sectors like the Botswana Meat Commission and Mining and meet with senior management, but because an itinerary was not provided in advance, many had difficulty committing to interviews with him. Chipanda had also hoped the Botswana High Commission in Zambia would organize funds for accommodation and food and Air Botswana would provide a free return ticket to Zambia. His company was only prepared to provide allowances while in Botswana. In the end he could not come.<sup>60</sup>

By contrast, a correspondent of the *Times of London*, Nicholas Ashford, received a warm reception and was able to meet the President and top government officials in August 1976.<sup>61</sup> This often led to accusation from local journalists that their own governments preferred foreign journalists from major News agencies. One incident in 1975 caused much discontent within the Department of Information and Broadcasting. The Chief Information Officer, Emphraim Lepetu Setshwaelo, complained to the Office of the President that the Ministry of

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<sup>59</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (168, 169)

<sup>60</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (126, 121, 107, 128)

<sup>61</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/I (100)

External Affairs had failed to inform the Information Branch about an impending meeting between Presidents of Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique to discuss Rhodesia. The department only got the information from Reuters wires. "It is most frustrating and demoralizing to the staff of the Information Department and Radio Botswana...and the people of this country to learn about foreign travels and engagements of the President of Botswana from foreign News agencies".<sup>62</sup> External Affairs responded by castigating Information Services for having "an insatiable appetite for News", so that they took as fact every speculation from Reuters.<sup>63</sup> In response, Setshwaelo maintained that it had become common knowledge that the BBC, Reuters and South African papers obtained information about affairs of the Botswana government before the government's own information service had been informed.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Non-aligned movement, UNESCO and efforts towards a balanced flow of information: Formation of the Botswana Press Agency**

The Botswana Press Agency (BOPA) was established in 1981 to provide News of the government-owned print media and radio - the free *Botswana Daily News* paper, Radio Botswana, and later its offspring, RB2. It emerged out of the Non-aligned Movement's efforts to establish a New International Information Order (NIIO), directly linked to the New World International Economic Order (Servaes, 1999:135). The Southern African News Agency (SANA) was initiated in the late 1970s in Cape Town as a loose association of freelance and fulltime reporters and photographers in southern Africa. The feeling was that "those foreign correspondents resident in South Africa relied heavily on South African government communiqués and copy from the South African Press Association (SAPA). Few of them established their own contacts in the field and few put in

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<sup>62</sup> Letter dated 8 September 1975 forwarded from Information and Broadcasting to External Affairs through the Office of the President. Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (40)

<sup>63</sup> M.C. Tibone, Permanent Secretary, External Affairs responding to complaint from Information and Broadcasting via Permanent Secretary of the Office of the President, L.M. Mpotokwane. Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (41)

<sup>64</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (42)

the necessary legwork to check accuracy of the News put out by government spokesmen or the local white press. SANA was a very leftist, black supporting agency. SANA at some point approached the government of Botswana to open office in Gaborone. Initially the government was reluctant citing insufficient information about the agency. They were later permitted to do so.<sup>65</sup>

### **International media reporting bizarre and truly horrific about Africa**

There were always different sentiments regarding the place and form of mass media that was relevant for newly independent African states. More independent players like the Thomson Organisation were sympathetic to the needs of the new African statesmen – men like Julius Nyerere, Tom Mboya, Sir Abubakar Balewa, who needed at that critical time in their history a means of mass media to keep their people fully informed, to integrate them, to encourage and to in spite them to new efforts. At a 1986 symposium of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom on 'The Media and Africa since Independence: past trends and future prospects, it turned out that two decades into the decolonization of Africa, media coverage on Africa was continuing to decline. Reporting Africa had become narrower and more distorted. Local media was weak and vulnerable to excesses of political and bureaucratic control. In film production, most westerners saw Africa as merely a field for documentaries and the little independent production depended on donor funds. International News agencies and broadcasting organizations had reduced the number of resident staff correspondents; and only the spectacular, bizarre and truly horrific stories on the likes of Idi Amin and 'Emperor' Bokassa were found Newsworthy (Palmer, 1987).

Part of the NIIO strategy was to support the birth of national News agencies. The idea of a Pan African News Agency (PANA) is as old as the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU). It was given a

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<sup>65</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (162, 165)

fresh impetus by the debate that began to take place within the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) about a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), but particularly the 1975 General Conference in Nairobi. The conference among other things debated if UNESCO was meeting its central mandate to actively assist the free and balanced flow of information and ideas among peoples of the world.

The Nairobi conference also found the flow of information between developing and developed world to be hampered by among other things, the fact that News dissemination agencies of the developed world virtually had a monopoly on News gathering and information; the monopoly was made secure by the fact that between themselves, these agencies had the financial, technological and management resources to continue to exercise this power; and that with this power, News and information from the developing to the developed world tended to be treated as frivolous and somewhat in sensationalist fashion to suit expectations of what the News agencies of the industrialized world interpreted as their readers tastes. NWICO would redress this situation. At the 20th UNESCO General Assembly, developing countries demanded control of information through national News agencies. The 1978 2nd meeting of the Coordination Committee in Jakarta of Ministers from the Non-aligned Movement recommended national News agencies. UNESCO provided the financial and technical assistance.<sup>66</sup>

At the second session of the conference of African Ministers of Information in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 1979, governments of member states of the OAU adopted the convention establishing PANA. In the spirit of Pan Africanism, the convention sought to promote unity among African peoples. Even though the ideal was to make the voices of the African people heard, the convention had clearly paternalistic overtones. The sources of the 'objective and accurate

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<sup>66</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (176) Letter dated 9 September, 1978, from the High Commission of India in Lusaka, Zambia.

information' were to be News agencies of member states, which at the time were often state monopolies. Countries would have had to consent to the information given about them. News reports would provide favourable News about sub-regional and regional integration in Africa. Concerns about imbalances in the flow of information between the developed and developing nations grew into attacks on the cultural dominance of the West, and could have led to the withdrawal of both the United States and the United Kingdom from UNESCO in 1984 and 1985 respectively (Tomlinson, 1997:123).

Botswana was not represented at the meetings on the NIIO and NWICO, and only belatedly entered the debate through OAU at the Second Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa in April 1979. At this meeting, the draft convention establishing PANA as a specialized agency of the OAU was deliberated upon; the budget, structure, modus operandi, location of headquarters and institutions of the agency. Linguistic divisions between Francophone and Anglophone Africa nearly brought the meeting to a deadlock, but finally Senegal was appointed by the technical committee after voting failed. The southern African region agreed on Lusaka, Zambia for the regional office.<sup>67</sup> PANA began to take shape from 1980, and began to seek subscriptions from OAU member states. Each country was to contribute 1.97 percent of the total national budget.<sup>68</sup>

In February 1980, B.M. Setshogo, Director of Information informed the Office of the President that in the wake of the NIIO and the formation of PANA, it had become imperative to set up a Botswana National News Agency (BONNA).<sup>69</sup> This was after the Inter-Governmental meeting of PANA held in Lobito, Angola in January 1980. Botswana had not paid up subscriptions as it had not yet established a News agency. The Zambian National News Agency (ZANA) had been formed, having exclusive control in receiving and transmitting foreign News.

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<sup>67</sup> From the report on the meeting of Ministers of Information of the OAU, Addis Ababa or Africa, 4-5 April 1979. Botswana National Archives, OP/25/7/I (185)

<sup>68</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP/25/7/I (182)

<sup>69</sup> A savingram from the Director of Information, B.M. Setshogo to the Administrative Secretary of the Office of the President dated 12 February 1980. Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/I (185)

In Malawi, the Malawi National News Agency (MANA), did not prevent individual subscribers from owning individual receiving machines for foreign News in their own premises and therefore, the News agency had no 'editorial control' on the use of foreign News. In Mozambique, because of the civil war, many journalists had left. From about twenty journalists, the national News agency – Agencia Informação Moçambique (AIM), was operating with only four in 1980. PANA was requested to offer financial and technical help to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to establish their own agencies.

Inherently, the approach of reversing Western-biased information and communication by way of establishing state controlled national News agencies legitimized state censorship and threatened editorial independence. Lawrence was at pains not to appear to encourage this trend. He proposed that the national News agency should not concern itself with international feed. This would remain under the print and radio sections. If the News agency was to do editing and dissemination of international News, Lawrence argued it would be tantamount to censorship – something that only happens in countries that exercise rigid press and media censorship, and whose governments wished to deny the inhabitants access to independent News sources. It was for these reasons that the US fell out with UNESCO and the NWICO.

Chief Press Officer A.S Osman and Ted Makgekgenene represented the Department of Information and Broadcasting (DIB) at the first 1st meeting of the southern African pool of PANA in Zambia, March 1980. At this first meeting, the Zambian Minister of Information, M.M. Tambatamba bemoaned foreign News agencies' imbalanced and distorted reports of events taking place in Africa. PANA through national News agencies would therefore correctly interpret Africa's stand on local and international issues.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP/25/7/I (188)

## **Delays to the birth of BOPA: International concerns, internal wrangling**

Internal politics of power between Chris Lawrence, the new Chief Information Officer and other local staff was to delay the birth of BOPA. Lawrence had suggested that the BONNA or Botswana News Agency, (BNA) as it was initially interchangeably referred to, should start with two expatriates; a chief press officer and a senior press officer. He envisaged a working relationship between three formerly disparate sections where the managing editor of publications and the assistant Director of News and Current Affairs were clients of the Press section. The heads of sections would work in close cooperation, exchanging ideas, requests for assistance, material and even staff when necessary, and would exactly equal status, pay and prestige.<sup>71</sup> The full output of BONNA or BNA would be sent to PANA.

James Zaffiro (1988) characterised the early years of broadcasting in Botswana as dominated by expatriates. "Language taken from the Lawrence report found its way into the relevant pages of the National Development Plan for the 1979 – 85 period" (Zaffiro, 1988:45). A.S. Osman and Lawrence appeared to have an interpretation of the project, different from that of locals. In a memorandum to the Administrative Secretary of the Office of the President (OP) dated 4 September 1980, Osman deferred the implementation of the press agency because he felt submissions coming from the department were not in harmony with the concept of the "press section" as had been envisaged by Lawrence. He felt that that the News agency would have to be "considerably diluted" to meet the tastes of all parties that would be affected by its implementation. "I should like to stress that the BNA [Botswana National Archives] cannot initially be a conventional News agency. It is modelled by conditions and circumstances prevailing here" (BNA, OP 25/7/1).

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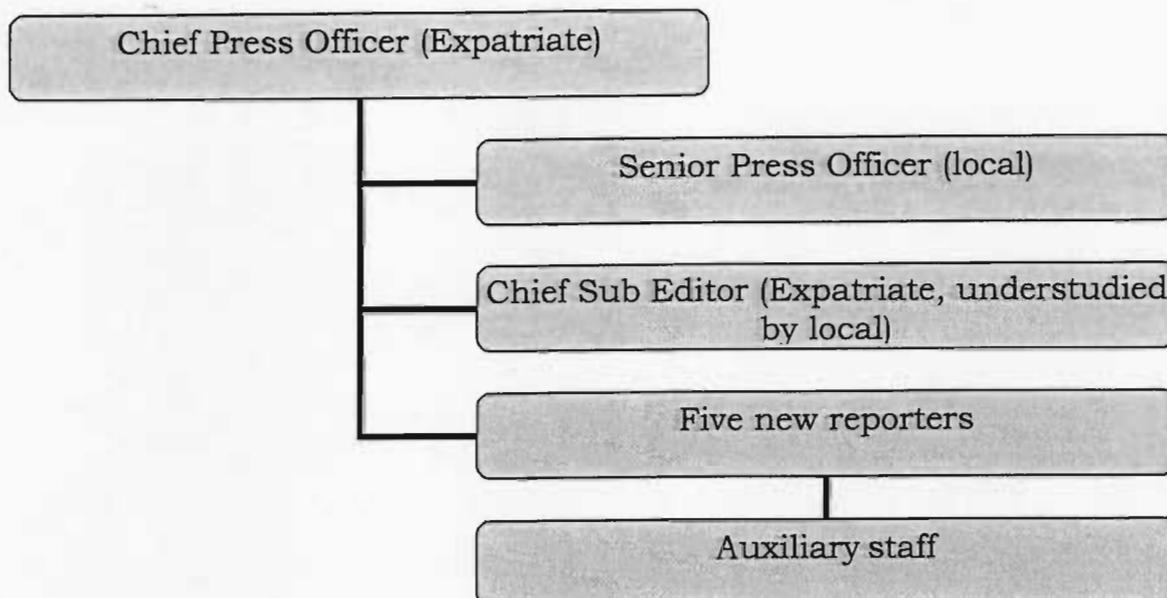
<sup>71</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (189)

On the same day, 4 September 1980, Lawrence wrote two contradictory memoranda to OP. First he sent in the Proposal for the Establishment of the Botswana News Agency. It was proposed as the Press Section, where all government News is assembled, processed, checked and issued, serving all media outlets; Radio Newsroom, Information Services publications, Botswana diplomatic missions abroad, the private sector press (if and when it is established), overseas press, News agencies and their local representatives. The facility would mainly cover the government and its agencies, but also offer a similar facility to parastatal organizations and corporations where government has a shareholding. It would provide reports of events in Gaborone and the vicinity that were sponsored by or of interest to the government, Ministries and departments. Headed by the chief press officer, it would draw from the best staff from all the other sections. He recommended that the chief press officer be an expatriate because the novelty of the agency requires that the staff possess qualifications, skills and experience and a sense of improvisation to ensure its success.

For the local staff, a national News agency proffered new prospects of positions. A memorandum from Setshogo to OP in March 1980, requested that the establishment of the News agency be treated as urgent, "by all means get the Lawrence report implemented or forget the News agency if it will interfere with the report in anyway". He however reminded OP that they had a commitment to PANA to establish the News agency.<sup>72</sup> It appears the department tried to take advantage of the fact that the Lawrence Report had called the press section the heart of any government information service to justify proposing a large staff. Lawrence reported to OP that he was misunderstood, what he had in mind was an efficient staff. He thus proposed the following chain of command:

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<sup>72</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (189)



Lawrence backtracked the same day, reducing the position of chief sub-editor to just sub-editor because it gave the impression that he would be at the same level with the chief press officer. Locals would have preferred to take over expatriate positions within the shortest possible time, but expatriate consultants, whose voice had more weight within government, had very little faith in them. In the case of the new position of chief press officer occupied by Osman, Setshogo and other locals in the department proposed that he be understudied by a local for twelve months, after which the local would take over. Lawrence wrote on 4 September 1980 that twelve months was too short, that in fact the expatriate needed one or two full contracts to pass on skills. So that, if Osman was to terminate his contract before the end of its term, Lawrence advised-that he be replaced, not by the local understudying him, but by one of the expatriate sub-editors.<sup>73</sup>

Expatriate dominance was often coupled with frustration of locals. For example, the first local Chief Information Officer, Dingaan Mokaila was forced to retire within a very short time by the expatriate BBC broadcast advisor, Bernard

<sup>73</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1

Palmer, Chief Engineer Ian Kennedy and Alan Donald who had moved from position of Information Officer in 1961 to Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs (Zaffiro, 1988:16-18). The wholesale acceptance of the findings and their rapid translation into official government broadcast and information policy dramatically underscored the influence of outsiders on policy formulation and implementation.

Lawrence's most important legacy was the establishment of the national News agency. The Department of Information and Broadcasting decided they preferred a consultant's report before they could proceed, arguing that News agency journalism would be a new and demanding form of journalism for Botswana. A letter dated 9 September 1980 signed by B. Setshogo of the Department of Information and Broadcasting read, "As you will recall, Mr Osman was recently promoted to the Chief Press Officer in accordance with the Lawrence Report. He has now come up with a blue print on how the section should operate. Basically it will be the launching into the News agency area which is long overdue in view of our regional and continental weight in News perspectives. I recommend that these ideas be accepted as a basis for the Botswana National News Agency".<sup>74</sup>

Locals did try to assert their own power. When Lawrence showed disapproval of the manner in which the department was handling the establishment of a national News agency, the then Chief Information Officer, B.M. Setshogo wrote, "Mr Lawrence has commented on the proposals but his observations do not affect the subject of the presentation...once the News agency is launched we will contact UNESCO to garner any additional help we can get from that quarter".<sup>75</sup>

### ***'From police network to radio station of the nation' to television station of the nation***

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<sup>74</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP/18/3

<sup>75</sup> Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (3)

In 1984, thirty two years after the advent of Radio Bechuanaland in 1962, the Botswana government began to seriously think about expanding information services *'From police network to radio station of the nation'*, (Zaffiro, 1991) to television station of the nation. As will become evident, there were strong parallels between the birth of Radio Botswana (RB), the Botswana Press Agency (BOPA), and BTV. With regard to radio, South African's domination of colonial Botswana was direct and statutory. With BTV, the domination is less direct, it is by technology and experience. Satellite and terrestrial transmitters permit viewers in Botswana to watch content from most parts of the world. BTV is still new and inexperienced, and where viewers have a choice, BTV is unlikely to be their first choice yet. Expatriates, including from the BBC, were brought in to help set up BTV. Just as it was with radio and print, the next section will show that, local African managers and expatriates at BTV were often at loggerheads. With the Cold War behind us, the new politics in the broadcasting arena are about protecting local cultural capital both and entering global markets. This section focuses on the idea of television for Botswana, and later chapters will look into the manner that BTV tries to strike a balance in a state-media-market nexus.

## **The idea of television service for Botswana**

President Ketumile Masire said in 1984 that the broadcast media would be incomplete without television (*Botswana Daily News*, 16 February 1984, BOPA Library). The *Botswana Daily News* of November 30, 1984 carried the headline, “*Broadcasting incomplete without TV*”. That same week, the independent *Mmegi wa Dikgang* of November 24, 1984 alleged that a “*new television network for Botswana*” was under consideration. Fourteen months later in February 17, 1986, the *Botswana Daily News* revealed a sentiment within government that, “*television too expensive to maintain*”.

## **1988 International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Feasibility Study**

The 1988 International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Feasibility Study Report<sup>76</sup> was the first report ever done specifically on the feasibility of television for Botswana. A paternalistic and condescending mentality, similar to the colonial legacy, was exhibited by this report, as did all the other consultancy reports on mass media in Botswana before it. It maintained the same recommendation as that of Hughes. The report was done in consultation with Radio Botswana, various ministries of government and the University of Botswana. The terms of reference of the report were to determine the marketing, technical, financial, economic, social and political feasibility of a television facility. The report concluded that the problems of television would far outweigh the benefits.

Television would foster national identity, act as a tool for education, increase public awareness of health and modern farming. However, the perceived social dangers were portrayal of violence, sexual permissiveness at a time of HIV/AIDS,

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<sup>76</sup> It was not possible for me to get hold of the ITU report. Information about the report, the government's response to it and the subsequent Croton Report was adapted with permission from an unpublished MA thesis by Bishy Mmusi (2002), entitled “The Development Assumption of Botswana Television: An assessment”.

portrayal of affluent lifestyles, and increased extravagant consumer cultures as a result of advertising. Television was also said to promote passivity. These would not be beneficial to Botswana's unsophisticated would-be consumers. If government were to insist on television, the ITU recommended a public service television rather than a service run by a commercial company. Mmusi (2002) revealed that the Ministry was worried nonetheless about locals watching television from the then apartheid South African, which they viewed as containing in-built apartheid propaganda (see appendix 5).

According to Bishy Mmusi (2002), the Ministry of Finance found in 1989 that the case for a television service in Botswana was extremely weak. They argued that only 1.5 percent of the population would be able to afford a television set and licence fees. A television set alone was the same as the average annual income at the time, an investment of USD 40 million (P2 billion) in the first four years. Government would have to subsidise users at USD 2000 (P10 000) per person. Only the richest, 20 percent of whom were expatriates, would enjoy the subsidy, and according to the Ministry of Finance, they were not a priority (Mmusi, 2002). The ITU report suggested setting up community television-viewing centres, but the Ministry declined to do this on account of the costs of maintenance for such centres. Yet, the Botswana National Development Plan (NDP) 6 clearly stated that a television service would be erected within the 1985 and 1991 planning period. This was the earliest firm public mention of a television service for Botswana. Interestingly, for the 1992 to 1996 planning period, NDP 7 only noted that there were significant developments in private television services and that more consumers were buying television sets to watch video tapes and take advantage of the overspill of South African television (NDP 7:398).

The discussion of television was going on at various levels, within and outside government. James Zaffiro (1988) found that by 1988, top people at Radio Botswana and in government privately expressed mixed feelings about the wisdom of a national television service, as some felt it was mostly a prestige

project for the urban elite. In 1991, the Institute of Development Management (IDM), held a two week television management and production course for senior government officials at Radio Botswana (RB). Ephraim Lepetu Setshwaelo, then Director of IDM, advised RB management that a television service must only be provided if it will not be a burden to the taxpayer while benefiting only the urban elite. In his view, television was only viable if it would cover more than half the national population, contain imaginative home-grown material rather than depend on foreign content, and be an instrument of truth, objectivity and abstain from partisanship (*Botswana Daily News*, 10 October 1991).

Ted Makgekene, at one point the Director of DIB, confirmed in an interview that within DIB, there was always a quiet but persistent push for government to introduce either film or television. Throughout the 1980s, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning was to continue to preach that television was not justifiable from an economics point of view, and that other reasons would have to be advanced to justify it. It appeared that Makgekene did not lose hope, after the discouraging recommendations of the ITU report. He approached the Office of the President (OP) to re-consider the report which he queried did not evaluate all possible options (Mmusi, 2002:21). He argued that the development of satellite technology as opposed to terrestrial microwave programme distribution had greatly reduced the cost of television. Makgekene requested another feasibility study to review and update the ITU report and provide fresh recommendations, exploring the possibility of utilising satellite technology. While the tendering process was going on, incidentally the BBC showed interest and sent its Head of Training, Gordon Croton on a fact-finding mission to Botswana. His report dated March 1992 showed that the few people he had met wanted a television service for Botswana. He found the ITU report's recommendation on content not fitting the facts of modern broadcasting and audience viewing patterns. He suggested a much cheaper option to one suggested by the ITU, a phased television station starting with a small News and Current Affairs service (Mmusi, 2002).

## **1993 Studio Hamburg Media Consult Report**

It was Studio Hamburg Media Consult that won the tender for a consultancy report requested by Makgekgenene. The 1993 Studio Hamburg Report, unlike other reports before it, was designed to make a strong case for the establishment of a television service. As a result, it was optimistic, based on expected expansion of infrastructure, population growth, increased urbanisation, and economic growth. By 1991, two thirds of the population of Botswana still lived in rural areas, in small settlements of under 1000 inhabitants. The capital city had about 135 000 inhabitants and a growth rate of 13 percent per annum (Studio Hamburg Report, 1993:15). The report put forward four options for a television service that they proposed could start in 1997. These were, a government department; a parastatal corporation owned 100 percent by government; a joint venture with government owning shares not exceeding 49 percent or a private company. The Hamburg report postulated a significant growth in the ownership of television sets, from an approximate 28 000 in 1993 to anything between 180 000 and 260 000 sets by the year 2012. The 2002 survey done by Thapisa and Megwa estimated that by then, nearly 60 percent of households in cities of Botswana owned a television set, and half of all households in urban villages had sets (see appendix 6).

To increase the numbers of beneficiaries of the service, like ITU, Studio Hamburg suggested television viewing centres, starting with secondary schools. Licence fees would initially only be P10 (USD 2), affordable for the average television set owning household. It was expected that advertising would over a fifteen year period increasingly cover the costs of the service, assuming advertising revenues would increase much faster than the GDP (Studio Hamburg Report, 1993). Satellite technology evolved much faster than the report envisaged, in 2000, and not the postulated 2007, BTV commenced straight away on direct satellite broadcasting (DSB) (Hunt Report, 1999).

Government of Botswana tended to be sceptical of many of the consultancy reports it commissioned. The Studio Hamburg Report was rejected (Mmusi, 2002). A Television Reference group composing of Permanent Secretaries of various government Ministries found the report lacking in the technical and financial arguments. The capital costs were too high. The parastatal scenario was found more attractive. The Reference Group tried to work out a different alternative; of a production house constructed by the government to produce programmes that could be aired through existing small booster stations in Gaborone, Jwaneng, Morupule, Selibe-Phikwe, Francistown and Orapa. DIB rejected the idea because it would be inadequate to fulfil requirements of public broadcasting of universal access. The department also did not want to be an embarrassment considering that Botswana viewers had access to superior broadcasting programmes from SABC and M-Net. Viewers would not have patience with the department's teething problems (Mmusi, 2002).

According to Mmusi, the Television Reference Group concluded that, "If Government decided to go ahead with this television project, the justification would have to be based on other considerations rather than economic viability", in a Savingram dated 19 June 1996 (Mmusi, 2002:28). They recommended that Cabinet advise the President to direct that the recommendation of the Studio Hamburg on the establishment of a fully fledged television service in Botswana be rejected. It appears the elected political leaders and the bureaucrats differed on the matter, for, in July 1996, P.H.K Kedikilwe, then Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration, told Parliament that his Ministry was only looking at the possibility of introducing a pilot television project. Makgakgenene had finally convinced the Ministry that satellite technology would ensure 100 percent national television coverage around the year 2000. This would form the basis of a future national television station.<sup>77</sup> To get government to make a

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<sup>77</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 18 July 1996, BOPA Library

commitment, according to Makgekgenene, was the most crucial part of lobbying for any project. Then one could change specifications like scale and scope.

## **Resistance against television**

Resistance against television continued in some quarters. Botsalo Ntuane, then the Youth Information and Publicity Secretary for the BDP was also of the opinion that television had adverse "corrosive effects on the collective psyche and sense of nationhood of a people".<sup>78</sup> Those in support, saw the benefit of people being able to hear and see that national leaders and development projects. Some members of the public, including a certain Lorato Mongatane of Ramotswa expressed disappointment at the Minister's position that television would generally be a misuse of government funds. Although she acknowledged that television would initially not benefit rural populations, she felt Botswana needed to start somewhere.<sup>79</sup> Local government authorities of the Central District Council also urged the government to introduce television to help educate people about such issues as voter apathy.<sup>80</sup> Residents of the squatter settlement of Old Naledi in Gaborone added their voice to the call for the introduction of a television service. They made their submission to the National Vision for the year 2016 Presidential Task Group. Their concern was that the exposure of the youth to foreign television programmes was causing a slow death of Setswana culture. Even people in rural Botswana supported the idea of television. Residents of Mabutsane felt that television would promote culture and curb crime.<sup>81</sup> It may however be that, in order to give the impression of popular support for television against government's reluctance to introduce it, DIB purposively reported only the stories that supported their cause and under reported opposition to television.

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<sup>78</sup> *Botswana Gazette*, 16 October 1996, BOPA Library

<sup>79</sup> *Mmegi/The Reporter*, 2 August 1996, BOPA Library

<sup>80</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 10 December 1996, BOPA Library

<sup>81</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 21 April 1997, BOPA Library

Kedikilwe stood firm, and announced again in October 1996 that the government was actively considering to establish a television station in Botswana, at the launching of a two – month intensive television production course by World View Botswana. At the same launch, he announced that his office was drafting a Mass Media Bill to provide operational guidelines for mass media, including broadcasting.<sup>82</sup> On March 26th 1997, the Cabinet decided that Botswana should have its own television service and the project would be implemented by the Department of Information and Broadcasting. No debate was supplied by Cabinet as to why the state scenario was the preferred model (Mmusi, 2002:29). Between April and May 1997, Cabinet approved a proposal presented by Kedikilwe to set up BTV during NDP 8, expected to broadcast by 2000. He told Cabinet that the television service could have been done during NDP 7, but that feasibility studies did not support its establishment.<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, besides mentioning that two feasibility studies were conducted, NDP 8, covering the years between 1997 and 2003 was conspicuously silent about the commencement of the television project, although it started the very next year.

As the next chapter will show, as soon as the television service commenced, politics shifted from whether or not it was a necessary service, to whose interests it served. BTV came to be censored more than both radio and print. Opposition parties found it biased to the ruling party, and the ruling party found its management deeply divided among Botswana's political parties, as former Communications Minister Sebetela told the researcher in an interview.

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<sup>82</sup> Daily News, 18 October 1996, BOPA Library

<sup>83</sup> *Midweek Sun*, 17 May 1997, BOPA Library

## Chapter Four

### **Public Service Broadcasting under duress: Botswana Television, the mirage of autonomy and the onset of government control**

Government-owned BTV started in July 2000 as Africa's most advanced digital technology television station at the time. The early history of BTV from the mid 1990s to 2006 was to follow a similar path to that of its precursor, Radio Botswana (RB). BTV emerged as part of the Republic of Botswana Public Service, funded by the government and run by civil servants. Thus, from the outset, the broadcaster was in the ambit, and under the control of the national government. It fell under the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Department of Information and Broadcasting (DIB). BTV, however, unlike RB, missed a small chance of starting off independent from government. The idea of a semi-autonomous television station was sown right from the first feasibility study by ITU in 1988, even though the recommendations of the report were never adopted. Subsequent consultancy reports also favoured the parastatal option. Particularly Kevin Hunt, the first project manager for the establishment of the service, tried to pursue autonomy for BTV (Hunt, 1999). BTV would be something of a novelty, a government-owned public service broadcaster,<sup>84</sup> with a vision to become a commercially viable station.<sup>85</sup>

#### **BTV, a government-owned public service broadcaster?**

The Editorial Guidelines proclaimed News, Current Affairs and Programming that is free of political, commercial and any other interference at BTV. The Accuracy

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<sup>84</sup> This is according to the former director, Andrew Sesinyi.  
[http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from\\_the\\_director.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from_the_director.html)

<sup>85</sup> Outlined in the BTV web page: [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding\\_principles.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding_principles.html)

Checklist insists on journalists among other things, presenting all sides to a controversy (See appendices 7 and 8).

As employees of the Department of Broadcasting Services and the Department of Information Services we recognise the fact that the state media organs – Botswana Television, Radio Botswana, *Botswana Daily News*, Kutlwano and the Botswana Press Agency – are funded by the public and therefore exist to serve the public. We also believe that to effectively serve the public we need editorial independence backed by a high degree of responsibility and accountability. This calls for the adoption of editorial guidelines and codes of ethics (BTV Editorial Guidelines).

Botswana journalists have a responsibility to practice ethical journalism. The three tenets of journalism: accuracy, balance and fairness, should be adhered to in each story published or broadcast (BTV Accuracy checklist).

On the BTV official website, former Director of the station Habuji Sosome once wrote,

Although Government owned, Botswana Television operates in accordance with the conventional norms of a public service broadcasting organization. BTV enjoys a reasonable degree of editorial independence that allows it to portray Botswana's political and socio-economic fabric as it is.

On the same website, a former Head of News and Current Affairs of the station, Felicitus Mashungwa also wrote,

Striving for the truth: We at BTV News are committed to giving you fair, accurate and balanced reporting. In line with the country's Vision 2016, BTV News aims at ensuring that Batswana are properly informed,

educated and become innovative. To those who wonder about editorial independence and integrity we say, watch us and judge for yourself for indeed the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

A content analysis of Radio Botswana News bulletins by Tefo Ray Mangope (1998) revealed that per week, only 1.2 percent of the bulletin covered ordinary members of the public. Most of the News was on figures of authority. The same was true for BTV News. BTV News was mostly about government's efforts to address Botswana's development questions. The reports were often biased, not by lack of facts, but by failing to be critical on the government position. Accuracy was achieved simply by relaying almost verbatim, positions taken by government officials interviewed. BTV could have started off independent from government, but a series of events prevented this. Interview accounts about events leading to the firing of project manager Hunt, problems with training, internal politics about positions and salaries, the BBC intervention, and eventually Makgekgenene's retirement, show why it is that autonomy for BTV became a mirage. It was conservative voices from within DIB that demanded the reinforcement of government control. The fall-out between locals and expatriates during the crucial and defining moment of the television station made government control justifiable.

The station subsequently went through four different Directors of DIB the first six years. Makgekgenene was replaced by Andrew Sesinyi when he retired from the position of Director of DIB in 2001. Sesinyi left to direct URTNA in 2003, and was replaced by Habuji Sosome. Sosome retired in 2006 and was replaced by Bapasi Mphusu. With regards to General Managers, the station went through five substantive and acting General Managers within the same period. Months of interviews with BTV staff revealed that, the birth of BTV was a process of identity negotiation that was both spatially and politically embedded. It started with power struggles between foreigners in the 'Project Team' that started the television project against the local old guard of the Department of Information and

Broadcasting. When the project team was gone, it became a contestation over space utilization; differing expectations between 'those in television' and 'those at radio', government general orders for civil service against an aspiring new 'corporate image'; the young against the old; new way versus only way of doing things; the 'traditional' versus the 'progressive'.

### **BTV editorial independence under stress**

By 2003, when this research commenced, BTV's claim of editorial independence was under severe challenge, and the station was losing some of its best journalists as a result. Political parties were complaining about the domination of BTV by the ruling party at their own expense. On the other hand, the Director of the station, Sosome was saying the exact opposite of what he was quoted saying in the BTV official website above. On government control Sosome said, "there is no media that is not controlled by certain interests". To him, editorial independence was "just semantics, a relative term which can mean many things". Sosome made parallels between BTV and other media institutions; at CNN, the buck stopped with the owner. The reason that Dr David Kelly committed suicide, he said, was because at BBC, final control rested on the British government,

[A]t the end of the day it is the financier who has the final control. So the buck stops with whoever pays whoever funds! Government may not constantly breathe on our shoulders but when it comes to a push they will say, enough is enough, this is not right! (Sosome, 2004)

The crucial question in the early history of BTV is, why did the British and South African consultants that tried to mentor BTV meet such resistance weaning BTV from government control? The foreign experts that came to start the television project had a totally different orientation and agenda about television from the local staff of the department. To them, government ownership of the media was a thing of the past. Several reasons are explored; the timing of the birth of BTV in

the political history of Botswana, co-option of the media through the bureaucratic state machinery and BDP's success in inculcating a politics of fear and rule among media workers, especially middle management. Lessons from the formative years of BTV help to understand contemporary broadcasting dynamics in Africa. Susan Wright (1994) argues that, beyond the ideological context of the organisation, everyday individual lived experiences of the workers were important in understanding their productive process. Steven Lukes (1974) also said,

[T]o use the vocabulary of power in the context of relationships is to speak of human agents, separately or together, in groups or organisations, significantly affecting the thoughts and actions of others. In speaking thus, one assumes that, although the agents operate within structurally determined limits, they nonetheless have a relative autonomy and could have acted differently..." (Lukes, 1974:54)

Raymond Williams (1974) warned against technological determinism in thinking about television. Television was not predestined to be, it was a result of a set of particular social decisions, in particular circumstances (Williams, 1974:16). To understand the impediments and inroads that BTV has met is best approached by studying how organizational subcultures at the television station shaped and were shaped by the politics of cultural production. This section focuses on the everyday realities of journalists, producers, and managers of government-owned BTV as they colluded with, resigned to, and resisted state power, to the degree permissible within their context.

## **Kevin Hunt and Ted Makgekgenene: State – of – the – art – technology, nothing to air**

The Botswana Television project, started in earnest in 1998, with intentions to go on air on April 1999 (Makgekgenene's Briefing notes for new DIB, 2001). It was hoped that BTV would be on air in time for the 1999 general elections (*Mmegi/The Reporter*, 09 January 1998, BOPA Library). Thomas Nkhoma of the BOPA wrote a headline story January 1998 announcing that the nation could expect to view their television station in 18 to 24 months. The first member of the television project team, Kevin Hunt, had started work on 19 January. A British national, Hunt was commissioned to co-ordinate the starting up of the station. Hunt was a 1960s graduate of Bournemouth Film School in the UK and claimed a wealth of television production experience with camera, being a producer, director, manager, setting up of television facilities and post-production. Hunt's first comments were to inform the nation that the television service would broadcast mainly News, and that more programmes would follow. Top on his priority list was to train a small team of television experts that would help in the initial stages of the project, both on the technical and production side.<sup>86</sup> He was hired for a monthly salary of about P26 000 (USD 5000), as the highest paid 'civil servant'. After six months, Hunt had sourced Paul Farnsworth as the senior engineer for the project, and David Millard for training of staff for production and programmes. Farnsworth would lead the local engineers in of DIB, working closely with Habuji Sosome on transmission and States Batsalelwang on operations (Interview with Robert Gray).

By the time the BTV project reached completion, it had met difficulties from several factors. It was intended to go on air by the end of 1999.<sup>87</sup> The construction of BTV was commissioned in September 1998 by the Department of Architecture and Building Services (DABS). In April 1999 some 500 workers

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<sup>86</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 21 January 1998

<sup>87</sup> *The Botswana Daily News*, 23 April 1999, <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=19990423>

engaged in the construction of BTV went on strike. By November 2000, even as BTV had gone on air, DABS was extending the completion period of the Mass Media Complex to the last half of 2002. Theko Fako of DABS cited multiple problems of tendering, structural engineering, land surveying, and design. They projected that the costs would go from the initial P155 million (USD 31 million) to P329 million (USD 66 million) by November 2000.<sup>88</sup> According to Makgekgenene, the final estimated construction cost of BTV and the rest of the Mass Media Complex was P308 600 million (USD 78million), with cost overruns to the tune of P 80 million.<sup>89</sup>

BTV started with state – of – the – art television technology. The engineers informed the researcher that BTV used Pan American Satellite (PAS) 7 satellite technology, one of the best technologies in television broadcasting. The servers and ports were Quantel Digital. They had fully automated editing and script-writing by Omnibus and Associated Press' ENPS. ENPS had only been launched in 1997.<sup>90</sup> OmniBus technology automates ingest of all media, provides browse and on-line full-resolution editing functionality, manual-assist and fully-automated playout as well as sophisticated access to archive media via the Internet for remote users.<sup>91</sup> ENPS provided features including program rundowns, scripting, planning, contacts, messaging, archiving, third-party device control, publishing, News wire management, full text searching, tightly integrated resilience capabilities and language support.<sup>92</sup>

A guided tour of the BTV studios and the master control rooms. Equipment included brand names such as the latest JVC Video Tape Recorders (VTRs) and professional monitors, Soundcraft B800 audio mixers, Ikegami Cameras, Sony

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<sup>88</sup> The Botswana Daily News, 20 November 2000, <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20001120>

<sup>89</sup> 'Briefing notes for the new DIB' handing over notes provided to the researcher by former DIB Director, Ted Makgekgenene just before he retired.

<sup>90</sup> Associated Press News releases, Monday July 12, 1999, [http://www.enps.com/news/news\\_details.aspx?ID=60](http://www.enps.com/news/news_details.aspx?ID=60)

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.omnibus.tv/newsrooms.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.enps.com/about/index.aspx>

Tascam, Phillips, Cyteck Back. They had fully equipped broadcast television production vehicles, fly away kits, and other technology. They delivered in state – of – the – art digital video production; betacam SP, digibeta, digital video (DV), digital video cameras (DVCAM). BTV conformed to 625 50Hz in the PAL 1 system. The entire studio production was serial digital inserter (SDI) data encoder. This was a highly flexible digital video platform which carried out encoding, insertion, reception, bridging and multiplexing of data in the vertical blanking interval (VBI) and active video of any component serial digital television signal.<sup>93</sup> BTV engineers were however quick to explain that technology became obsolete very quickly, and that four years into the running of the station in 2004, it was impossible to maintain that they still had state – of – the – art technology. They agreed that the station was perhaps one of the most technologically advanced in Africa, but that engineering required for stations to always be right where technology was; updating their soft and hardware in tandem with the ever evolving technology. Besides delays in construction, according to Habuji Sosome, a former Director of Broadcasting, the project was 'technology and not content led'. The engineering technology was ready in place way ahead of the content side. Management of BTV all agreed that the infrastructure was there, but there was nothing to air.

On 25 July, 2003, BOPA announced that DIB would soon be divided into two, the Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS) and the Department of Information Services (DIS). DIB would comprise of BTV and Radio Botswana while DIS comprised of BOPA with its 22 district offices and the Publication Section comprising the Botswana Daily News, Kutlwano monthly magazine, and the Photography and Publicity/Graphics sections. Minister Sebetela was reported saying that the split was as a result of an Organisation and Methods (O&M) exercise undertaken by the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM). It

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<sup>93</sup> <http://www.norpak.ca/Tes5.htm>, website visited on May 11, 2006.

had been recommended that DIB was too large and needed to be split to bring more focus into the services offered.<sup>94</sup>

The split of the department however, was initially television project team leader Hunt's idea, and was intended to remove BTV from the control of government. Hunt made most of the most important decisions. Batswana were invited to compete for the name of the station. Names like '*Goora motho*', '*Sedibeng Television Station*', '*Katlego*', '*Lebone la Botswana*', '*Tswelelo*', '*Seipone sa Botswana*', '*Tshupetso Station*', '*Naledi ya meso*', '*Masa TV*' and '*Bona o reetse*' came up from the contest. Hunt did not pick any of the suggested names, he decided that the name shall be Botswana Television rather than Botswana Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) or Botswana Radio and Television (BRT). He chose the broadcast technology, and the design of the station. He wrote in a report entitled "The Future of Television in Botswana" in May 1999<sup>95</sup> that he had been given to understand that BTV was to be along BBC lines – to which he strongly concurred (Hunt, 1999:2). He therefore wanted to 'set it up at arms length from government; with editorial and operational autonomy enshrined in some kind of 'charter' or Act of Parliament, akin to the BBC Royal Charter, which guarantees its independence. If the Botswana government took such a step he argued, it would only further the country's enviable reputation at home and abroad (Hunt, 1999:2). BTV would then be free to be a "worthwhile, cost-effective and pro-active broadcaster" (Hunt, 1999:4). Without a strong independent foundation he said, BTV would lack credibility, be weak and ineffective (Hunt, 1999:3). To keep government running costs to the minimum, Hunt thought BTV could carry advertising commercials and rent out its facilities – studios, editing, camera crews, outside broadcasting units and satellite services to the private sector. This would "make it something of a hybrid – a state funded, public service broadcaster with revenue earning capacity" (Hunt, 1999:3).

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<sup>94</sup> BOPA Daily News Archive, <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20030725>

<sup>95</sup> Special thanks to the former Director of BTV and DIB, Ted Makgekgenene who graciously made available to me this report and other reports on the early days of the television station that I could otherwise never get access to.

It appears that, in principle, local staff of DIB supported Hunt's idea of 'de-coupling' BTV from government (Hunt, 1999:3), and perhaps Radio Botswana as well. Government would keep the control of a separate Department of Information. The Department of Information would then be responsible for public information material of health, road and domestic safety, farming etc (Hunt, 1999:6). It was the request for "sufficient organizational and financial autonomy... [not having] to comply with civil service payment schemes or with the procurement regulations necessary for government departments" (Hunt, 1999:4), that started to cause problems for Hunt. The same recommendation was made in the 1993 Studio Hamburg Feasibility study into Botswana Television Service. Interviews with Makgekgenene, Sosome, Tsiang, Phetlhu and other senior managers of BTV at the time show that it was this vision that was to cause the termination of Hunt's services to DIB and the BTV project.

Ultimately, many that were there when BTV started felt that it was Hunt and Makgekgene who could have given the birth of BTV a different history. One BTV reporter said that the one man who failed BTV in achieving autonomy was Makgekgenene, as the man who was the Director of DIB when the station was born. Makgekgenene did not deny this; he accepted that when the television project started, not one person in the country comprehended the demands, magnitude and scope of the project. He succeeded in mobilising government commitment to the project and financial resources, but did not have the competence to draw a master plan that would see the project to a successful end. In retrospect, Makgekgenene saw that BTV did not become a parastatal because DIB started the project without a very clear conceptualisation of how this would happen (Makgekgenene, interview, 2006).

Hunt's era was very short-lived. He was never to see the station take-off. BTV failed to go on air on schedule. The construction company was unable to finish on schedule, exacerbated by a strike by its employees. Pressure was mounting

on government to get the station off the ground. BTV had failed to meet the initial 1999 General Elections deadline. The project was also delayed because although the technology side was advancing very well, the production side was lagging far behind. Hunt's management was also to be quickly seized by politics of power and control. It became evident very quickly that the project management, both local and expatriate had not fully understood what the job would require before getting into it.

In trying to steer the station away from government control and other divisions of DIB, it appears Hunt angered the old guard of the department. Their position, presented by Sosome in an interview with the researcher was that the Cabinet Directive that established the station was very clear that it would fall under DIB, and therefore that whatever obtained at Radio Botswana would apply at BTV. Sosome, who had been with DIB since 1980 and said about himself, "*ga ke tswe hano...I come from a long way with this department*", was among those who wanted Hunt gone. He did not sympathise with Hunt's frustration with the government procedures for procuring funds. To Sosome, Hunt wanted to flout due process, and that could not be permitted. Government standard procedure, according to Sosome, must never be undermined. It appears Hunt had his own ideas about who he would prefer to work with, rather than building on staff from Radio Botswana as the core of the new station. Under government, Sosome was happy that, as Project Co-ordinator, Hunt would be able to implement his own staffing agenda; he could only make recommendations to be sanctioned by the Permanent Secretary at Ministerial level.

According to Sosome, BTV was nearly granted autonomy by government, until a concern was raised by the old guard of DIB. Calling themselves 'the concerned group', the old guard instigated an auditors inquest to be made against Hunt's management. As Sosome put it when interviewed, "Kevin Hunt had nothing to offer for when the station went on air". Director of DIB at the time, Makgekgenene himself admitted that when the television project started, not one person in the

country comprehended the demands, magnitude and scope of the project. When interviewed, Makgekgenene claimed BTV as his baby in many ways. He lobbied for its establishment during his tenure. Initially it would be a small project focusing specifically on News and Current Affairs. At a time when the government was inundated by development projects for more basic necessities such as schools, roads, health facilities, it was hard to convince government that television was necessary. Once he had solicited financial commitment from government to build BTV, he lobbied for a much bigger facility. There was a problem of land. He managed to secure the land that the Mass Media Complex now occupies after he received inside information that the projected that the land had been earmarked for would not take off.

Makgekgenene failed to stand by Hunt and prove to government that he was ready to run the station with autonomy. He had worked tirelessly to influence the decision that gave birth to BTV. When the project became a nightmare, he was to be overwhelmed and increasingly frustrated by a series of publicly embarrassing problems. The project became a succession of crises management and damage control episodes. In interviews, Makgekgenene's subordinate did not express sympathy with his situation. He had approved the hiring of Hunt, and so was partly blamed for all of Hunt's perceived failures. As the project met more delays, Makgekgenene was put under pressure to do damage control and give progress reports to the public. He posted a full colour centre page on the *Botswana Daily News* in February 2000, showing images of progress in construction and equipping of the facility. He also posted a sketch programme to 'wet the appetite' of the public despite the fact that, there was no 'Production' or 'Programmes' section to speak about (see appendix 9).

Towards the end of 1999, the government started to demand answers from DIB on why BTV was falling behind schedule, instigated in part by the older and more conservative section of DIB (Interviews with Tsiang, Gray and Sosome). PriceWaterHouse & Cooper auditors probed into why Millard left, and the supply

of equipment. 'Scores of British suppliers' were apparently arbitrarily been awarded tenders to supply equipment that some local suppliers could have supplied.<sup>96</sup> Auditors reported over-expenditure, negligence and passing wrongful information to government on the part of Hunt.<sup>97</sup> The then acting Permanent Secretary to the President, Samuel Rathedi, alleged that equipment estimated to have cost the government hundreds of thousands of Pula had gone missing.<sup>98</sup>

Responding to the *NewsFlash* report, the project's senior engineer, Farnsworth, called the PriceWaterHouse & Cooper audit report a farce. According to him, the supposed negligence reported in it had been refuted by Hunt with full supporting documentation. As far as the missing equipment, he reported that two pairs of speakers had been stolen during the construction phase, costing GBP 1600 (P12 800) a pair, hardly hundreds of thousands of Pula. He explained the delay in the launch as having been largely due to the building running a year behind schedule. It was due to be handed over in April 1999 but was not finished until April 2000.

Hunt and Farnsworth also began to exclude other managers from design making. Millard dumped the project team before the end of the year. He later said in an interview with a local private radio station that he left because he did not share the same vision with Hunt and Farnsworth, the senior engineer for the project on the appropriate technology for BTV. Millard found digital broadcasting inappropriate for a developing country with no experienced human resource. It was also at the time still in experimental stage even in developed countries.<sup>99</sup> Hunt was forced to resign from his job in March 2000.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *Botswana Guardian*, 12 October 1999, BOPA Library

<sup>97</sup> *NewsFlash*, 22 May 2000

<sup>98</sup> [http://www.africafilmtv.com/pages/newsflash/nf68\\_1.htm](http://www.africafilmtv.com/pages/newsflash/nf68_1.htm)).

<sup>99</sup> *Mmegi Monitor*, April 25 2000, pg 3, Courtesy of the Botswana Press Agency.

<sup>100</sup> *Mmegi Monitor*, March 03 April 2000, pg 3, Courtesy of the Botswana Press Agency.

## **Simon Higman and the BBC Intervention – April to August 2000**

At the end of February 2000, BTV was still under construction.<sup>101</sup> According to Mosieman and Tshenko, staff had very little to do. Higman later noted in October 2000 that the project team was in disarray (Higman Report, 2000). The citizen staff, with the support of expatriates like training coordinator Robert Gray, rallied government support to oust Hunt, but the project was increasingly becoming a public scandal. After what Sosome aptly labelled the 'Hunt experiment', Makgekgenene was pressurised to bring in BBC to salvage the project. Gideon Nkala and Modirwa Kekwaletswe of the *Mmegi* Newspaper reported that towards the end of Hunt's stay at BTV, he and Makgekgenene were 'trading bile in public'.

People began to ask why it was not the BBC that was contracted to lead the project seeing that they have historically provided technical and human resource assistance to the government media in Botswana. The BBC expressed interest to help BTV to the launch. At the end of April 2000, Makgekgenene brought in two BBC Resources consultants, David Manning and Liz Duckworth to make a needs assessment for BTV; the station strategy, financial management, programming, and all operation so that BTV could go on air in July 2000 (Manning and Duckworth, 2000). They were to assess the project and come up with solutions. The team was further commissioned to look into technical and operational areas and come up with short and long term solutions and identify training needs. The BBC consultancy found that there was 'little readiness for the launch in critical areas'. In May 2000, BTV had no strategy. The very few and demoralised staff that had been recruited and trained did not have clear job description and therefore clear functions, roles and responsibilities. It was still to be decided if it was going to be an entertainment channel, a News channel or a distinctly Botswana channel with local in house and independent content not available in other stations in the region. If it went the entertainment route, it would have to rely on acquisition of expensive high quality foreign programmes and be able to

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<sup>101</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 31 March 2000

compete for audiences with SABC and M-Net. It could become a News channel like CNN and SKY, or a distinctive and original channel (Manning and Duckworth, 2000).

The Manning and Duckworth report identified several key areas where BTV most needed attention in order to launch. The station needed to define its identity – editorial remit, target audiences, branding, promotion and publicity, advertising sales. It also needed to set up channel management that would take care of programme content, programme sourcing, scheduling, set design, presenter training and appearance. Human resource management would have to be put in place to match staff numbers and skills to output requirements, recruitment, appraisal, ongoing training, operational deployment, working practices. Finally, the station needed financial management to put in place accounting procedures, systems for monitoring and controlling expenditure, for maximising income and for reporting results.

One of the recommendations was that a seasoned broadcasting manager be appointed on a temporary basis and they recommended Simon Higman to replace Kevin Hunt. BBC Resources signed a GBP 500 000 (-+P4million) deal with the government of Botswana to bring in teams of experts to take the project to each next stage towards launching. First, The BBC categorically sought full government support for the project. The BBC needed assurance that its plans would not be compromised by the slow bureaucratic revenue procurement processes of government, which was part of the reason that the project had failed. They had a reputation to protect.<sup>102</sup>

The BBC had a very specific mandate, to get BTV to launch and save the Botswana government growing public embarrassment. The team leader, Simon Higman, who acted in the capacity of General Manager for the station, announced in the middle of July 2000 that the station would go on air on or

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<sup>102</sup> The Botswana Guardian, June 02 2000, pg 2, Courtesy of the Botswana Press Agency.

before July 31 2000 (Higman report, 2000). Higman committed the station announced that for a start the BTV schedule would be about 60 percent local. During the week, the programmes would run from 19:00 to 22:00 and at weekends from 14:00 to 22:00. BTV would run advertisements and carry sponsorship for some but not all programmes. News would not be sponsored in order to guarantee it is independent and seen to be independent. He expected that BTV would take advantage of its late-coming to learn from lessons of older television stations to ensure it gets most of the programming right. BTV would, as most of the developing world, be a combination of government and American or British programming and be funded by government. He however, hoped the bulk of BTV programmes would be produced locally. Initially local programmes would be done exclusively by BTV, but all Batswana would be encouraged to produce as the station grew. They needed to guarantee that their News was independent, or seen to be independent.<sup>103</sup> Higman, was in October of the same year describing BTV as a station that would 'promote the values, the influence and the democratic stability of Botswana throughout the SADC region. The initial emphasis was on sports, music and talk shows; *Setswana* being the dominant language.'<sup>104</sup>

Around the same time as the BBC was coming into the project, Chris Bishop was recruited in 2000 to lead News and Current Affairs. According to then Senior Programmes Manager, Robert Gray, Bishop came during the transitional period, just as Hunt was leaving, and stayed until after the BBC 'rescue team' (Interview with Gray, 2006). As the core mandate of BTV was initially to be News and Current Affairs, it was given a head start over the Productions section. The BBC gave Gray a new position of Head of Productions. Head of Operation was Martin Hillman. It appears however that soon after offering him this new appointment, Higman changed his mind about Gray. In a report Higman gave in October 2000, he wrote, "the management team was in disarray with some seriously inadequate

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<sup>103</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, July 14 2000, pg 1, Courtesy of the Botswana Press Agency.

<sup>104</sup> Higman S., (2000) Botswana Television Progress, Problems and Opportunities. BBC Consulting and Projects.

members, others in the wrong jobs, and no job definitions...one of the expatriates has proven not up to the standard required and moved on" (Higman, 2000).

The firing of Hunt made other expatriates increasingly worried they would be dismissed in the same way. Although Makgekgene told the local papers at the end of March 2000 that other expatriates did not have to fear for their jobs,<sup>105</sup> one month later senior engineer Farnsworth put up notices at BTV that he would be leaving in three months. He quit four months after Hunt in July 2000, after a two year contract.<sup>106</sup> South African Robert Gray was brought in after David Millard to head training, but also left soon after the launch of the station. More of the expatriates left within the first three years, including Chris Bishop who was Head of News and Current Affairs, Martin Hillman who was Head of Operations, and the head graphic designer. On 27 July 2000, the *Botswana Daily News* reported that BTV would launch its programmes with live coverage of a charity football match between Super League sides, Mochudi Centre Chiefs and Extension Gunners at the national stadium. The station went on air 29 July 2000 and was officially launched on 31 July, without much spectacle.

In 2003 when this research commenced Habuji Sosome, then Director of DIB, continued to blame the existing uneasy relationship between the state and BTV squarely on Kevin Hunt. Referring to the mood of the newly hired television staff under Hunt, Sosome said, "There was a cultural disorientation among people. *"Re ne ra bona gore batho ba a timela,"* we saw that people were losing direction, and we just set back and watched". What is meant here is that the old guard of the department very nearly lost control of the television station and therefore possible new avenues of power. "The government discovered it nearly made a mistake and decided to halt the process of making television independent, so that it sorts itself out and matures". Sosome felt that, although Hunt left before the launch, he had already successfully sowed the sentiment

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<sup>105</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, March 31 2000, pp 5. Courtesy of Botswana Press Agency library

<sup>106</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, April 28 2001, Courtesy of the Botswana Press Agency.

even among the local former employees of Radio Botswana that television was best placed outside government.

Once the BBC had accomplished the assignment of seeing BTV to the launch, they practically left the station to its own device, to swim or drown. Once again locals had to make do with their limited experience and scrutiny and criticism from both the government and the public. In the end, the general feeling among staff about the BBC Consultants as captured by outgoing DIB Director at the end of 2001 was that,

The BBC consultancy is not affordable and we do not seem to be gaining much out of their current involvement. They are a typically British occupying force – their advice plus attention is not genuine as usual. Please pay attention to what they say but do what you think is best. Oshinka Tsiang, Simon Higman and Makgekgenene could provide more information when time permits (Makgekgene briefing notes for new DIB, 2001).

Makgekgenene retired at the end of 2001, saying “my departure could not have come at a better time because relationships are no longer strained like in the past”, (Makgekgenene Briefing notes for the new DIB) but his departure in many ways signalled an acceptance that he had failed the struggle for editorial freedom. This section focuses on the everyday realities of journalists, producers, and managers of government-owned BTV as they colluded with, resigned to, and resisted state power, to the degree permissible within their context.

### **Of collusion, apathy and resistance: BTV, the picture of a nation divided**

Challenging about the arrival of BTV at this point in the life of Botswana’s democracy, was that nation-building project started during colonialism was

undergoing tremendous strain. From the mid 1990s, ethnic politics were at the forefront more than ever before in our postcolonial history. Locating and representing a national identity in the context of the ongoing contestation over citizenship and belonging makes the politics of representation key to the commissioning process. Contestation over ethnic identity, belonging and land rights for indigenous minorities were challenging the invented homogeneity of tribes in Botswana that started at the eve of colonialism and more aggressively implemented by Seretse Khama, first President of Botswana. As already discussed, Khama was preferred by the outgoing colonial administration for his liberal democratic position compared to the more African nationalist opponents like Phillip Matante and Motsamai Mpho in the early days of party politics. Seretse Khama saw mass media as a tool for forging legitimacy for his Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) government and its policies, as became evident in the language of the Hughes and Lawrence consultancy reports commissioned during his tenure. He also, being the first leader of a newly formed republic, critically needed to use mass media to forge a collective mass of people identifying as citizens, no longer diverse groupings at different levels of political organization. An imagined community of Botswana was targeted that together could participate in the development of their country.

Khama's government solidified an ethnic hierarchy through sections 77, 78 and 79 of the Constitution that established the House of Chiefs, and allotted chiefs from the so-called eight major Tswana tribes, ex-officio membership into the House. All the other tribes could have elected and specially elected membership into the House. Over thirty years later, with a lot of pressure from the inadequately represented tribes, the BDP, now under Mogae, had to submit an Amendment Bill to the Constitution in 2003. Parliament adopted a motion on 17 February 1995, "to promote Nation Building by amending Sections 77, 78 and 79

to render them tribally neutral".<sup>107</sup> A heated debate ensued at each village and town where the President addressed the nation about the proposed changes; with tribes favoured by the status quo against the changes, and others for the changes. At a village of Molepopole of one of the 'major' tribes, the President was verbally abused by those that felt he was meddling with issues that were above him, labelling him as of inferior stock. As illustrated in previous chapters, Botswana had her own share of the colonial encounter, often under the shadow of apartheid, as James Zaffiro accurately characterized it. "...when people do not share historical memories of the past, it is difficult for them to weave together a common future which is respected, cherished and adhered to by all" (Diescho, 1997:77).

The greatest challenge so far to Botswana's invented homogeneity, was the battle by the Khoisan peoples of the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve (CKGR) for their indigenous land rights. Sidsel Saugestad (2001) says about the position of the Khoisan Peoples in Botswana, or Basarwa as known in popular discourse in Botswana, that it is widely regarded as "a very sensitive issue" (Saugestad, 2001:36). This was evident even from the fact that until some time in 2006, '*Relocation of Basarwa*' was the only issue given specific mention on the official government website.<sup>108</sup> In the name of development, government sought to move the peoples out of the reserve under the pretext of preserving wildlife, shifting the lives of the people from dependence on natural resources and bringing them closer to social amenities such as health and education.<sup>109</sup> The CKGR was allocated by the colonial government in 1961 for the protection of traditional land use patterns of the San. The United Kingdom based Survival International (SI) led an international campaign to assist First Peoples of the Kalahari (FPK) to

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<sup>107</sup> His Excellency Mr. Festus Gontebanye Mogae President of the Republic of Botswana independence day message to the nation, 29 September, 2003. Embassy of the Republic of Botswana, Washington D.C. [http://www.botswanaembassy.org/092903\\_1.html](http://www.botswanaembassy.org/092903_1.html)

<sup>108</sup>

[http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=category&sectionid=10&id=23&Itemid=52](http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=10&id=23&Itemid=52)

<sup>109</sup> 'Water, health and education services',

[http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=65&Itemid=80](http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=65&Itemid=80)

resist government; in order to force government to reconsider, they targeted Botswana's diamonds. SI mounted aggressive campaigns against the government of Botswana by targeting the country's most important source of income: diamonds. One Khoisan was quoted as having said, "These are conflict diamonds because diamonds are the root of our sorrow and pain. They caused us to be moved from the land of our ancestors. We say these diamonds are killing us the Bushmen".<sup>110</sup> SI sought for a reclassification of Botswana's diamonds as blood diamonds. In the latest turn of events, with the aid of SI, Roy Sesana, leader of FPK, appealed to Hollywood actor Leonardo diCaprio to support their campaign against relocation. DiCaprio stars in a movie about a blood-diamond dealer in Sierra Leone, *The Blood Diamond*.<sup>111</sup> President Mogae had to make a number of international trips, the latest being in October 2006 in New York, to defend Botswana diamonds (Lesley Wroughton and Maggie Fox, Reuters, 11 October 2006).<sup>112</sup> After a long protracted legal battle, on 13 December 2006, the High Court of Botswana ruled the Botswana government had illegally evicted the San people from their ancestral lands in what is now the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.<sup>113</sup>

Francis Kasoma (1995) has said about government-owned media in Africa that it is never free, for governments invariably control what the media may or may not publish. There were moments when the BTV acted purely the role of the government such as before and during the March 2004 CIVICUS World Summit which was hosted by Botswana and the 2004 general elections. Botswana was the host of the CIVICUS Summit, and it was expected that the international community of civil societies would put the host country, on the spot for forcibly relocating San peoples from the CKGR and limiting its use for wildlife (Interview with BTV reporter, Kefilwe Mokgaotsane). The Office of the President sponsored a tour of the CKGR and the new settlement at New Xade for local journalists

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<sup>110</sup> <http://www.survival-international.org/news.php?id=2112>

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.survival-international.org/news.php?id=1872>

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N11409750.htm>

<sup>113</sup> *Mmegi online*, <http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/December/Thursday14/index.html>

across the spectrum. According to Kefilwe Mokgaotsane, one of the BTV reporters who took part in the tour, this was done to 'give them the facts', so that they would support the view of government and 'protect' the image of the Botswana government against any 'foreign' attacks. A voice over (VO) she wrote for the News bulletin on 3 November 2004 (see appendix 10) on the relocation was neither objective nor impartial, and lacked in facts,

Government's campaign to tell its side of the story on the Relocation of Basarwa [Khoisan] have been long, and more often than not, set back by statements made by Survival International. However, they continue to explore avenues in which they can win this campaign. In 2002 they launched a Website mainly set to address the issues of the relocation and to counteract statements by Survival International. Government's efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

Clip – Maribe [Government spokesperson]

In the latest of their approach to this problem, they recently took a group of Journalists and Members of Non Governmental Organisations to both the old and the new settlements. Observations made by the Journalists and the Civil Society could make a difference to the Campaigns.

Clip – VOX

The reality on the ground has seen many change their stance on the matter, including the head of NGO's.

Clip – Moletsane

Government does not undermine the impact of statements made by Survival International, especially that they link the relocation to the Backbone of Botswana's economy, diamonds.

Clip – Maribe

As the campaign continues, perhaps with support from NGO's and all those who tell the truth the way it is, this issue will finally fade off, and let Basarwa enjoy the services given to them by Government without anyone spoiling it for them (Mokgaotsane, BTV News bulletin, 3 November 2004).<sup>114</sup>

Elections were also a tightly managed affair in the government media. At the end of 2003, as election campaigns heated up, at the instruction of Minister Sebetela, BTV was stopped from airing political rallies except those where the President, the Vice President and Cabinet Minister, were attending. Effectively this meant that only the ruling party got to use the national television for its campaigns. The opposition parties noted that while their important events went unreported on national television, BTV reported favourably major BDP events (*Botswana Guardian*, 23 April, 2004).

### **The Public Service Act and ideological state control**

Botswana has earned international accolades as having one of the best bureaucracies in Africa, but as Ian Taylor (2003) argues, if Botswana still emerges the best, given quite a number of problematic state – bureaucracy – civil society relations, then perhaps this is "as good as it gets" (Taylor, 2003:215). Partly through disabling Public Service employment statutes and with specific reference to the short history of BTV, through politics of favouritism and witch

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<sup>114</sup> Courtesy of BTV Newsroom

hunting, the BDP was able to successfully legitimise its control of the television station. At the organisational level, the state did own the media. The ruling BDP succeeded in utilising mass media to reinforce its hegemony among the public as the only viable political alternative as evident in its win of successive elections since independence in 1965. Ian Taylor (2003) labelled the BDP 'adept in co-option, the ability to minimize the threat of counter-hegemonic politics. Even "the various parastatal and statutory bodies in Botswana are largely controlled by a small group of politically trusted senior bureaucrats" (Taylor, 2003:218). Elsewhere, Taylor also argued that the ruling party particularly used prolonged control of the media to co-opt and integrate potentially opposing forces (Taylor, 2002).

Monageng Mogalakwe dates the first trade union in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate, to 1948 when the Whites only European Civil Service Association was formed, followed a year later in 1949 by the African Civil Service Association (Mogalakwe, 1997:99). Although by 1995, government employed about 42 percent of the labour force in Botswana,<sup>115</sup> until 2004, the workers did not have a right to form or belong to a trade union. They could only belong to staff associations such as The Botswana Civil Service Association (BCSA), the Botswana Unified Local Government Staff Association (BULGASA) and the Botswana Federation of Secondary School Teachers (BOFESETE) (Mogalakwe, 1997:92-93). They were barred by law from getting into collective bargaining with the government, their employer because they were employed under the Public Service Act. As civil servants, they were excluded from the definition of employees in the Trade Unions Act, Trade Disputes Act and Employment Act. Government was also excluded from the definition of employer, except for industrial or casual labour employees (Briscoe, 2000). It was only in April 2004 that the Acts were amended in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions no 87, 98, and 151 which Botswana had ratified since 1997. It took

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<sup>115</sup> Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (1996). *Annual Economic Report*, cited by Mogalakwe (1997).

seven years for the ratification to become law. Unlike in countries like South Africa where ratification of international conventions automatically gave them precedence over local laws unless local laws were more up to date, in Botswana, Amendments must first go through Parliament for domestication. Consultations among stakeholders, preparation of Bills and Parliamentary debate delayed ratification. Government involved the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry & Manpower (BOCCIM) and the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) in the consultation processes.<sup>116</sup>

Amendments of Section 48 of the Trade Unions Act allowed government employees, including BTV staff to unionise, with the exception of the Botswana Defence Force, Prisons Department and the Botswana Police. Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Valerie Seemule, expressed disappointment at union activity in Botswana, "They are still only concerned with bread and butter issues. They are lagging behind compared to unions in other parts of the world that are also tackling issues relating to globalisation and HIV/AIDS in the workplace." Government however, still showed a lack of commitment of the welfare of its workforce. The Department of Labour could previously mitigate in disputes relating to unions. Workers associations campaigned against statutory state intervention in union activity disputes. As workers unions and associations go through teething stages of the processes, the department was too happy to take a back seat. "We gave them a long rope to hang themselves", said Seemule.

According to Seemule, for many years before the Amendment of the Acts, government workers associations complained bitterly about this state of affairs, especially after ratification. By February 2006, 18months after the Amendment, government workers associations had only made inquiries; there was not a single government workers union registered with the registrar of unions. Clearly newly found Statutory freedoms cannot erase many years of systematic instillation of

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<sup>116</sup> Valerie Seemule, assistant Commissioner of Labour gregariously agreed to be interviewed and provided this very information about labour relations in Botswana.

fear by state among government employees. It will take time for many of the workers to shed the culture of self censorship. The Public Service Act and the Government General Orders are likely to continue to terrorise the civil service.<sup>117</sup>

For the first group of locals to work for Botswana national television broadcaster, it all started with an advert in local Newspapers in May 1998 (see appendix 11). Wayne Levy (2003:233) reports that over 3000 people applied and only 100 was selected for training. In May 1998, the Department of Information and Broadcasting, through the government Central Tender Board invited proposals to tender for a series of six week television foundation courses. It would be entry level training for all staff recruited for the Botswana National Television Service, held on a rolling basis. Six batches of twenty students with no previous television broadcast experiences would within six weeks be given a general introduction to broadcast television, and those that could not cope eliminated.<sup>118</sup> The training programme would develop student's skills and knowledge quickly from nothing to a level of being able to run the television station when it opened. Several television training centres responded, including the Sony Training Centre, in Basingstoke, United Kingdom. The project team had meetings with the Sony Training Centre team in Gaborone on 27th and 28th April 1998. Sony was also interested to provide the second stage of training which would be hands on. Students that would have successfully completed the first six-week course would get on to a six-month training course, based at the Basingstoke Training Centre. Course content included cameras and outside broadcast work, post production and effects, audio and audio production for video, studio and outside broadcast lighting, computers and computing for television, the digital environment, first line maintenance of television equipment, transmission and vision mixing. There would also be elective modules in journalism and news presentation, programme production and studio management, and archiving and research methods.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *The Botswana Daily News*, May 15 1998, No. 90 pg 6.

## **Starting a television on no experience, 1998-1999**

Tender proposals were received from several television training schools in the UK and from a few local centres. It became apparent from proposals such as one above by SONY – PrimeSkills, SONY Broadcast and Professional Europe that training would be a very costly exercise. For each student, Sony – PrimeSkills quoted at GBP61 865 (P500 000) for just over seven months of training (see appendix 12). A local training centre, Dipolelo Video Arts, directed by John Clement and Renee Gilbey was awarded the tender to do the crash course for significantly much less. Clement told the researcher when interviewed in 2006 that both he and Gilbey were Canadians, and first came to Botswana in 1992 as volunteers under the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), attached to a local NGO, Worldview Botswana. Their job with Worldview Botswana was to provide twelve week foundation level courses for local video artists. Some of the local video producers they trained were George Eustice credited for producing the first BTV commissioned drama, *Re bina mmogo* and Botswana's first local filmmaker, Moabi Mogorosi who produced *Hot Chilli*. During this time, they became very disgruntled with the tendency among some NGOs to be 'images of government'. They were told at Worldview Botswana to avoid political issues, thereby serving the NGOs and providing skills for personal growth among local artists. At the end of their two contracts with WUSC, Clement and Gilbey established Dipolelo Video Arts.

The BTV Training Workshop took place at the University of Botswana, Gaborone. The four week course was in two parts; part one lasting one and a half weeks

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introduced them to the very basics of television production, concepts and definitions. For the last two and a half weeks, they went through a series of productions related exercises, where their strengths in the different aspects of production were also identified. It covered directing, field production, studio and field camera work, lighting, presenting, editing and reporting. Most of the training was done by the two of them, but there were guest lectures by local broadcast engineer for the Department of Information and Broadcasting, States Batsalelwang, a member of the project team, South African Mooiji Parshotam who was to teach journalism and David Millard who was briefly in the project team, in charge of programming and training of staff (Interview with Clement, 2006).

Clement was aware that employees from the existing government-owned radio and print media were also allowed to apply for jobs in television. Following successful performance in interviews, the first crop of BTV staff first underwent this crash course. Asked what they thought of this course, for most of the BTV staff that attended it with no previous television training, it was the four-week crash course in Gaborone was the most useful. It was perceived as much more 'rigorous', 'intense', 'gruelling', 'through', 'organized' compared to the next level course at the BOP TV studios in Mmabatho, South Africa. It gave them a clear idea of what production entailed, but was compromised by a lack of television equipment. They would make mini-productions in make-shift studios, where they learnt how to direct, do interviews both at the field and on studio, write scripts and train to work the long hours television required. They were also talk how to treat footage although they could not do picture editing for lack of edit suites. They would review the footage to see if the initial idea had been successfully executed, whether or not relevant questions were asked and that sort of thing. It was during this training that people were told where their strengths were; and for most of the 'would be' producers, this is when this strength was identified.

Part of the course was also to eliminate trainees who lacked the aptitude to learn and work for television. Clement recalled that two senior and experienced people from Radio Botswana had to be eliminated from television production. Gasenna Moloji, one of the few people eliminated during this process took the matter to Court.<sup>120</sup> Moloji queried her elimination when she held a Bachelors degree and some people without any qualifications were selected. The advert had put the minimum qualification as diploma or above. Reflecting on the elimination part of the training, Clement said in interviews with the researcher in 2006 that he felt it should not have been done so hastily, that four weeks was too short to decide if people were cut out for television or not.

Much of the information about the training in Mmabatho was obtained from Robert Gray, in an interview and through correspondences he shared with the researcher in 2006. For a period from 23 November 1998<sup>121</sup> to June 1999, trainees arrived in Mmabatho on what was called a 'rolling bases'. Robert Gray, an experienced South African television broadcaster, was hired to replace Millard. He was approached by an Irish recruitment company called PARC Ltd to apply. He was selected and offered a three year contract from December 1998, just in time for the second level of the training. Gray started from an engineering background and grew into production as primary an outside broadcast planner, which was his last job at SABC. He had multi-camera expertise. Gray had extensive experience in radio and television broadcasting. He had helped to set up SABC's TV2 and TV3, both of which were targeted at black South African audiences. He had also founded City Varsity in Cape Town, one of the renowned television colleges in South Africa. By December 16 1998, Gray had covered lectures in television an electronic medium, signal transmission, move to digital, formats, the grey scale, contrast ratio, colour temperature, camera filters, editing

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<sup>120</sup> Mmegi/The Reporter, February 26, 1999. pp 14, Courtesy of the Botswana Press Agency (BOPA) library.

<sup>121</sup> Date acquired from a letter dated 3 December 1998 from Robert Gray to Richard Makgotlho, SABC Regional Manager for the North West.

aesthetics, building a screen event, post production editing, live edits, and other techniques.

BOP TV was a national broadcaster for the former Bantustan of Bophuthatswana. When the ANC government took over power from the white minority government, Bophuthatswana was incorporated into the rest of South Africa, and of necessity, BOP TV had to become part of SABC. SABC was reluctant to adopt BOP TV and the station had to close down. Workers had to be laid off, and only a few were retained by SABC. This caused a lot of internal strife, which unfortunately came to affect the training of BTV staff. BOP TV failed to avail facilities on required time. The necessary on the job technical training services were often lacking. Although some of the staff was very helpful, the training program was disrupted by irregular staff availability for training.

Gray was indirectly instrumental in the decision to use BOP TV facilities for training, even before he was officially contracted. He had been communicating with former Head of BTV training and programming, David Millard, and had suggested to him to approach BOP TV as a possible option. BTV project management started the process of hiring BOP TV studios. Before he came, the Botswana government entered into a contract with BOP TV that the latter would supply equipment including lighting kits, cameras, microphone kits, field monitors, an audio facility, sound recording equipment, ENG kits and an operational crew for P5 million (USD 1 million). Compared to the P500 000 per student for six months that the Sony Training Centre in Basingstoke had quoted, this was very cheap. For the sixty five trainees, government would have paid Sony P32. 5 million (USD 7 million). Because BOP TV failed to meet some of their contractual obligations (see appendix 13), Gray was able to get the overall charge reduced to only R3 million (P5 million or USD 1million) for the seven months of training (Interview with Gray, 2006).

Gray arrived into the scene soon after the training started and was to have to face many logistical problems although he had little knowledge of the exact deal between the government and the SABC. He pointed out to Peter Matsetse, Administrative Secretary to the Office of the President (OP) that it appeared negotiations with the SABC “were conducted with persons with little or no understanding of training needs and related logistics within the television environment”.<sup>122</sup> He challenged Hunt’s competence as Project Management leader. Gray’s earliest correspondence regarding the difficulties he was facing was dated 3 December 1998. He wrote a letter to SABC North West Regional Manager Richard Makgotlho and copied to Project Leader Kevin Hunt, Ken Masupe of the OP, States Batsalelwang who was the DIB senior engineer and Moolji Parshotham who at the time was doing the general housekeeping. Gray reported that students morale was lowering as the promised BOP TV operational crew that was supposed to give them practical training was failing to meet its obligation. There were internal politics at BOP TV about compensation of staff for the exercise that resulted in some of the crew not appearing on scheduled activities. Three days later on 6 December, Gray called a meeting inviting Hunt, Masupe, and Parshotham. Agenda items were transport, staff attitude, monthly report, contract signing, tapes, training in hotel, secretary for January, information regarding equipment and invoices (see appendix 14). For the months following, Gray said there was very little support from Hunt in so far as resolving training problems despite the many letter of complaint Gray wrote. BOP TV equipment was either not available on time or in poor condition. Gray had to tackle engineering problems for which he was not paid.

Gray started by organising Newsroom facilities from BOP TV, that had been omitted from the list of hired facilities, despite the fact that News was the core mandate of BTV. Although many of the trainees argued that Mmabatho training lacked focus and clear guidelines, Gray called his method of training the

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<sup>122</sup> Letter dated 6 January 1999 to Mr. P Matsetse, Administrative Secretary, Presidents Office, courtesy of Robert Gray.

'producer-learning' criteria. Students were to specialise soon as it was possible. Gray was unhappy about the capabilities of most of the trainees. The television project consultants had instructed a policy of multi-skills training, but Gray preferred to create actual job functions for students within the training process. Instead of giving students the impression that after the training, they would eventually choose the job they wanted, Gray sought to categorise the prospective employees according to their aptitudes in the broad categories of Production, Operations and Engineering. He did not think the trainees needed structured modules like in a classroom; it was a time to get television broadcasting off the ground. Within a few months of heading the training, Gray was considered for the position of Senior Producer. Office of the President, which was the Ministry in charge of broadcasting in Botswana, sent a team of two including Administrative Secretary Phillip Matsetse to interview Gray and he was offered the job. The idea was that he gets other content besides News and Current Affairs off the ground.

For what would become BTV News, Gray started by organising Newsroom facilities from BOP TV. Although news was central to BTV, a newsroom and news studios had been omitted in the hiring of facilities. The newsroom became the focal point of all other training needs; camera, lighting, sound, directing, producing, editing, graphics, operations, engineering and all other aspects television broadcasting. Gray led hands on training of about sixty-five locals for news and current affairs which was priority, technical operations and engineering. At the beginning of January 1999, Gray evaluated the performance of trainees and proposed the first job allocations (see appendix 15)

Gray was keen to start on dummy broadcast exercises by mid January and needed an operational structure. It appears that there were complaints about the first allocations he proposed, hence the second option of applying for posts. This also seems not to have gone well with the trainees. Trainees had issues with the training, posts, rank and salary structures. On a letter dated 11 January 1999,

Gray furnished them with yet another job allocation schedule, after further discussions with the Botswana Television Project Management. He was informed that all delegates were on probation with the Department of Information and Broadcasting and that final allocation would be made by the department on merit. For News, and temporary allocations were made with Oshinka Tsiang as Acting Managing Editor News. Assignment Editors were other locals, Simon Moilwa and Norman Patlakwe. The first to be selected to be BTV journalists were Reginald Richardson, Doreen Moapare and Kefilwe Mokgaotsane. Newsreaders would be Tsiang, Moilwa and Amilia Malebane, with Tsiang also hosting Current Affairs with Moilwa and Patlakwe. The weather would be presented by Richardson and Moapare (see appendix 16).

BTV has become the newest space for of cultural production in Botswana. Cultural Production is the production and consumption of representations that affects the construction of identities – national, ethnic, religious, occupational, familial, sex and gender (Thompson, 1997:1). It is yet too early to declare BTV one of the largest culture-producing institutions in Botswana, in the way that Graham Murdock (1982:120) says of the BBC in Britain, but there is strong indication that it is making an impact. It is also too early to say that its products are cultural products in the sense of adequately reflecting class, gender, ethnicity, religion, age and family in Botswana. BTV News, Current Affairs and local programming is still in infantile stages. What is true is that BTV does make certain representations, and that these occur within a cultural context. Cultural production at BTV is an encounter between television technologies and conventions and the cultural socio-political context, articulated through the human resource working behind the technology. Once BTV was successfully launched onto the airwaves after the many delays that began to embarrass government, it had to broadcast back to back images to the nation, despite management crises, political pressure from the government that funds it, and an increasingly unforgiving public.

## Chapter Five

### **Of Africanisation, improvisation and control: BTV, the early years**

A.H.M. Kirk-Greene asked in 1972, a decade into independence of many African countries, “what Africanisation was all about”? He was suggesting that perhaps the change of colour of the bureaucracy in Africa, or Africanisation, while welcome, may not have yielded intended results. This he said was because, of necessity, Africanisation involved “‘crash’ training and accelerated promotion to the top of the best local talent, in such short a time as was safely – rather than reasonably possible” (1972:94). While arguments as these generally tend to undermine tremendous efforts by underpaid and suppressed government workers across Africa, it fairly represented the history of government-owned mass media in Botswana, as demonstrated in chapter one. It was true of the establishment of RB and it remained true in the establishment of BTV.

The following section shows how the earliest formations of BTV, particularly the BTV Newsroom were created through improvisation, ‘Africanisation’, and control, sometimes for the best of the station, but sometimes to its detriment. Oshinka Tsiang, for example although ‘fast-tracked’ rather quickly to position of General Manager for BTV, demonstrated superb leadership skills right from the conception of the Newsroom. On the other hand, government control of BTV led to the frustration and resignation of Head of News, Chris Bishop, which caused BTV a major loss towards a creative, objective and impartial News agency. Robert Gray, a South African who replaced British David Millard as supervisor of training of the first crop of BTV, was to also later be sidelined and he too later resigned. Gray’s resignation was interesting because, as he told the researcher in an interview, it came as a result of collusion between the locals and the BBC

consultants. As will come out in the proceeding discussion, while he teamed up with locals to oust Kevin Hunt, they later teamed with BBC consultants to oust him.

### **Oshinka Tsiang and the formation of the BTV News and Current Affairs**

News and Current Affairs was identified as the core mandate of BTV right from inception. The nucleus of BTV News and Current Affairs was the earliest structure of station to form. An account provided by Oshinka Tsiang when interviewed in 2004 and 2006 showed that, BTV News and Current Affairs began to take shape at the hired studios of the now defunct South African BOP TV studios in Mmabatho. In Mmabatho, Martin McGhee was responsible for training the people that were to become the first journalists of BTV. Although Robert Gray said he would have preferred three women, Lorato Tshipinare, Neo Mosimanyana and Amilia Malebane at the top, the Department preferred to give the most senior position to Oshinka Tsiang, as the most senior civil servant among all trainees. From January 1999 until he resigned from BTV in 2002, Tsiang worked at various leadership position at BTV. He was very central to the nuclei of this most important section of BTV.

One of the first things that Tsiang wanted to change, in his new role as the man in charge of BTV News, was for reporters to do actual reporting; going to the field to collect a story, writing it and presenting it. He had always been frustrated by the role of Radio Botswana (RB) 'reporters'. Tsiang had been Head of News and Current Affairs at Radio Botswana. 'Reporting' at RB was different from normal reporting in the sense that, the radio reporter did not gather and compile his or her own story. RB receives all its local stories from the Botswana Press Agency (BOPA). They come in news print format, and the job of the RB reporter is to simply adapt and translate the print copy into for the radio English and *Setswana* bulletins. This way of doing things, although not unique to Botswana, had long

been dropped in many other parts of the world. Raymond Williams (1974) recalled that,

In the early days of radio, there was virtually absolute dependence on existing press agencies for the collection of news. Techniques of broadcast presentation were at first at simple transmission of news agency dispatches read by 'announcers' who were assumed to be at once authoritative and neutral, though real 'authority' and 'neutrality' were those of those agencies.

Right from Mmabatho, Tsiang was especially keen to shorten the distance between the author of news and the audience. A Radio Botswana news item usually originated from a junior reporter from the different districts in Botswana. A more senior BOPA reporter re-wrote and edited the script for the 'Daily News' government newspaper. It then went to a pool of translators who usually wrote a *Setswana* version as stories were usually written in English. A copy was sent to Radio Botswana to be repackaged for radio. A radio reporter shortened and adapted the script for the bulletin. It was finally given to a newsreader. By the time a story reached the audience, much had been lost from the original story. Tsiang wanted a different meaning for what a reporter was for BTV, not an 'announcer' who was part of a chain that added to distortion of news, but someone that actually went out to the field to collect news and give it to the audience. He wanted stories to come fresh to the audience and "a functioning, effective and planning ahead newsroom" (Interviews with Tsiang, 2004; 2006). When Simon Higman of the BBC left, BTV management was 'Africanised', Oshinka Tsiang became the first local General Manager.

Around the same time as the BBC was coming to rescue the BTV project in mid 2000, a White South African Chris Bishop was recruited to lead News and Current Affairs. According to then Senior Programmes Manager, Robert Gray, Bishop came during the transitional period, just as Hunt was leaving, and stayed

until after the BBC 'rescue team' (Interview with Gray, 2006). As the core mandate of BTV was initially to be News and Current Affairs, Bishop was to give it a head start even before other Productions. Interviewed by Maggie Mabechu (2001: 48-49), his idea was to make BTV a confident News service that will make a confident nation, even considering the shortage of staff and equipment. Despite the promise by Tebelelo Seretse of the then responsible Ministry of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration at the launching of BTV that it would enjoy freedom of its editorial policy (Interview with Gray and Tsiang), by April 2001 Chris Bishop had been caused to resign. This was in protest against what he alleged as censorship by government when he was refused permission to broadcast a documentary on the execution of Mariette Bosch, a South African woman found guilty of murdering a lover's wife.<sup>123</sup> Bishop was quoted in a telephone interview with the Southern African Press Agency (SAPA) in April 2001 that "Bosch brought out what had been there all along... there has been previous harassment and interference. The journalists at BTV and myself have often been harassed by officialdom. It has rendered the running of TV News impractical". He also alleged in the same interview that the Office of the President had said if the management of BTV could not control the station, it would send a government official to control the News department. The explanation from government was that it was the view of the Attorney General's Chambers that the documentary would have resulted in litigation against the department (Mabechu, 2001:52). Soon after Bishop resigned, it was also alleged that Tsiang, at the time the acting General Manager of the station also temporarily resigned, because of unjustified government interference with BTV administration.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>US Department of State, Botswana: Country Report on Human Rights Practices – 2001 (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8265.htm>)  
Committee to Protect Journalists, Botswana – Attacks on the Press in 2001. (<http://www.cpj.org/attacks01/africa01/botswana.html>)

<sup>124</sup>Committee to Protect Journalists, "Botswana – Attacks on the Press in 2002," <http://www.cpj.org/attacks02/africa02/botswana.html>

Former Director Sosome's assessment was this,

Normal practise would suggest that television starts with trained people from radio, but the department risked its credibility and gave young people with no relevant experience or training on media a chance. The young people however quickly forgot this and bought into Hunt's agenda. They naturally did not want to have to compete with those from radio with more experience. This is the main reason that the first Head of News and Current Affairs, Chris Bishop left because '*O ne a sa bate go laolwa*', he did not want to be under control. '*O ne a bata go supa bosula ja ga goromente*' – he wanted to portray government in bad light (Interview with Sosome, 2004).

Tsiang, at the time the General Manager of the station also temporarily resigned, citing unjustified government interference with BTV administration. According to him, the only reason he went back to BTV after resigning the first time, is that government was reviewing retirement packages for the civil service. If he had resigned in April 2001, he would not have earned anything for the many years he worked in DIB (Interview with Tsiang, 2006).

### **African journalism under siege: State ideological apparatus and media freedom**

Whereas it was at one time said about government interference on media in Botswana that it was subtle and insidious, in 2004, a government Savingram was issued by the state to DBS, through the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology. The Savingram stated that "whenever introduction of new programmes and/or a review of programmes is effected, proposals should first be referred to the Ministry...to get concurrence of the

Minister” to avoid the airing of programmes “out of tune with Government policies or viewer/listeners expectations”.<sup>125</sup>

African journalism is also faced among other challenges with undoing an evil commonly referred to as ‘Afro-pessimism’. An example of pessimistic writing about Africa that in the *Economist* in May 2000, labelling Africa the ‘hopeless continent’, a predictive piece without much supporting basis that painted Africa as regressing. In contrast, the *National Geographic* recently published more optimistic pieces with headlines such as “Africa, whatever you thought, think again”, and “What right with Africa” (Garman, 2005: 1). However, it is hard to invent a uniquely African yardstick for media and democratization for Africa. Media technologies were invented in the West. Africa is yet to produce its own technologies. There is pessimism even about African journalism itself. Francis Nyamnjoh found it to lack “both the power of self definition and the power to shape the universals that are deaf-and-dumb to the particularities of journalism in and on Africa” (Nyamnjoh, 2005b). There was also some optimism about the practice; Nixon Kariithi (2005) commended African journalists for cutting their teeth in some of the harshest conditions and contexts in modern history, but did acknowledge there was room for improvement. It is increasingly difficult to be objectively critical of African media without seeming to feed into Afro-pessimism or placing unrealistically high expectation on African journalism that are based on media-state relations in North America and Western Europe.

Cultural production under the state in Botswana was often pulled apart by opposing forces of state power, the public good and professional journalistic ethos. The government expected of BTV to serve as its information service being part of the civil service. It was to become clear as the station grew that government had never intended the medium to serve for two-way communication. BTV was to experience constant reminders by different government Ministers, Daniel Kwelagobe, Margaret Nasha, and Communications

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<sup>125</sup> *Mmegi Online*, 16 August 2004

Minister Lephimotswe Sebetela that they could not to be critical of government. While he was Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration, and BTV was under his control, Kwelagobe demanded that BTV should sanitise their content. He felt a News item containing 'insults' to the President levelled by an opposition leader at a *kgotla* meeting at the village Molepolole, should have been further edited (*Mmegi* May 6, 2002).

Nasha could not permit the broadcast of a panel discussion where the opposition demanded that she accept responsibility of problems in her Ministry. Though Minister Sebetela claimed innocence,<sup>126</sup> an episode of a weekly studio Current Affairs programme, *The Eye* of 16 August 2004 was recalled and repackaged. Dumelang Saleshando of the opposition Botswana Congress Party (BCP) had demanded that Nasha shoulder responsibility of irregularities over land allocations contained in findings of the Lesetedi Land Commission Report.<sup>127</sup> Sebetela championed a reign of terror as Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, which is discussed later.

If the bias of BTV News towards 'what's right with the government of Botswana', was a contribution towards Afro-optimism, then it was an uncritical Afro-optimism. Even optimists about media in Botswana like James Zaffiro cannot escape the fact that, African media is under duress, "from undemocratic media-state relations, insufficient media training, experience and professionalism, small media markets, weak civil society groups and unsupportive political cultures" (Zaffiro, 2000:88). Both Radio Botswana and BTV News bulletins failed the 'African Journalism' test, popularized recently by the Highway Africa community. African Journalism has been defined in a number of ways; often in relation to how media of other parts of the world portray Africa. It has to be more than just the opposite of other media, or mimicry of such media, and be a 'syncretic', overarching and encompassing media that is true to the continent. It has to be

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<sup>126</sup> Monitor, Monday 23 August 2004:2

<sup>127</sup> 'Cover up at BTV'; 'BCP man muzzled' in The Botswana Guardian Friday August 20 2004:1-2, 'Nasha is so intolerant' in The Midweek Sun, Wednesday August 25 2004

more than African journalism merely filling in the positions that were formerly occupied by Westerners without transforming the practice, and more of a transformative and embracing force (Strelitz, 2005:2).

### **Understanding of editorial independence at the BTV Newsroom**

The meaning of editorial independence and its value to the BTV Newsroom were found to be varied among the News team. For a start, the title of the research of the current work, initially entitled "State control, nation-building and commercialisation as determinants of Botswana Television", sparked much consternation to some managers at BTV. From Habuji Sosome, then Director of DBS, to Kesholofetse Phetlhu, then acting General Manager to Head of News and Current Affairs, Felicitus Mashungwa; they found the research question problematic since it appeared to imply BTV did not enjoy editorial independence from the state. All of them were long serving members of the former DIB, having served the department for periods going beyond twenty years. According to them, lack of training and lack of commitment among the younger staff rather than editorial independence, was what was threatening the future of BTV. They all insisted that BTV was independent; the Minister did not have to approve content first before broadcasting. Ministers did not constantly monitor the day to day work at BTV. They did not perceive themselves as civil servants like all other civil servants in other government departments. They distanced themselves from the state, and hence saw themselves as operating generally under freedom from state – control (in interviews, November, 2003).

On the other hand, many of the reporters, editors and producers at the BTV Newsroom, were all new to television broadcasting and journalism. Every single one of those interviewed agreed that there was no editorial independence or freedom of the media at BTV. Yet, upon observation, in the day to day carrying out of their work, they revealed very little concern for editorial independence. Attempts towards critical journalism were generally very few at BTV. Many

claimed that they protected their jobs by reducing chances of an encounter with the wrath of state control. News items critical about government or positive about other political parties were best avoided, they said. BTV was generally perceived to be the wrong place for those who wanted to take a critical position on the government and its policies. Stories on corruption among government officials were avoided. An anonymous email ranking BTV reporters, circulated in the Newsroom and also copied to BTV management summarised the thinking about journalism at BTV (see appendix 17). The email revealed the usual workplace competitiveness; communication skills, command of the English language, passion, shyness, confidence, grasp of issues, intelligence, analytical skills, hard work, interpersonal relations, talent, presentation, and leadership skills. An important aspect that was also highlighted by the email was that, there was a need for BTV reporters to realise they were not working for the private media. Of the thirteen reporters ranked, only three were found to be 'fearless', 'trouble seeking', 'manipulative', and 'risk taking', i.e. they sometimes dared to challenge government policy. One of them in any case was said to be 'losing his fire'. The few that had dared to cross the line were made to write many letters of apology for their 'misconduct', and be labelled dissidents, as was the case with Joshua Ntopolelang with the production of *Matlhoaphage*, discussed in detail later on. Although these were legitimate reasons for self – censorship, by failing to push the boundaries of state – control however, many of the BTV News team conspired together with the state to rob the nation of critical, informative and uncompromising journalism.

Only a very few, usually those that had worked in the private media before joining the television station saw the lack of editorial independence disturbing enough to attempt more critical journalism. Alpheons Moroke, producer of *The Eye*, was one of the very few that took the issue of editorial independence seriously. *The Eye* was a Current Affairs programmes attempted to critically analyse activities of government and civil society organisations. He saw the major difference between BTV and the private media house he used to work for, as the fact that, there he

had never seen a Minister walk into the premises to demand a change of the content of a programme. At BTV, he reported that it was not uncommon to see a Minister walk into the station to personally handle matters of an editorial nature. The political leadership of the ruling party was known to instruct pulling out of some 'offensive' content.

Assignment Editor Montlennyane Baaitse, having previously worked at Radio Botswana, was of the position that many of the BTV reporters were not competent to execute editorial independence. Attempting to be critical of government or civil society needed better journalistic skills than many of the BTV reporters possessed. They often confused partisan anti-government reporting with editorial freedom. She felt that many that had burnt their fingers in the course of their reporting did so because they failed to make their reports fair and balanced. They were guided not by the public interest, but by a yearning to impress their 'comrades' in opposition parties. By failing to be professional in their criticism of government, in the view of Baaitse, it was reporters that rendered government control justifiable. The response to Baaitse's position by other reporters was that, although it was true that mistakes had happened, the reaction from government was often much more drastic. Obliterating opposition political parties from the BTV screen because a few news items exhibited bias towards one party is unjustifiable. To prove that coverage of political party was not a no go area if one was competent, Baaitse decided against the newsroom practice in 2004, to include results of political party primary elections in a bulletin. No one, not her immediate bosses or anyone from outside, lodged a complaint about the bulletin. She made the point very well that, the immediate challenge that BTV faced towards editorial independence was lack of training compared to state – control.

The overemphasis on stories about government officials by BTV, could also not always be seen as a direct result of state control. Former Director Habuji Sosome, showed the news team that they had become dependent on

government and political figures as easy sources of news that they had failed to pull off local news during the Christmas holidays of 2003. Most senior government officials were on vacation, and that was a chance for BTV to cover alternative stories, which they often complained they were prevented from doing by having too many of their assignments coming from above. The BTV Newsroom is therefore not simply a room of like minded people with similar aspiration, but a mix of mainly young people of different levels of inspiration, training, ambitions, maturity, conformity, interests, interpersonal relations and cliques.

### **The State and its journalists: Between allocative and operational control**

The extensive research on organisational culture of major Newsrooms like News Corporation, the BBC and CNN often looks at whole workplace environment rather than individuals differing levels of professional abilities among staffers vis-à-vis the workplace (Marjoribanks, 2003). Lucy Kung-Shankleman (2003) compared BBC to CNN. The BBC's culture in its own words is a commitment to serving the public good. Its employees felt compelled to live up to the expectation of licence fee payers, which in turn resulted in making their institution the best public service broadcaster. Getting the best public service broadcasting made the subscribers more discerning, thus putting pressure on the BBC to improve all the time. CNN was committed to breaking News across the globe while making a profit. Even less attention has been paid to organisational subcultures within state-owned broadcasters to analyse exactly how this perceived lack of independence occurs in the daily operation of the organisation.

A study on Ugandan journalists, their role perceptions, professional attitudes and beliefs, as well as the major constraints on journalistic freedoms by Peter Mwesige (2004), is one of the very few that looks into Newsrooms in Africa. As the next section will illustrate, BTV journalists, like Ugandan journalists enjoyed a

modest amount of professional autonomy and freedom. The organisational subcultures, individual and group dynamics at play at BTV; the informal concepts and attitudes of those working at the station together as they find their way through its formal organisational values as contained in such documents as strategic plans and vision statements tell the wish of the station to be professional. In the daily performance of their duties; the reporters, producers and management of the station, aspired to universal journalistic ethics of free and fair reporting and representing the nation, not merely advertising government policy. Countless brushes with state power compromised their ability to realise their aims.

It became apparent after several months observing in comings and going at BTV that finding a neat category for the station would be impossible. Without an independent broadcasting regulator that ensured the necessary distance between a broadcaster and the state, their claim to a 'reasonable degree of editorial independence' and to be guided by public service broadcasting (BTV official website, 2003) was hard to sustain. History of more astute public service broadcasting models such as the BBC and the SABC with independent broadcasting bodies has shown that even they could not remain immune from the state's relentless efforts to overtly influence broadcasting (Tomaselli, et.al., 1987:32; Mpofu, 1996:12; Murdock, 1982:121).

## **The state denying BTV editorial independence: Sebetela era**

The year 2004 was an election year in Botswana and the BDP made it very clear that it sought singular use of the power of television. By the first quarter of the year, opposition parties were beginning to complain. Akanyang Magama, former Secretary General for the opposition Botswana National Front (BNF) complained that Sebetela's Ministry had systematically denied opposition parties routine coverage through BTV. It did not cover their major events such as launching of their parliamentary candidates. Magama recounted the ways in which the BDP had turned BTV's editorial policy towards building a positive image about the ruling party by keeping its mistakes away from the public sphere. BDP high ranking officials such as Ministers dominated the screen through public functions they attended.<sup>128</sup> Although BTV had drawn objective editorial guidelines and an accuracy checklist, there were on the other hand ad hoc reminders and reprimands from government Ministers, senior civil servants and sometimes the State President, that the ultimate unwritten editorial policy lay with the state power.

Former Minister of Communication, Science and Technology, under which is the Department of Broadcasting Services, Lephimotswe Boyce Sebetela, between 2003 and 2004 fast made a name for himself as the face of government interference on the media in Botswana. An Internet search of his name generated Newspaper articles that attested to his efforts to control government media. Most of the articles were on his lack of respect for journalistic independence of the state-owned media. Titles included; 'freedom of expression in jeopardy'<sup>129</sup> 'Botswana: govt pulls plug on radio call-in show,'<sup>130</sup> 'media bill under scrutiny'.<sup>131</sup> In *allAfrica.com*, they included; 'Setshwaelo warns Sebetela on

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<sup>128</sup> *Botswana Guardian*, 23 April, 2004

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.sadocc.at/news/2003-357.shtml>,

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=38207>

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d+20030822>

media meddling', 'The transformation of Boyce Sebetela', 'Sebetela defends his media meddling antics', 'Boyce, Boyce Oh Please Boyce!', 'The Sebetela show rolls on', 'Ministry orders stringent measures on programmes', 'Dictatorship in a democracy', and more.

Only one article by a certain Eddie Mdluli, said 'the Minister of Science, Communication and Technology, Boyce Sebetela is the bomb',<sup>132</sup> and that the media should not think it can control him. One leader of the opposition, Ephraim Lepetu Setshwaelo characterized him as not understanding the guiding principles of journalism as a profession.<sup>133</sup> Sebetela was labelled a liar by the *Mmegi* Newspaper for claiming that he had not interfered with the editorial independence of the Departments of Broadcasting Services and that of Information Services. Some inside informers from these very departments told the Newspaper otherwise. The same publication labelled him "Super Editor Sebetela!"<sup>134</sup>

A former Director of the Department of Information and Broadcasting described Sebetela's meddling with editorial content as nothing compared to some former Ministers responsible for the department. In 2000 the Government criticized BTV management for reporting on the eviction of squatters by the Ministry of Lands and Housing. A Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President responded by convening a press conference on the private Yarona FM radio station and stating that it was important for BTV to broadcast News that promoted government policies and not reports that "encourage trouble and criticize the Government". The opposition Botswana Congress Party criticized government for its control over national media and urged that they be privatized or turned into parastatals.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> The Midweek Sun, December 3, 2003

<sup>133</sup> Mmegi/The Reporter, August 23, 2004

<sup>134</sup> Mmegi/The Reporter, August 16, 2004

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.terrorismcentral.com/Library/Government/US/StateDepartment/DemocracyHumanRights/2001/Africa/Botswana.html>

All of the controversial decisions Sebetela took, he confessed in an interview with the researcher, were under instruction from Cabinet. In order to allow BTV some amount of freedom, Sebetela often acted without consultation with Cabinet. Sometimes he got away with it, other times he did not. The most widely condemned action he took was to order Radio Botswana to pull off the call-in segment of a morning show, *'Masa-a-sele'*. Sebetela acted under instruction from Cabinet because he had failed to make sure that the programme was sufficiently internally censored by Radio Botswana. The public used *'Masa-a-sele'* as a forum to air their discontent with the government and specific political figures. BTV, Radio Botswana and the *Botswana Daily News* are run by public funds, and ideally should serve all regardless of class, race, gender, religion or political persuasion. The public has a right to demand more than just what the government is comfortable with. Cabinet, with Sebetela as its mouth piece, claimed the segment was used to verbally abuse to some members of the public, but critics argued it was because callers were very critical of government. He was also ordered to instruct BTV to refrain from showing file material of heavy plant bringing down homes in illegally occupied land in a village of Mogoditshane just outside the city of Gaborone, instructed by government in 2002. Under Sebetela, BTV management threatened producers and reporters that it would put in place a censorship mechanism where all material can be approved by management before going on air. Fortunately, this would be difficult to put into effect. BTV management was constantly strapped in numerous meetings and official functions that it rendered such close monitoring of daily production improbable.

On the positive side, Sebetela was proud that, in his tenure, BTV was able to successfully start commissioning programmes to local independent producers. He had also without seeking a go ahead from Cabinet, sanctioned BTV and Radio Botswana to broadcast live debates among all political parties contesting in the 2004 general elections.<sup>136</sup> Sometimes, his actions did not appear to be guided only by furthering the dominance of the Botswana Democratic Party.

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<sup>136</sup> See story 'Live tv debates limited', The Botswana Guardian, Friday October 15 2004

There were isolated efforts to protect viewers, particularly children, although even this should not have been for him to directly instruct what action BTV should take. He called off a promotional sting for a coming episode of an AIDS education programme, *Re Mmogo* (Sebetela in interview, 2006). Pictures of used condoms were shown at primetime, thrown all over the place near a small settlement of Mmantshwabisi after the international Kalahari 4X4 Desert Race. The condoms were shown being blown out like balloons by local children. It was irresponsible, he argued, for the national broadcaster to show shots of used condoms at prime time. However, it appears that viewers had a different position. An interactive short message text sent to BTV's *TalkBack* in June 2005 exposed a positive reading of the same images, "some people dispose used condoms carelessly, like the ones shown in last week *Remmogo*, how dangerous is this to people esp children who play with anything".<sup>137</sup> According to BTV reporters, Sebetela had also previously requested BTV to stop airing of images of demolitions of a squatter settlement in Mogoditshane, just outside Gaborone. These images were apparently banned for the bad light in which they portrayed government as merciless and ruthless towards the poor, with general elections approaching.

When asked about the mandatory requirement on BTV to cover the President and Vice President and most of the public appearances by government Ministers, Sebetela found it difficult to understand what the problem was with that. He argued that, in the US, the private media followed the President wherever he went (Sebetela, in research interview, 2006). This is a view also shared by a former Director of DIB, Sesinyi, but being a journalist by training, Sesinyi gave a much more careful reason,

First I think people who say the President and Vice President are being unnecessarily given too much attention only need to look at the American media. The American President is News, that is why even the White

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<sup>137</sup> <http://www.tcbtalkback.net/sms1.htm#3>

House houses journalists from all over the country whose main role is to report on the President...but the problem is if the government journalists are specifically being ordered to follow the President around. I think media professionals can make those decisions and they don't need them to be imposed by a non-professional. Also I take it that when journalists follows a public figure, they are really after his or her interaction with the people. So let us see the people's reaction to what the public figure is presenting.<sup>138</sup>

The 2 August 2004 *Editorial* of the *Mmegi* Newspaper resorted to asking the President, Festus Mogae, to save the media in Botswana by changing to a different Minister in the next Cabinet. On his last few weeks as Minister, in August Sebetela undertook to make a national tour to educate the nation that the radio and television stations were ordinary government departments controlled by a Minister and that any expectation that these should operate as public service broadcasters was misguided. He was responding to the "public outcry that his 'unprofessional influence' in the state media was highly prejudicial to the growth of media in Botswana". He told the public at one of the meetings in Gaborone that "just like any other government department, the government media should be similarly monitored". Such monitoring included the state unilaterally deciding that the public did not need a call in segment in one RB programme '*Masa-a-sele*', for, "the public had ample opportunity to communicate feedback to government".<sup>139</sup>

### ***Matlhoaphage: of self-censorship and gate-keeping***

As Ian Taylor has often argued (Taylor, 2002; 2003), power and position in the civil service in Botswana were often secured by declaring allegiance, in overt and

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<sup>138</sup> Mmegi/The Reporter, August 2, 2004, <http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/August/Monday2/6887503611306.html>

<sup>139</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 19 August 2004

covert ways, to the ruling BDP. Nowhere in the civil service in Botswana was self-censorship more pronounced than in government-owned media. Overt government control was also often exacerbated by self-censorship. To survive, many government journalists said they needed to learn to balance what they learnt in the classroom about professional journalism, and their terms of employment under government.

Former BTV acting General Manager Kesholofetse Phetlhu, once argued that she saw it fitting for the government and politicians in particular to keep the journalists in check. To her, the disapproval by the ruling elites of some of the content of the station should be seen as more gate-keeping rather than interference. They had a right after all, like any other citizen, she argued, to have a say on the content of the station (Interview with Phetlhu, 2003). Gate-keeping is undeniably an essential function of any editor, and conformity to official and unofficial guidelines are a prerequisite for promotion or continued employment (Hood and Tabary-Peterssen, 1997:12). Ideally, gate-keeping should be guided by public interest and ethical journalism. At BTV, self-censorship, rather than gate-keeping, was embedded in stages in the process of production, from peer review pre-productions to presenting tapes of packaged productions, as the case of production of one *Matlhoaphage* episode illustrated.

*Matlhoaphage* a BTV Current Affairs programme produced by Joshua Ntopolelang, was illustrative of the extent of self-censorship rather than overt government interference, on the editorial freedom of BTV. *Matlhoaphage*, was not pitched for in a manner similar to other programmes where the idea came from producers within the station. It was born out of an effort by then Director of DBS, Sesinyi to address bitter complaints from opposition parties that the BDP monopolised BTV. Sesinyi was perhaps the most progressive of all former DIB Directors when it came to the public service broadcasting ideal. He decided that BTV must intrude a studio debate that would give different political parties a platform to debate their positions on issues before the nation. The editorial policy

for the programme was that, participants of the studio programme would always include a member of the ruling BDP and representatives of the opposition and other interest groups. *Matlhoaphage* was expected to remove some of the pressure off the News section, which received many complaints from opposition parties that they were not adequately covered.

The ideal production process set out for BTV Current Affairs in-house productions such as *Matlhoaphage*, was that first, the producer provided information about the angle that the week's discussion would take, who would be invited to the studio and why, according to Ntopolelang. One of the aspects that a BTV Current Affairs producer had to be careful about was that the angle was favourable to government. Ideally immediate supervisors would pronounce on whether they approved or disapproved of the proposed synopsis before recording. The third stage of gate-keeping was when a recorded tape was sent for approval by middle management; Channel Controller, Head of Productions, the General Manager and sometimes the Director of the Department. Often, management delayed or never gave the final go ahead, so it was not unusual for producers to work on a 'silence means consent' bases. It worked most of the time. After consultation with fellow producers, Ntopolelang had submitted a synopsis to Head of Productions, and as per normal practice, went on with the production while waiting for their response.

However, a recorded *Matlhoaphage* episode scheduled for 13 November 2005 was prevented by management of BTV from going on air because they said it was biased against the ruling party. The topic was high packages for Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers, including huge housing allowances. A local Newspaper had listed the allowances that political leaders received, and BTV sought a response from them. An opposition Botswana Congress Party (BCP) panelist, Dumelang Saleshando argued that all workers on the government payroll were under-paid and that salaries should be restructured across the board. The BDP panellist argued that all workers could not be at the same salary

scale, that there would always be differences. According to Ntopolelang, his mistake was to ask a follow-up to the BDP panellist Kentse Rammidi, asking if his government was happy to increase income disparities between low and high incomes, when the economy was already skewed. Ntopolelang decided after being called to not air the tape that he no longer wanted to present the programme. He was quoted saying in the papers, "these are just some of the things that are making it difficult for presenters to do their job as you will never be sure of what you are expected to do and whether you are asking the right questions" (Interview with Ntopolelang, 2005). Some refuted allegations of state interference and said that the programme was not aired because the gatekeepers were not happy with the end result. "It had mistakes that were too hard to ignore and was not fit for airing. It was an internal decision that had nothing to do with any Directive. In fact, I haven't seen the Directive that you are talking about".<sup>140</sup>

Lack of editorial freedom at BTV was therefore, often more as a result of self-censorship by BTV middle management than by instruction from the state. Even when the BDP did not complain, middle management did not want to take chances. The BDP panellist Rammidi later told *Mmegi* Newspaper that he did not notice any unfair questions levelled against him nor did he feel that he was being victimized. "I just answered the questions that were asked and it was just like all the sessions that I have been called to give my input. It was not biased in any way but was just the same grilling that these guys always do to the BDP".<sup>141</sup>

It appears though that no amount of self-censorship at BTV, whether at a personal or institutional level, could ever satisfy the ruling BDP. In an opinion letter to a local Newspaper, Comma Serema, Executive Secretary of the BDP castigated Ntopolelang for allocating opposition parties more participants in the studio programme. Comma alleged that, this gave the impression that the

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<sup>140</sup> *Mmegi*, November 15 2005, Vol. 22, No. 175

<sup>141</sup> *Mmegi online*. <http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/November/Tuesday15/2192825961607.html>

opposition was more dominant than the ruling party.<sup>142</sup> *Mmegi* Newspaper of 15 November 2005 quoted Ntopolelang saying "I quit this morning," meaning 14 November 2005. Ntopolelang said he later received a warning letter from the Director of DBS, Habuji Sosome, for his statement to the press and for insubordination, having refused to continue producing *Matlhoaphage* until a new presenter was found.

### **When self-censorship and interference is not enough: The downfall of Sebetela and Phetlhu**

Francis Kasoma (2000) found self-censorship to be prevalent in Newsrooms across Africa. He explained that, the reality was that, while editors and managers proclaimed editorial independence and often preached it to the journalists, privately, they often took instruction from the echelons of state power, either not to report certain stories, or to provide the official line. It appears that sometimes, even this was not enough. Sebetela was excluded from Cabinet after the 2004 general elections.<sup>143</sup> It was not clear if the loss of the Ministerial position by Sebetela indicated disapproval at the highest office in the land that he failed to completely control government-owned media, or a disapproval of his 'interference', in the media. Pelonomi Moitsoi-Venson took over the Ministry. In a 1997 publication entitled '*Civil Society and Form of Political Participation in South Africa*' Venson-Moitsoi celebrated the power of resistance. Her paper pointed out the ways in which community organisations or civil society in black urban communities in South Africa passionately resisted apartheid statutory bodies and defined their own development. It was hoped that in her new powerful position in Cabinet, she would not lose sight of the power of the people to resist oppressive governments. There was jubilation when she took over the Ministry, but it would appear that the jubilation was premature. The independent *Botswana Gazette* Newspaper of 02 April 2005 ran a story entitled 'The mystery of the missing cattle

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<sup>142</sup> *Mmegi*, November 17 2005, Vol. 22, No.177, Opinion Letters

<sup>143</sup> *Mmegi*, 12 November, 2004

– and the disappearing bulletin!’ According the Newspaper report, a BTV Setswana bulletin at 19:00 had ran a story of stolen cattle being found in the farm of the biggest cattle baron in Botswana, Derek Brink, but was not included in the English bulletin at 21:00 later that night. Venson had allegedly personally gone to BTV and directed that the News desk remove the story from the rest of the bulletin. She denied instructing BTV staff to pull out the story, but added: “I know where my authority starts and where it stops. There are times when our ‘gate keeping’ has to be put into practice, especially when our reporters, who we are still training, may broadcast News that might seem discriminatory”.<sup>144</sup>

Ziegler and Asante have characterized the mass media in Africa as ‘Thunder and Silence’, referring to the stark contrast between moments of tremendous freedom such as happened in Nigeria where the media grew to become a proper fourth estate; and periods of silence such as in Ethiopia where the press spoke ever so timidly (Ziegler and Asante, 1992:vi). A comparative analysis is risky – postcolonial and feminist studies have pointed to the tendency to measure the subject of study, not by what it is, but what it is not. Studies of the media in Africa have tended towards this (Nyamnjoh, 2005). The environment in which the media emerged in Africa was that of colonization, radically different from say the emergence of the media in the United States or the United Kingdom.

When Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler (2002) speak of ‘echographies of television’ – referring to the contradiction or double postulate of the idea of ‘actuality’, unfettered ‘truth’ that television claims to achieve through such conventions as going ‘live’, or reporting in ‘real time’, they are speaking about a different kind of television in a context radically different from television as we know it in many parts of Africa. The expectation of the Western consumer of television ‘actuality’ like News is that, the medium must as far as possible provide an actual transparent and neutral account of an event. More often than not, the

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<sup>144</sup> *Botswana Gazette*, 02 April 2005.

African viewer, who can hardly be called an audience for his and her lack of direct access in the medium has come to accept top-down 'the Minister said' kind of reporting.

### **Towards an African media**

Africanist scholars such as Richard Fardon and Graham Furniss (2000), saw the problem with African mass media as the fact that African cultures were broadcasts via conventions influenced by broadcasts of other cultures. For critical African postcolonial scholars like Francis Nyamnjoh (2005), the similarities between Western and African broadcast cultures was only prima-facie. Nyamnjoh maintained that broadcasters in Africa today appeared to operate under universalized values, attitudes and practices identifiable with the West because media workers in post-colonies were very often recipients of uncritical Western biased 'professional' training. This, however, did not make the media experience in Africa at all similar to that of the West. The use of the media in Africa during colonialism was for the metropolis to consolidate its position; not to celebrate African cultures or promote equitable access to the public sphere. It was only towards the end of colonialism that the West began to campaign against state control of the media. This was the same control during colonialism they had vehemently protected. Just as colonialism had used mass media to further its own agendas, the newly independent governments quickly turned state control to their advantage in the name of nation-building (Nyamnjoh, 2005).

Pessimists like Professor of Law and Journalism at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, Robert Martin (1992) have concluded about the predicament of mass media in Africa that

The global economy is becoming more integrated and more interdependent, and most of Africa is simply left out of the process...not as

underdevelopment-dependency theorists once argued,...the misery of being exploited by capitalists is nothing compared to the misery of not being exploited at all (Martin, 1992:332).

## **Foreign News feeds in Botswana**

While like the rest of the continent, Botswana was receiving very little international media attention, or 'not being exploited at all', she has received international News feeds since the inception of radio broadcasting in the 1930s. The BBC was probably the earliest source of foreign feed. After independence, many foreign News services; Chinese, Swiss, Soviet, South African, and many other offered their services to the newly independent and unknown state. Preference however, was given towards Western News wires, particularly as the Cold War years coincided with a period when Botswana relied heavily on expatriate expertise from the West. From about 1972, discussion started on the possibility of establishing a Reuters link in Botswana. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning was eager to finance the installation of the service.<sup>145</sup> By June 1973, Information and Broadcasting sections were expecting that the equipment for receiving Reuters News would be operational.<sup>146</sup> After a number of delays, Reuters News wires were installed in Botswana in the early 1970s.

Mostly the Botswana government's policy towards international media communications and journalism issues was lukewarm, if not totally ambivalent until the early 1990s. Botswana showed no interest in the invitation for the African and Arab press agencies directors' conference in Tunis in 1975. The country was never a member of the African Journalists Union.<sup>147</sup> High Commission offices around the world made efforts to get Botswana linked to

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<sup>145</sup> Letter dated 26 June 1972 from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to the Chief Information Officer. Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (3)

<sup>146</sup> Letter from Press Officer to Office of the President, Botswana National Archives, OP 25/7/1 (4)

<sup>147</sup> From letter dated 20 January 1975 from J. Ewing, Acting Chief Information Officer to Permanent Secretary to Office of the President OP 25/7/1 29/31

many News services in their host countries and the Department of Information and Broadcasting turned most of them down. John Ewing, Acting Chief Information Officer in the mid 1970s, argued that the department was already under utilizing the Reuters News service.<sup>148</sup> To this day Botswana continues to pay for foreign News. In November 2005, BTV paid USD 80 031.00 (P400 000) for a two year license to the Associated Press (AP) for (Electronic News Production System) ENPS Broadcasting Services. The next month in December, the station also renewed contracts with its existing News agents.

### **Towards a working definition for BTV**

When referring to national broadcasters in Botswana, including BTV, the concepts of government or state or public ownership have been used interchangeably. Although BTV management have often claimed it operated along public service broadcasting ideals, even as it is under government, the brief history of the national television broadcaster has shown that, not only would that be a misnomer, but it is also impracticable. At best, BTV is a public broadcaster, in the sense that it is wholly funded by resources the public has entrusted to the government. Even then, labelling it a public broadcaster could be misleading because it would imply a service akin to national public radio (NPR) that started in the US in 1970. NPR is funded largely by philanthropic foundations in the US, with some programmes funded by state grant. Currently, BTV is not licensed because according to the management of the station, it is a state broadcaster. With very limited local productions on its schedule and News that is biased in favour of the ruling party and the bureaucracy, it is clear that under direct state funding and management, media cannot be free. On the one hand, editorial independence is compromised, and on the other hand, a civil service mentality among employees precludes professional journalistic conduct that

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<sup>148</sup> Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1 (38)

could be expected of a corporate entity. Government ownership of mass media, even under the most benevolent of governments, is far from ideal.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Television and development in Botswana: Between nation-building, cultural production and the market**

#### **A brief history of visual communication in Botswana**

Visual images as media for public communication have an older history than radio communication in Botswana. Botswana Cinema historian Neil Parsons (2004) traces the first use of visual images for mass communication in present day Botswana to 1879 when Jesuit missionaries showed giant paintings of Christ and the saints to local Christian converts in a village called Shoshong. This apparently offended local Christians, with Congregational or Protestant ideas that such icons were heathen idol-worship.

A lecture in January 1896 by Kgosi Khama III of Bangwato using photographic slides of places and of the people he met in Great Britain projected onto white sheets strung up in the church at Old Palapye has to be the most significant early use of pictures for public communication in Bechuanaland. Because the crowds could not fit inside the great church, the lecture was repeated three more times that same week (Parsons, 2004:1). Kgosi Khama III, grandfather to Botswana's first president Sir Seretse Khama was perhaps present day Botswana's most powerful statesman. Together with two other Batswana Dikgosi, Sebele of Bakwena and Bathoen of Bangwaketse travelled to Great Britain to solicit support against British South Africa (BSA) Company diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes's efforts to transfer the area covering present day Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi to BSA administration. William Charles Willoughby of the

London Missionary Society had organized the campaign.<sup>149</sup> Rhodes lost credibility with the British government in events leading to the second Anglo – Boer between 1899 and 1902 and so plans to give his company control of Bechuanaland were dropped. After the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the question of incorporation into SA came up again. The British and the South African governments could not agree about the modalities of the transfer, and it never took place (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980:13,14).

On this visit they encountered media at three levels: of journalists, of use of mass media and of becoming media spectacles. Khama was to label journalists 'hunters of words' during the many press interviews and public discussions they had while in London. They were also to become acutely aware of the difficulty of translating meanings as they had to communicate through translators. Apparently on landing in Botswana they told of the difficulty of relating *Setswana* language to the new technology of steamships, steam trains, electric lighting, telegraphs and telephones. Willoughby was to work ceaselessly to encourage the otherwise astute and eloquent politicians to relax around the foreign crowds that they were met by.<sup>150</sup>

Parsons dates the first known actuality movie made within Botswana borders between 1906-07, a comprehensive documentation' of Southern Africa conducted by a team of cameramen from Charles Urban's company in London, who travelled up the Bechuanaland railway to Victoria Falls in 1906-07.<sup>151</sup> Bioscope was to become a regular spectacle after the Fillis Imperial circus with its own cinema or 'bioscope' travelled annually by rail through Botswana to Bulawayo and back from about 1896-97 onwards (Parsons, 2004). Parsons

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<sup>149</sup><http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/4/248.htm>, from Mundus: gateway to missionary collection in the United Kingdom. Willoughby, William Charles. Identity statement. Reference code(s) GB 0102 CWM/LMS Africa Personal Boxes 4,6. Held at School of Oriental and African Studies library.

<sup>150</sup> Neil Parsons, excerpt from King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great white Queen: Victorian Britain through African eyes. <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/misc/chicago/647455.html>

<sup>151</sup> Botswana cinema & film studies 1st Edition by Neil Parsons © March 2004 (<http://ubh.tripod.com/cinema/bots-cinema-studies.htm>)

suggests that over five hundred titles of feature films and documentaries (relatively few), ethnographic and wildlife films (many), and Newsreel clips (numerous) have been made since 1906 – 07.

According to a Botswana film historian Neil Parsons (2004),

“the American anthropologist Tom Larson made two documentaries on the lives of HaMbukushu people in north-western Okavango, beginning with *Rainmakers of the Okavango* (1948, 38 minutes & 1950, 40 minutes). Another American, John Marshall, began filming the Zhu/'hoansi or !Kung people (Northern San) nearby on the Botswana-Namibia border in 1947... Between 1947 and 1997 he and his family and assistants were to shoot a million feet of film on both the Namibia and Botswana sides of the Zhu/'hoansi borderland” (Parsons, 2004).

Parsons explained that the Bushmen of the Kalahari burst on the film and television world in 1957-58 with *The Hunters* by John Marshall (71 minutes), which has been called the ‘classic ethnographic documentary’, and *The Lost World of the Kalahari*, a famous BBC television travelogue hosted by Laurens van der Post (5 parts, 177 minutes). Comparing *The Hunters* to the more popular *The Lost World*, rather than reconstructing the lives of the Bushmen themselves as Marshall did, Van der Post concentrated on himself and his prejudices.

Perhaps it was the patronizing portrayals of the Kalahari and its Bushmen in ever-popular U.S. television series, *Mutual*, of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom wildlife series by American producer/director Marlin Perkins in the 1960s and 1970s (Parsons, 2004) that made the BDP government wary of films about the people of Botswana, especially the San. That the Botswana would have been concerned about anthropological films could be as a result of what Tomaselli referred to as orthodox anthropological interpretations of the San, and other Africans as isolated and pre-modern people. Ironically, Marshall films, which the

Anthropological Act and the Cinematograph Act of Botswana must have affected, did show that the San had greater interlinkages with their Tswana neighbours than orthodox anthropological works acknowledged. This is important information that could feed well into the nation-building agenda of government. In fact, Tomaselli explains that Marshall's film on the '!Kung, Death by myth', was made as a formal way of contesting Jamie Uys's portrayals of the Bushmen – San peoples, in romantic anthropological stereotypes in 'The Gods must be crazy' (Tomaselli, 1996:43). Uys' film was allegedly filmed in Botswana, but was actually filmed in the Northern Transvaal and Namibia. "To avoid international sanctions against South Africa, Uys claimed that his company, Mimosa Films, was Botswana-based. Hence many filmographies today repeat the lie that the film originated from Botswana" (Parsons: 2004).

### **BTV and the mirror of the nation**

BTV arrived with a specific mandate to be 'the picture of the nation and reflect the nation to itself'. A guiding principle when BTV commenced was that, "with all our advantages of investment, the latest technology and skills, we must not be satisfied until we have created the best television service in Africa that is admired by the rest of the world".<sup>152</sup> Habuji Sosome, former Director of BTV wrote,

The most basic benefit in introducing the nation's own television service is simple really:- people of Botswana had never really seen themselves in the manner they perceive themselves. BTV has overnight virtually, become a symbol of nationhood. Its nascent stages have not dampened the mood of the people of Botswana to take pride in watching a television screen that reflects the people they know, the thing of familiar salience, the depiction of Botswana culture in its pristine form, and the joy of

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<sup>152</sup> [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding\\_principles.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding_principles.html)

visualizing objects of functional salience. A BTV screen has become a picture of Botswana.<sup>153</sup>

BTV was not to become an 'overnight' success at being the symbol of nationhood or 'the picture of Botswana' as the former Director would have wished. BTV needed to provide both representations of nationhood for Botswana as well as enter global capitalism. On the other hand, consumption of images from more advanced sites of cultural production like the SABC threaten nation building projects that small industries of cultural production are trying to achieve. A late start for BTV also meant an unforgiving audience. A satellite earth station at Kgale, near the capital Gaborone enabled urban populations for many years to consume good television productions from more established broadcasters from neighbouring South Africa. SABC and the MultiChoice Africa pay television bouquet, Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) exposed locals to quality television programmes and round the clock News channels like Sky News, CNN and BBC World. There were also private initiatives in the form of small television owners associations to set up television boosting relays in larger towns like Gaborone, Francistown, Selibe-Phikwe, Orapa and Jwaneng.<sup>154</sup> The Botswana cultural production industry had to show the region and the world "the meanings, messages and stories that it has to offer – its intellectual property" (Doyle, 2002b).

### **Between nation-building, cultural imperialism and the market**

Young nation states in Africa such as Botswana continue to struggle with what Benedict Anderson (1983), Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawn (1983) have correctly identified as the imagining and inventing of national identities. At the same time, the youthful states are in a struggle to appropriate markers of

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<sup>153</sup> Habuji Sosome, on the official website of BTV, [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/from\\_the\\_director.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/from_the_director.html)

<sup>154</sup> Republic of Botswana National Development Plan 1991 – 1997, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Government Printer, Gaborone.

development such as democratization and good governance, free and independent media, in order to receive donor funding and benefit from international development banks. Donor agencies like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are increasingly seeking the right to review, accept and reject audit reports for the development projects they fund (McAuslan, 1996). This is all happening at a time when the international flow of capital has put pressure on the Third World to enter and compete in global markets, or perish (Guyer and Hansen, 2001). Cultural production and the cultural industry are threatened more than at any historical epoch. The case of BTV is useful for the conceptual difficulties it presents, particularly towards the broader debates about the political economy of communication for the Third World in the age of globalization. It was important to also observe how BTV fared in the area of local content production, particularly considering "increasing stress in the Information Age which relentlessly seeks to commodify anything and everything that previously escaped the global function of capital" (Tomaselli, 1996b:2-3).

BTV had to negotiate imperatives of the market, of local content, technology and democracy in a context of an infantile independent local production industry. In 2004, BTV started a slow painstaking and problem ridden process of encouraging a local film and television production industry. In the Information Age, nothing escapes the global function of capital (Tomaselli, 1996b:2-3). Convergence, globalization, and commodification of meanings in the media scene are a big challenge for television in Africa and Botswana in particular. BTV was something of a paradox, a new broadcaster starting with state – of – the – art digital technology, and yet stuck in antiquity in so far as trappings by the state and its bureaucratic machinery. The original station management had hoped BTV would become a parastatal with a semi-autonomous budget and a semi-independent board. It was yet too early to say that the role of the state in Botswana would eventually hand over BTV to the interests of business, which according to Robert McChesney (1998) was a feature of globalization. Protected

by government funding and therefore not under pressure to be financially viable, BTV is run as if it exists outside of grips of capitalism. In fact, at this point in its young history, BTV is focused more on bringing faces of government leaders and to lesser extent local politicians in the opposition to the nation. Finding a market niche in the regional economy of communication is yet to be big the agenda of BTV. At the moment Botswana is at the margins of the global impetus towards commodification of cultural meanings. It is not clear for how long BTV can postpone its entry into market economics. It has to find a balance between the essential but expensive local productions, entering the global market of cultural products and serving the nation-state's nation-building agenda.

James M. Coltart, once a managing director of the Thomson Organization, felt that, Africa needed more than anything else television; 'for with such high illiteracy she must have a visual media which will open up the whole world to literate and illiterate', (Coltart, 1963:202). Coltart warned against wrong motives for developing broadcasting in Africa, fearing that there might be a tendency for help to come, in anticipation of future markets. Other countries, possibly referring to the Communist bloc, he contended were developing mass media in Africa to spread their own propaganda. Television he argued, was necessary to enlighten Africans on better farming practices, motherhood, hygiene and vocational training.

Coltart, very much like his contemporaries in the early sixties was very paternalistic in his view of Africa and other Third world audiences. He remembered an event where in Karachi, about 2000 people gathering to watch television at a community centre would get rowdy so that tough policing and sometimes the use of barbed wire was necessary,

Sometimes it is difficult for people in this country to realize how absolutely essential it is that they must have television, but I would ask you this – how can the Governments of these countries, with anything up to 90 per

cent illiteracy teach and train any adult population, except through a visual method (Coltart, 1963:206).

### **Appropriateness of television for Botswana**

Cinematography is a fascinating past time and anyone contemplating making film at government expense must ask the question, 'Is there really no cheaper way of getting the message across?'(Hughes, 1968:26)

Doubt about the appropriateness of television for Botswana existed from as early as 1968, when consultant, A.J. Hughes was brought in to make a blue print for government-owned mass media in Botswana. At the time there were no technical facilities for professional film production, but it appears some of the government journalists were interested to start up a film unit. At the same time, Hughes also noted that in 1968, appearances of Botswana in television were limited to 'rare visits' by foreign News teams. He wished for more coverage of Botswana by foreign television media, but on the use of moving images as a line of communication between government and citizens, Hughes emphatically stated that cinematography was not the cheapest way of getting the message across (Hughes, 1968:26). He thus recommended that the idea of a film unit be shelved for a while. Dietrich Berwanger (1976) found the question of whether film and television were necessary, financially acceptable and developmentally meaningful to developing countries as outdated.

Yet in Botswana, even in 1978, Information Consultant C.N. Lawrence discouraged the introduction of television. Information consultants Hughes and Lawrence emphasized more the role of mass media in the Third World especially in the post colonial period as to inform and educate. Even those that supported the idea for television in Africa often perceived it in terms of its possibility as a visual medium to enhance development communication for the largely illiterate

continent. Berwanger argued that experience had shown that visual media were a useful and cost saving instrument of development policy. By 1976, there were already 26 television systems and at least 2.5million sets in Africa (Berwanger, 1976:11). Education, rather than entertainment, was the only scope that television was found relevant for, in so far as the needs of the Third World. Later studies showed a trend among most viewers to prefer television as entertainment rather than an educational tool. In fact, educational television systems that were installed in many parts of the Third World ended up being used for entertainment shows (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:139).

While media was long recognised as a powerful tool for the distribution of political, economic, and cultural benefits, according to Jan Servaes (1999), countries like Tanzania still delayed the advent of foreign content dominated television. Because Tanzania appreciated the power of visual images, they instead opted for the inexpensive horizontal communication videos for relaying information between the people taking part in Ujamaa villages and Julius Nyerere's government (Servaes, 1999:169). Melkote and Steeves (2001:360) heralded Ujamaa an example of grassroot participatory movements, but incidentally, the failure of experiments such as Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa villages in Tanzania was often blamed on both inappropriate technology and for not being rooted in a cultural context. Zaki Ergas (1980) found that, besides the fact that Ujamaa was top-down, designed by bureaucrats rather than the peasant farmers themselves, it was also jeopardized by the fact that, very often the equipment to execute these projects frequently came from outside and the peasants were expected to conform to modern agricultural implements determined by the food transnationals and mediated by the international organizations (Ergas, 1980).

The appropriateness of television and any other new technology for the developing world was often much contested for several reasons, including ability for developing countries to maintain equipment in sound working condition (Hughes, 1968). When the Ujamaa villagization project collapsed, it left a trail of

rotting farming technology such as tractors. When interviewed, engineers reported that already at BTV, maintenance was proving a problem. They cited a growing inventory of expensive equipment; cameras, lights, monitors, needing to be repaired while the bureaucratic process of procuring funds for maintenance was slowly taking its course. Television and film are necessary but very expensive forms of cultural production. The establishment of a vibrant film production economy by the state had to compete with more basic needs of health and education, given the small population of consumers of television the country.

Traditional debates around technology transfer and development in Africa were often critical of the importation of Western technologies into contexts that barely understood such technologies. E.F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful* (1973,1999) and well-known champion for alternative technology in the Third World advised countries to invest not in primitive technology of bygone ages, but simpler, much cheaper technology that used local materials. Technology should be suited to the prevailing socio-economic conditions (Webster, 1990:186, 189).<sup>155</sup> Servaes (1999) warned that "when one has to import foreign technology, which is not available inside the country, a major criterion should be whether this technology can contribute to autonomous and sustainable development" (Servaes,1999:168).

If television technology remained foreign, content could be modified to the local consumer. According to Kenneth Thompson (1997), this seldom happened because broadcasting has often been transferred to developing countries in organisational models of the countries of origin, usually of the West. The high cost of production of local television programmes was also prohibitive. It has been observed that for many television stations in less developed countries, resources are often lacking to produce extensive programming of their own, hence they import American serials at relatively financially attractive and lower prices to fill their broadcasting schedules (Thompson,1997). Hughes advised the

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<sup>155</sup> Webster, A., (1990) Introduction to the Sociology of Development (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Macmillan: London

Botswana government against the introduction of television because it was a desirable but unnecessary expense that would only benefit a very few. This was considering that most places in Botswana did not have electricity and very few people could afford the service.

Successful technology transfer would mean looking first at domestic or indigenous technologies over imported ones to avoid dependent technology (Servaes, 1999:169). To many Third World countries such as Botswana, television primarily came as a 'ready made' foreign technology whose manufacturing was never domesticated and adapted to local technological capabilities. Yet, the fact that although the whole BTV project experienced long delays, the technology side of things was completed on schedule, was according to the local engineers, because they were able to work to the standard of their counterparts brought in from BBC and SABC. Local engineers often had received Western education and training. They said in interviews that they realized during the project that they were as good as others from the developed world. The problem with BTV however, was that it was not conceived with a strong do-it-yourself approach in so far as maintenance. It relied on maintenance contracts with the providers of the high technology from the First World. Just in two months between June and July 2005, BTV paid GBP 69 411.99 (P556 000) towards maintenance and support to UK based companies.<sup>156</sup>

Today talk is about the digital divide which further widens the income and development disparities between Africa, and the developed West. Internet is rendering national boundaries less relevant. It is also creating large parts of Africa, South America and Asia into a Fourth World that is completely excluded from the global network economy (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:64). Africa is lacking behind on the Information Super Highway. A developing country invested in a state – of – the – art digital television broadcaster. It is yet too early to determine if this marked a step towards closing the information and digital divide.

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<sup>156</sup> Information obtained from [http://www.ppadb.co.bw/jul05\\_awards\\_tab.html](http://www.ppadb.co.bw/jul05_awards_tab.html)

## **BTV and media economics**

Gillian Doyle (2002b) provides useful insights into the understanding the politics and economics of television production. The US is the leading producer in international audiovisual trade, mainly to Europe. This is largely because English is an international language, and few television audiences will put up with programming in foreign languages, especially minority languages. The UK is the next successful producer, followed by other English speaking countries of Australia, Canada and Ireland. The BBC is the largest exporter of programmes in Europe. Spreading production costs across as many different release windows and territories as possible is the fundamental recipe for success for any media content-producer. US suppliers have also been accused of dumping their productions into smaller markets like the European Union (EU), selling them at below production cost, which makes it even more difficult for emerging local producers to compete. Europe responded by putting in place a number of collective policy initiatives and funding schemes intended to support indigenous producers. More importantly, a compulsory quota system was introduced to compel European television station to broadcast productions made in the EU. "As far as culture is concerned, the 'invasion' of foreign television content is perceived by some as posing a threat to indigenous languages and values" (Doyle, 2002b: 93).

Television stations can choose to either be strictly broadcasters, to produce some of their own programmes or to acquire transmission rights or else commission production of new programmes. New channels, such as BTV often started out by relying heavily of relatively inexpensive imported programming, and even second hand programmes with a known record of attracting audiences. As they matured, they would switch from imports to domestic acquisitions or even original programming, especially at primetime (Doyle, 2002b:80, 88). Advocates of free market access argue that any artificially support measures to encourage local production of a commodity – cultural or otherwise – which can

be created more cheaply or cost-effectively elsewhere will lead to less efficient use of resources. Encouraging high cost 'indigenous' productions may serve interests of domestic producers, but it was a misallocation of resources (Doyle, 2002b:99).

It has been observed that for many television stations in less developed countries, resources are often lacking to produce extensive programming of their own, hence they import cheap foreign content to fill their broadcasting schedules (Thompson,1997). Simon Higman of the BBC initially thought BTV would from the start be able to meet the 60 per cent quota of local content set out for broadcasters by the National Broadcasting Board (NBB) (Higman Report, 2000), but this was never possible. Canned foreign content were cheaper to buy than to produce local content. BTV had to negotiate a balance between cheap inexpensive foreign content, the essential but expensive local production, and real or imagined risk of cultural imperialism (Schiller, 1976; 1996).

### **BTV in-house productions**

Much of the failure of BTV to meet expectations was often blamed on Kevin Hunt and the project team that was hired to start up the station. It would appear that Hunt not only failed to successfully and timely launch BTV, but his overzealousness on unnecessarily sophisticated television technology, was a significant set back to the emergence of a vibrant local production industry. His only vision was to build state-of-the-art broadcasting facilities that would be envied by even the most advanced television stations. BTV should have been the hub of an emerging local production industry. The feeling expressed among some people involved in the project like John Clement and Robert Gray (in interviews) was that it should have been designed to offer the very best facilities to creative minds outside the station that did not have the equipment. Part of the reason that Hunt was finally forced to resign was the fact that many people did

not think BTV needed to be designed in the way that it was. Clement who did the crash course or boot camp for applicants that would become BTV's first employees, also did not share Hunt's idea of BTV. For him, BTV was built as if there was already an independent production industry. There was a dichotomy between the outside and the inside. It was not designed as a walk in facility that local producers could come into to lease equipment from or use. The problem, in the words of Robert Gray, a South African brought in to do on-the-job training of staff, Hunt did not have much broadcasting experience to oversee a project of the magnitude of BTV. For a small group of BTV employees collectively called 'Production', who were neither in Operations nor part of News and Current Affairs, their future with BTV was uncertain until the arrival of two BBC consultants for in-house production in June 2000, Ann Umbina and Mary Gregory. In just under two months before the station went on air, BBC turned around a desperate situation into the core of the station. Local content was to occupy more airtime than News and Current Affairs, initially the core mandate of the station. The BBC brought 'Production' back on board as relevant and important to BTV's cultural production. Busi Butale, one of the producers, said about the BBC consultants that, the most important contribution was that they gave them confidence. The BBC consultants would go with them to the field and come and sit with them through the steps of pre and post production. "They taught us as you would a child, it was quick but very good", said Butale. Gray had an exact opposite view of the BBC. The BBC disempowered him. The BBC took away discipline away from the trainees. The BBC denied locals the chance of determining the look of their own station. The BBC came to launch a station he had worked very hard to put together and that he was ready to launch, and did not add any value to BTV (Interview with Gray, 2006).

Among the first generation of in-house local programmes were *Mmualebe* produced by Kitso Mosieman. There was *Focus*, later called *The Eye* and *Matlhoaphage* resulting from pressure on management to give all political parties coverage, all first produced by Norman Patlakwe. Gregg Lesibe had to produce

four programmes at one point, *Flavourdome*, *Mokaragana*, *What's the score?* and *Worship*. *Sport Hive* was created by Solly Nageng, and a sports window *Tshamekang* by Raymond Tsheko. Busi Butale, Oesi Thothe working with Kesholofetse Phetlhu co-produced Butale's creation, 'Sedibeng'. Butale proceeded to bring another programme, *Mantlwaneeng*. There were also two daily News bulletins in English and the local major language – Setswana.

BTV programmes were intended to be of the highest standards of professionalism, impartial, diverse, relevant and informative. They would cover most genres, but emphasis would be on sports, news, music and talk shows. Languages would expand from the initial emphases on English and *Setswana* (Levy, 2003). The synopses of local programmes posted on the BTV official website often exhibited a vibrant tone that belied the chaotic environment under which they emerged (see appendix 18). Many of the first in-house productions, besides News, were not to survive the first five years. *Mmualebe*, was to die when it should have grown after about two years of running. *Worship* also died along the way and was replaced by other Christian productions. Current Affairs and political debate programmes, *The Eye* and were to suffer perennial internal censorship as the reality that free and fair debate under a government department was impossible hit home. Some programmes became resounding successes. *Mokaragana* and *Sedibeng* became favourites to local audiences, but they were initially beset by lack of adequate human resource. *Sedibeng* was later to scale down from two shows a week to only once a week. Through the sports programmes, *Sport Hive* and *Tshamekang* especially football was to become a national sensation, leading to the formation of the first fan's association for the national football team, the *Zebras*. *Flavour Dome* was the first local in-house programme to get a private broadcast sponsor, making it the first BTV production to help towards cost-recovery.

Jeremy Tunstall (1993:20) noted the tendency for public service broadcasters and stations that aim to provide a substantive dose of informative and

educational programming to often concentrate on factual programming, because it is cheaper and represents good value for money that could be partly contributed by taxpayers. Most of the BTV programmes were factual, in studio or with a studio segment, and sometimes a brief field clip. There were occasional outside broadcasts for events like big football matches, opening of Parliament, State of the nation addresses by the President, and Independence celebrations. According to the first local Head of Productions, Kesholofetse Phetlhu, there were always good ideas for documentaries and other types of formats that were never executed because of lack of human resource, equipment and budget constraints. The first generation of BTV in-house productions was therefore, were understandably 100 percent factual programming, and very often comprising of 'talking heads', as one former producer, Kitso Mosieman later reflected (Interview with Mosieman, 2006).

### **Between budgets and development communication**

With the exception of *Re Mmogo*, and later *TalkBack*, BTV-led productions would not fare very well in the development communication category either, which emphasises a participatory approach to working on videos with beneficiary communities, so as to give them more control over their own representation (Tomaselli, SACOD Forum report 2001:10). Of the first eleven local productions, three were studio political debates, one was a children's educational programme, one for HIV/AIDS education, and the rest lifestyle, sports and entertainment. In-house producers and commissioned private local producers can learn much from SABC commissioned productions like *Tsha Tsha!* Here, access means more than just media enabling audiences to debate public policy. Producers of *Tsha Tsha!*, a drama on young people living in the HIV/AIDS era used post-broadcast discussion on radio talk shows and the Internet to facilitate discussion and input into the programme (Ford, 2005). At BTV, *TalkBack* is the only local programme that viewers can interact with, live. A BTV commissioned drama, *Thokolosi*, generated much public debate on radio, television and print media for playing on

an 'actual' myth about the village of Bobonong in Botswana, that the people are masters of witchcraft and turn corpses into *Thokolosi*, superhuman slaves. There was no deliberate attempt to improve public input and access into the production of the programme by the producers.

BTV fails development communication from obvious scarcity of manpower within the station, from the high cost of television productions, and for being a mirror of Botswana's politicians. Studio programmes are cheaper and easier to produce, and considering little training that BTV personnel had in the beginning, 'talking heads' have been better than nothing. BTV content schedule, compared to that of Radio Botswana even in the early 1970s, contained very little that can be called development communication. Radio Botswana had programmes for women, farmers, health education, and programmes on distance, vocational and tertiary education. A study by Onalethuso Makgoeng on 'Health education through radio in Botswana' in 1977 showed that the Ministry of Health had a radio programme since 1975 – covering topics such as tuberculosis, nutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, sanitation, family planning, and road safety. The government also used radio drama for social change through dramas like '*Sethito le Boitumelo*', which people preferred to lecture like formats (Makgoeng, 1977). Schools Broadcasting Unit (SBU) of the Ministry of Education was established in 1966. Initially it used tapes provided by the BBC, but over the years they introduced locally produced material. Although it was daunted by disrepair of radio sets, poor signal reception, lack of batteries, and a small production staff, only two in 1978, SBU survived to the present (Nleya, 1987).

Besides content that is informative, Radio Botswana was used for '*Lesedi La Puso*', Radio Listenership Groups campaigns (RLG) as a tool for participatory development in 1973, 1976 and 1978 (Jere and Youngman, 1977;1978). The campaigns were to explain new government policies to Botswana, especially in rural areas. Local village teams, headmen, family welfare educators, school head teachers, village development committees, councilors and villagers were trained

for a five week period to listen to radio broadcasts, with a study guide, to assess policies such as the National Development Plan in 1973 and the Tribal Land Grazing Policy in 1976. The objective was to get participants to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Initially the RLGs were organized at national level, but the 1978 version was adapted to the individual districts.

### **BTV buying canned foreign and local content**

An observation made by a former employee of BTV, Seamogano Mosanako was that, though in quantitative terms, BTV had many local programmes, the actual air time they occupied was much less. This, Mosanako attributed to financial constraints and the fact that the television industry in Botswana was still in infancy (Mosanako, 2004). Besides the few in-house local productions and News, the BTV programme schedule was dominated by canned foreign content. In 2004, Mpho Kgosidintsi of BTV marketing said in interviews with the researcher that it was by far much cheaper to buy foreign content than local content. In 2005 alone, government paid over USD 1.5 million (P7.5 million) for foreign programmes and only about USD 25 000 (P1.5 million) on canned local programmes (see appendix 19). The figures from approved tenders provided by the PPADB for the year 2005 proved this. For 260 episodes of the American soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful*, BTV only paid USD 78 000, USD 300 (P 1 500) per episode, compared to USD 1600 (P8 000.00) for one documentary from local Ditiragalo Media. It was also cheaper to secure programmes that ran longer than for one or two seasons, the latter were more expensive per minute. Another reason for low spending on local canned productions was BTV's unrealistically high quality standards considering the infantile stage of film and television production in Botswana. At the beginning of 2004, the local television station GBCTV bought rights to air the drama, *Flat 101* by a local production house, Flave. BTV was the first to be approached, but they apparently flatly rejected the 13 episode drama. The production had cost the local company

around P 500 000 (USD 100 000).<sup>157</sup> Yet as was pointed out by Press Secretary to the President Jeff Ramsay at the African Francophone Film Festival held by Alliance Française at University of Botswana in March 2005, although *Flat 101* was turned down by BTV as being too poor quality, it was found good enough for SABC Africa to broadcast to the continent.<sup>158</sup>

Many distributors, mostly from South Africa with holding rights of international best-selling programmes, approached BTV to sell non-exclusive free terrestrial television broadcasting rights. They offered renewable contracts for an average of 12 to 18 months (see appendix 20). BTV being a new station, it attracted many distributors, from South Africa and places as far as Lebanon, Mauritius, Monaco, USA and Australia. The international distributors approached the station, mostly with second-hand re-runs of popular series' from mainly the US, but also the UK, Australia, Canada and other English speaking countries. Very few non English international programmes that used subtitles were bought. Sometimes representatives from the international distributing companies came personally to sell programmes they had obtained holding rights for. BTV only bought broadcasting rights. Local producers had not created a common distribution system. They approached BTV with unsolicited canned programmes on an individual bases. Very few of the submitted local material were purchased by BTV. On the other hand, BTV had never attempted to sell any of its in-house programmes, according to Kgosidintsi. The Marketing section was very still very small, understaffed and inexperienced.

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<sup>157</sup> Mmegi online, <http://www.mmegi.bw./2004/January/Tuesday20/6734203981534.html>

<sup>158</sup> African Francophone Film Festival held by Alliance Française at University of Botswana library auditorium, 19-24 March 2005, Discussion panel, Film making in Botswana, 24 March 2005.

## **Deciding what the nations wants to see**

In selecting which programmes to buy for the schedule, initially BTV was to put together a Programme Advisory Committee, “representative of the Botswana society – age, background, education etc. as possible” (Hunt Report, 1999:8). This never happened. The best they were able to achieve towards representing different target groups was to extend selection of content to any member of staff at BTV that was interested in programme selection. A semi-permanent programmes committee had emerged, led by a BTV Marketing officer. It included the Head of Programmes, producers of in-house programmes, Transmission Controller and the Channel Controller (Interview with Kgosidintsi, 2004). At the end of May 2004, the programmes committee met to view screenings of some local and international canned production. Altogether, eleven people participated in the three day session, with eight coming on any one day, three men and seven women. It became apparent to the researcher that selection was a relatively unpopular process. It entailed skimming through demonstration videos sent by either international distributors or for local content, submitted by local producers themselves.

In one of the sessions attended during this research, a certain Peter Spammer of Berjaya Distributors came to sell some products. While he recognized that the selection committee did not make final decisions on purchases, he did express that he would be happier if they did. To put some pressure on the committee, he reminded them that taking a long time to make decisions could cost them some programmes. He could not guarantee that by the time the six week purchasing process was complete, that the selected programmes would still be available. South African SABC and M-Net on the other hand bought programmes on the spot, and could then secure monopoly broadcast rights and prevent BTV access to the purchased programmes. In 2004 at BTV, the procedure was that after the selection, the marketing officer filled in ‘CTB Form 3’ – an evaluation and recommendation form, to the then Central Tender Board (CTB), now PPADB.

They waited about two weeks for the CTB decision to approve or reject the application. Once approval was granted, the marketing officer completed a Government Purchasing Order (GPO). The GPO was a guarantee that the government would pay. The GPO was made by the Supplies section of DIB, and could take up to three weeks. Once made, the GPO was taken to the accounts section of the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology. Once the Ministry accountants approved, it was signed and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for the final cheque to be made. An electronic transfer would then be made from Finance to the Bank of Botswana, where sellers collected their payment cheques and tapes could be released. Very few programmes were obtained free, or through the barter system. According to Kgosidintsi, People TV gave broadcasters 'free' programmes such as *Initiative Africa* and *Business Africa*. The programmes came with pre-canned commercials (Interview with Kgosidintsi, 2004).

In May 2004, the procurement process of canned productions at BTV was observed by the researcher. Kgosidintsi, the Marketing officer brought in several tapes that were screened according to the time-slot and target audience they were intended for in the schedule. For instance, a slot after the 21:00 English bulletin was not considered appropriate for documentaries. For that reason, international award winning South African documentary, *Tobias Bodies* was not accepted to fill up that slot. Another time slot that had to be filled up was the time after the seven o'clock *Setswana* bulletin. *Mutant X* a sci-fi series was one of those considered. The women in the committee, most of them being thirty or older, did not like *Mutant X*. Perhaps as a result of the selection committee comprising more women than men, there was more support for family romantic comedy type of genre compared to action movies. On one of the three days, only one man was present, and he complained that there was a deficiency of action, and that the male audience was not being considered. The women were however adamant that they would not vote for action as it contained a lot of violence. One of them actually said that men had had it for too long. Women argued that *Mutant*

X had too many violent scenes, especially considering that children would still be watching television at the time slot in question. It was interesting that, the oldest and most conservative male in the committee, and the youngest woman, in her early twenties, both did not find anything wrong with *Mutant X*. The younger woman found the content similar to that of an American soap, *Passions*, that went on at 18:00.

A local producer, Billy Kokorwe had submitted a documentary of a visit to Botswana by South Africa President Thabo Mbeki. It was not accepted on the basis of the quality of the footage. *Forgotten voice* an American documentary distributed by Berjaya on Africa was accepted on the grounds that it had positive images of Africa and included a wide range of African countries. A concern was raised that it would have been nice if it was produced by Africans, and Ali Mazrui's name came up. *Disappearing world warriors: black slaves for sale* was given the thumbs down. An immediate reaction from Kitso Mosieman, the Channel Controller, was the programme depicted Africans in what she considered bad taste. There was a picture of a toothless woman breastfeeding a baby with her breast exposed. "The western gaze is a problem, as a station we have decided to accept a certain reality about Africa. The guiding principle and editorial practice of the station is putting positive images of our people". *Elephant Orphans*, set in the beautiful Okavango Delta in Botswana was perceived the right choice. To the delight of the Channel controller, a Botswana man shown on elephant back safari was not an emaciated figure of African poverty, but healthy looking. Josef Gugler (2003) reminded the Western audience that the great majority of African countries never made it to their screens. The little News that there was focused on disasters, droughts, epidemics, and war. Films produced by Africans like the Burkina Faso based *Yaaba* produced in 1989 by Idrissa Ouedraogo, according to Gugler, distinguished itself from Western films set in Africa by the unique character setting, pacing, language, music, and finance (Gugler, 2003:30).

The wildlife documentary genre was the most favoured by the BTV programme selection committee. A foreign documentary *The Whole Story* sold by Zee TV was given the green light because as Lorato Ntuara put it “you can’t go wrong with wild animals”. The view was that, wildlife tended to escape the trapping of ‘Othering’ representing non Western cultures as exotic and inferior common in films about Africa especially produced from the West. In the animal world, there was nothing wrong with a mother killing offspring of another animal to feed its own young ones.

Several tapes from Seed Entertainment were screened. *Political Assassinations* was found relevant, although the main issues were hatred, intolerance and brutality. It was seen as very good because it was about assassinations of important political leaders, even outside Africa. Seisa, then Commissioning Editor, was of the opinion that the choice of content should not only be based on the appeal of a programme. The developmental stage of BTV should also be taken into account. He found some of the content, like *Zambezi Sharks* on shark diving in the Zambezi a luxury suited for more established stations. *Being creative* about seeing things through the creatures’ eyes, by their rules and in their turf by Fairmead Consultancy was successfully sold.

From Botswana, Golden Bafana of the African Media Warehouse was selling a drama entitled *Tentacles*. It was shot down as substandard. It was apparently not the first time he was submitting substandard programmes to BTV. There was already little expectation around the table that this one would be any better. A producer of many BTV in-house productions expressed a need for the committee to avoid being prejudiced against local producers that had submitted poor work previously. They needed to be given a fresh chance with every submission. In fact, he suggested that perhaps screenings for local producers could be blind so as to counteract a tendency to judge them by earlier good or bad impressions. He however did find the camera work and lighting very poor. Seisa found the production and the script also very poor. The decision to not take *Tentacles*,

appeared fair, from a quality point of view. From a political point of view, the committee was concerned that local producers could put political leaders under pressure to force BTV to buy their productions even if the station did not fit in with the image of the channel BTV was trying to create. From a point of letting local viewers be the judge of the state of local production, it would be worthwhile for BTV to procure product of a poorer quality. Here, there was a lesson to be learnt from commissioned family game shows *Chalk and Cheese* and even worse, Obi Erobu's *Dreams come true*. Because the shows were commissioned by BTV at around P1 million (USD 200 000) each, they were included in the schedule. Viewers called and wrote to the station and in the local media that both shows were very poor.

*Divorce Court* a popular American reality courtroom series sold by Berjaya Distributors divided the committee along gender lines. The only two men in the committee that day, Seisa and Gregg Lesibe found the judge prejudiced against men. Seisa, a devout Christian also thought the viewers might see *Divorce court* as encouraging divorce. He was also of the opinion that the court was not conducted professionally. The women in the committee liked it and so it was selected. Seisa represented a conservative, family oriented aptitude, whereas the younger members of the committee focused more on aesthetics and entertainment value. International distributors did not supply much in terms of African films, and according to Spammer, many African producers could not maintain a steady supply of good quality programmes that attract high audience ratings. Distributors were not willing to shop around for that once off good production – they preferred to buy in bulk.

Many tapes selected that day were mostly from one distributor, Berjaya, and there was a concern that the purchases approving body, PPADB might have a problem with that. Because of the number of tapes that the committee needed to sample, a question was raised about how much time of screening was sufficient to make a valid decision to pick or discard a programme. There was a concern

that distributors could mislead buyers into a poor programme by ensuring a good introduction, middle and end of a programme.

Generally, the selection committee appeared to hold the view that audiences in Botswana were unsophisticated. For example, it was felt that a programme of *Ripley's Believe it or not*, or *Maximum Exposure* with their focus on the paranormal and unusual could confuse viewers. A more straight forward programme like *Believe it or you don't* was preferred. Gender however, also played a role. The men found *Ripley's Believe it or not* entertaining. One of the sentiments expressed during selection was that viewers in remote parts of Botswana like Gumare would not understand or appreciate cartoons. Nudity, vulgar language and homosexuality were not entertained because the view was that the Botswana society was conservative. BTV edited out parts of programmes with such scenes, or altogether abandoned the programmes.

In South Africa, the Broadcast Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) handles all *written* complaints about content found offending among stations that have signed the Code of Conduct of the National Association of Broadcasters of Southern Africa. In Botswana, it was reported that BTV mainly received complaints through telephone calls from the public. According to Channel Controller Mosiieman, many of the callers were male. However, it was clear that viewers in Botswana were varied and could not be packaged together into a single unit. Mosiieman remembered that at one point, due to pressure from some viewers and the Ministry, they pulled off an American soapie *Passions*. Six weeks later they had to bring it back on. Many of the callers that demanded it back were men.

### **Of a state-led local film and television production in Botswana**

When the television project commenced in 1998, there was virtually no local television or film production industry in Botswana. A brief history of the Gaborone

Broadcasting Company television (GBC), later GBCTV, was drawn together through an interview with General Manager Cyrus Mahmoudi, and a GBCTV Information package, on 02 November 2004. GBC was the only Free to Air terrestrial station in Botswana since 1988, until BTV came in 2004. Initially 100 percent British owned, at the beginning of 2004 it came to the hands of a local, Mike Klink. GBC received funding purely from advertising and sponsorship. At the beginning, GBC was a small television viewers association, they had a small voluntary license fee, and very few people paid. Viewers used to receive signal and channels from South Africa using analogue aerials and booster masts, and were very reluctant to pay license fees. GBCTV joined TV Africa as an affiliate in 1998, and went up to more than forty affiliated television stations. It started with a signal radius of five kilometres, but by 2004 was broadcasting in the city and surrounds, their signal was within a 240 degree arch and running 18hours a day. The population coverage was at 450 000, and they had an estimated active viewership of 160 000. Their programming in 2003 mainly contained re-broadcasting canned SABC, BBC and international sitcoms, dramas, sport, documentaries, News and a few children's programmes, including 'Oprah Winfrey', 'Gillette World Sport', 'Studio 53', 'Voice of America', 'Idols', and 'Crossroads café'. Among their popular programmes were also the South African soaps, Generations and Isidingo. They aired the first ever local drama, *Flat 101*. GBCTV also did News, reading pre-packaged stories from local and international sources such as Voice of America and the BBC. They also bought broadcasting rights for LIVE sports tournaments such as the Euro Cup, FA Premier League, Africa Cup of Nations, Wimbledon and the Miss World pageant.<sup>159</sup>

Raymond Tsheko of BTV noted that especially since 2002, many young Botswana citizens arrived home from abroad with diplomas and degrees in television and film production and directing, photography, graphic designing and associated fields. They hoped to make a living from the expected spin offs of a

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with General Manager Mr. Cyrus Mahmoudi, and GBC TV Information package dated 02 November 2004.

television station. Production companies were set up with funds borrowed from the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), spent on expensive edit suites, cameras and video production equipment. Many waited in vain for the trickle down from BTV. In 2003, BTV had compiled a list of about forty listed local production houses including Red Stone, Creative Liquid, AV Communications, Tsa Motshikinyego Pictures, Africa in Motion Productions, Boma Productions, Soul Power, Matinee Media, Counter Attack, Camel Thorn Media, Flame Power, Sequence, Spectrum Multimedia, Dipolelo Video Arts, Econ Network and free lancers including Phil McCowen, Spencer Moreri, Ben Ngwato, Morati Molosiwa, Ndipo Mokoka, and Feni Gasennelwe (see appendix 21). A number of immigrants also opened up shop, but until the first six commissioned projects that came out in mid 2003, there was not much happening or much of an independent television and film industry.

There was a very small video production industry which mainly did corporate communication videos and private weddings. Most of the work was done on part-time bases. Obi Erobu, a Nigerian Managing Director of Econ Networks, which later won a commissioning tender from the Botswana Television, considered himself one of the pioneers of video production in Botswana in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He came to Botswana in response to a job offer for a video producer at the University of Botswana, Department of Educational Technology. While working there he did a lot of freelance work. He worked with production outfits mainly for government. The Department of Town and Regional Planning in 1996 commissioned him to do a promotional video show casing planning. He was working with other local producers, mainly doing the camera work and picture editing. Erobu considered himself one of the pioneers in this country in the production industry. In 1996 he was part of the production team of a first ever locally produced and televised talk show, *'Dumela'*, which was broadcast by the GBCTV. It was a six episode programme covering issues such as alcohol abuse, single parenting, fashion, and multi level marketing that was used by GNLD, a very popular group at the time for direct selling of domestic ware in the country.

He has also done a documentary for the AIDS Sexually Transmitted Diseases Unit Unit and videos for the Institute of Development Management (IDM), the Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC) and others.

### **Lack of funding for film and television production in the Third World**

Dietrich Berwanger (1976) warned that, "low production budgets and limitations on equipment are no excuse for inflicting low-class films and television programmes onto the public", (Berwanger, 1976:63). He advised film makers and television producers in developing countries to try old programme forms that were different but no less effective compared to newer more expensive ones. Local content produced by or commissioned by BTV is not in anyway independent in the way of avant-garde 'alternative' cinema discussed in Chris Holmlund's introduction to the book 'Contemporary American Independent Film'. Admittedly relational and referred to by a variety of concepts, this genre of cultural productions were traditionally low budget but critical films that challenged the status quo.

Haile Gerima's '*Sankofa*', a black movie about slavery – the African holocaust, was refused by film distributors and theatres, denied press coverage at screenings, and refused funding, for its subject matter (Reid, 2005). Nor can BTV-led productions be labelled 'Third Cinema', a cinema that is not the imperialist, bourgeois and capitalist First Cinema, nor the nihilistic and mystificatory Second Cinema, but democratic, national and popular. Third Cinema includes works such as that of Ousmane Sembene, that "refuses to oppose a simplistic notion of national identity or a cultural authenticity to the values of colonial or imperial predators, Instead, they started from a recognition of the many-layeredness of their own cultural-historical formations, ... that inhabiting one's culture ...is neither myopically nationalist nor evasively

cosmopolitan” (Willemen, 1989:4-5). BTV did not produce any feature films or video.

Compounding the predicament of independent local producers was the fact that, in many developing contexts, film and television production often did not count as needs; especially in countries like Botswana, hard hit by HIV and AIDS. Elsewhere in the southern Africa, where cultural production is more mature, the industry is not totally dependent on governments. The Southern Africa Film Festival held in Harare, Zimbabwe in September 1996 encouraged co-production within the region and internationally because of the cost-sharing in production of a film; sharing of talents and skills and wider marketing possibilities for the film. Carl Fischer, then with a Canadian film production company, Toron named several possible ways of accessing funding for film. This included expected returns from box office, pre-sales guarantees from local broadcasters, donor funding and incentives from government such as tax holidays, hard and soft loans.<sup>160</sup>

There exist numerous other non governmental efforts to assist independent producers in the region. The Southern African Communication Forum (SACOD) promotes the production and distribution of developmental films and videos in southern Africa. The Southern Africa Media Development Fund (SAMDEF) was established in 1998 as a media development arm of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), to provide finance, training, and development support to emerging media enterprises in the region. In 2001, it was restructured and a new institution, the Southern Africa Institution for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED), focusing on entrepreneurial development, research and training was formed. SAMDEF retained the core business for the provision of

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<sup>160</sup> Africa Film And TV Magazine, Edition 11 November – December 1996.

media finance.<sup>161</sup> It was not clear at the time of this research how many local producers in Botswana were aware of and taking advantage of these resources.

Until mid 2005, when the first of the commissioned programmes went on air, BTV had to fill up its local content slots with its in-house productions for much of its early years. This was not easy. As was noted in the 2004 Strategic Plan for Local Content Acquisition, by the day of the launch in 2000, there were no locally canned programmes on the shelf, hence BTV continue[d] to shoot and go on air, thus compromising quality control measures. It relied heavily on in-house producers with little experience and in-depth knowledge of the television industry (BTV Strategic Plan, 2004:4). By 2004, Botswana was still awaiting a major feature film drama with a full complement of actors and film crew (Parsons, 2004:1).

Very few documentaries and films were licensed to air from local producers. The only 16mm film ever procured from a local was a one off drama, *Hot Chilli* by Moabi Mogorosi. Over the next few years, there was a occasional licensing – purchasing of broadcasting rights of local unsolicited programmes. Among the few licensed by 2004 were a gospel production by AV Communications, Econ Network's *Tlatlana* – a documentary on nutrition for HIV positive people and a one off drama, *Lasaro*. Billy Kokorwe of the Television Training Institute sold broadcasting rights of a documentary on Ruth Khama and the Khama family. BTV also procured an AV Communications documentary on *Youth and Alcohol, Pina ya Setswana*, a traditional dance docu-drama, and an informational showcasing the Mokolodi Education Centre. According to Commissioning Editor Raymond Tsheko in an interview in 2004, BTV used per minute rates that were negotiated according to technical inputs that went into the production such as travel, equipment, research, capital expenses, and whether the production was high, medium or low budget.

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<sup>161</sup> <http://www.samdef.com/about.htm>

## **BTV and Commissioning: the emergence of government-led local 'independent' production**

By the time the commissions came out, many of the local independent production houses were at the brink of collapse. Commissioning heralded a new era of hope, those that did not get jobs in the first round would get future jobs. With the establishment of BTV many of these young people expected that, as with countries with a longer history of television, BTV would bring infinite job possibilities. This was particularly because BTV had also intimated that it would outsource some of its production, because it was "important that the full range of television genres are produced here in Botswana, everything from games and quiz shows to drama...as part of [BTV] remit to the development of an independent production industry in Botswana (Higman Report, 2000)". BTV would then focus on its core business, News and Current Affairs.

Production of media content is expensive because of the need for specialist capital, human, and technical – cameras, studios, recording, and editing equipment (Doyle, 2002b: 80). Costs of local content are prohibitive even in neighbouring South Africa, even with more players, slicker technology and more experienced local producers. According to 'The Media: Independent Industry Intelligence' magazine, SABC 2 had the highest level of local content with over 75 percent of primetime dedicated to local programming. In more developed television production economies such as South Africa and the West, audience ratings proved that locally scripted and produced television dramas and soaps did just as well or even better than international productions. Even in South Africa it was still too expensive to broadcast only local productions. South Africa followed by Nigeria was the largest film market in sub-Saharan Africa, but local drama was 20 to 25 times more costly to make than to purchase internationally, according to Carl Fischer of M-Net. Bronwyn Keene-Young of ETV also showed that the local industry on the other hand had not yet developed to a point where costs could be recouped from distribution of local material in the international

market (Keene-Young, 2006).<sup>162</sup> Their productions were still considered poor by international standards (Gugler, 2003).

In October 2003, a BTV Local Content Commissioning and Procurement Strategic Planning Document was produced by a South African company, Underdog Productions (Pty) Ltd.<sup>163</sup> They successfully tendered for a commissioning workshop for local producers. The terms of reference required consultants to assist the broadcaster to fully utilize existing local talent to fulfil its mandate of developing Botswana's cultural industry,

The Terms of Reference asserted that there is a pool of upcoming, creative television producers who can assist in the creation of local programming through the process of commissioning, and that there is a lack in local content in terms of programmes and genres covered by the broadcaster (Commissioning Strategic Document, 2003:1).

The beginning of 2004 saw the finalization of another stepping stone towards outsourcing of local content, the Botswana Television Strategic Plan for Acquisition of Local Programmes, January 2004. It contained more acquisition methods besides commissioning; namely programme exchange, licensing, co-production and barter system. Commissioning was defined as hiring of local independent production companies to produce according to briefs provided by the broadcaster, programmes fulfilling specifications of local content. In the particular case of BTV, commissioning was defined as 'where BTV is a sole financier for a programme yet to be produced', (BTV Strategic Plan, 2004:11). Local content in Botswana was defined in the 2003 Draft Broadcasting Regulations as "the sum total of all television or radio programmes, both music or talk programmes, that have been produced using material gathered in

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<sup>162</sup> [http://www.themedia.co.za/article.aspx?articleid=270025&area=/media\\_insightfeatures/](http://www.themedia.co.za/article.aspx?articleid=270025&area=/media_insightfeatures/) surfed on 17 March 2007

<sup>163</sup> Underdog Production obtained the consultancy through a successful bid for the Republic of Botswana Government Tender: TB 2/5/16 – 2002 Commissioning Workshop

Botswana and using personnel and services the bulk of which are Botswana and Botswana registered; and unless otherwise stated in the specific license conditions, the Licensee would broadcast a minimum local content of 20 percent for television and 40 percent for radio, spread across the genres excluding News.

In April 2004, BTV began a process of commissioning some local production houses to fill up on local content and therefore relieve the station of some of the responsibility. Prior to this time, there had been close to no industry nor market for locally produced work, scarce as it was. As the industry and market were being created, it was already clear that demand would far exceed supply. BTV was not very optimistic about the quality of the scarce productions. This was only part of the problem. The other problem was that, BTV, as the commissioning body, had defined its mandate as that of nation-building or 'mirroring the nation'. In the selection of proposals, would assume they would also be guided by this mandate. Mirroring the nation was a tall order that has eluded even the bigger and more established public service broadcasters such as the BBC and the SABC. Cultural production was often pulled apart by opposing forces of state power, profit and the public good. Minorities, women and the poor are likely to be the least visible on the mirror, both as producers and as productions. BTV is already struggling for a definition, passing for the time being for a state media with some public service broadcasting responsibilities besides disseminating government propaganda.

Experience of state a subsidized production industry from neighbouring South Africa, showed how the more critical producer appreciated state aid on the one hand, but wished on the other not to have the film's content influenced or prescribed by the state (Tomaselli, 1988: 29). Keyan Tomaselli's important work on the 'Cinema of apartheid' shows how the prize that South African feature film producers paid by surviving off state subsidy often limited them to productions that legitimised apartheid to the local white audiences, ethnic separatist solutions, the racially tiered triacameral parliament and military preparedness

(Tomaselli, 1988:219). Many innovative and critical South Africa filmmakers were forced into exile, and their work never shown in South Africa. The limited state commissions and licensing was the only outlet for an ailing local production industry. It was also the impediment to a truly independent and even subversive industry that could offer alternative reflections of the nation of Botswana. The need to survive and not go under was in the early stages of local production in Botswana overriding professional and ethical consideration. When a state-sponsored local film production industry tried to produce alternative representations to those favoured by the South African state and Afrikaner Nationalism, it was brutally harassed by the government. On the positive side, this created an incentive for a truly independent industry that did not hope to miraculously escape editorial control by the state.

The commissioning of programmes from local producers began in 2004. This process arguably marked the beginning of a local television and film production industry in Botswana, decades after fellow African countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, and Ghana had made their mark in the global visual media scene. It was a start fraught with allegations of corruption, unrealistic budgets, very little real concern for developing locals, and unrealistically high expectations from the local industry. The major problem however was that, only one round of commissions was done between 2004 and 2006. This section chronicles this effort; of 'independent' producers, dependent on government resources and working on terms defined by the government, to contribute to the beginnings of a new site of cultural production.

### **Initiating BTV into the discourse of broadcast rights: *Tshamekang* and the commissioning process**

In procurement of foreign content, the issue of broadcast rights was fairly straight forward. Distributors normally sold non-exclusive free terrestrial television broadcasting rights, usually on renewable contracts for an average of 12 to 18

months (see appendix 21). It was the procurement of local content, where the question of rights was problematic. According to producer Raymond Tsheko, besides presenting local content, the most important contribution that *Tshamekang* made for Botswana was introducing the concept of broadcast rights. A Football match between two local teams, *Mochudi Centre Chiefs* and *Extension Gunners* graced the occasion the launching of BTV on 29 July 2000, two days before the official launch (Higman Report, 2000). It was decided that part of *Tshamekang*, would be to air live football matches of the country's Super League. Tsheko said in 2000, sports associations were not aware of the value of their product. They knew that they could somehow make money by selling their product to television but had no way of measuring the worth of their matches. Initially, football teams were simply happy to get television coverage. This was to change within a matter of weeks (Interview with Tsheko, 2006). The first big local football tournament that BTV aired was the *Coca Cola Challenge Cup* in July 2000. Initially BFA permitted BTV to air the matches for free. It became evidently very quickly that this was a bad decision. The novelty of being able to watch matches on television had an adverse effect on turn out at match venues. Supporter turn-out reached its all time low. Teams lost out on gate-takings. BFA was forced to stop BTV from airing the Cup Final and begin negotiating for broadcast rights (Interview with Tsheko, 2006).

For seven months between July 2000 and February 2001, the battle for broadcast rights ensued between BTV, BFA and OP. In the beginning, even the government, did not understand the concept of broadcast rights. Football, like other sports, was heavily subsidized by the government through the Botswana National Sports Council (BNYC). OP argued that paying broadcast rights would be charging the tax payer twice for the same product. According to Tsheko, Simon Higman, then General Manager, warned all parties to proceed carefully around rights to avoid inflation of broadcast rights that had happened in other parts of the world that made procuring local content too expensive. Around November 2000, the National Executive of BFA put a P5000 (USD 1000) per

match price tag for broadcasting of their games. This would be for all the 50 matches in the fixture for the 2001 season of the Super League. Half would be paid up front and the last half at the end of the season. All the money would go to individual clubs. More than that, BFA sought a separate deal for special games such as cup finals, and matches of the Confederation of African Football (CAF). BFA and BTV finally reached an agreement for P3000 (USD 600) for Super League games. By 2006, the figure had grown to P8000 (USD 1600) per match (Interview with Tsheko, 2006).

On top of increasing the price of their product, BNSC and BFA also tried to influence content. They wanted the games to start with each of four speakers from the association being given four minutes worth of commentary. Producers on the other hand felt that 16minutes of 'talking heads' did not fit very well into programme layout. It would become a corporate video, which they suggested BFA could commission to other producers. Also, the association was apparently pushing BTV to relinquish broadcast rights of events and matches such as their annual Sports Awards so that they could sell their product to the highest bidder (Interview with Tsheko, 2006).

Sponsored football events were a major source of battles over terms and conditions of broadcast rights. The annual Orange Kabelano Charity Cup was one of those tough negotiation events. Negotiations are made tougher by the number of parties involved and the profile of the parties involved. Orange is a big international wireless telephony network company; then there was the Botswana Football Association (BFA) and BTV. Each side has expectations and seeks to maximize returns. BTV seeks to attract sponsors and viewers, Orange seeks to take advantage to market itself and BFA wants to make money and gain publicity.

*Tshamekang* also included negotiating broadcast rights with international sporting associations. According to Tsheko, BTV bought broadcast rights for the

2000 – 2001 season of the English Premier League for Tshamekang. Because they had satellite footprint coverage of the whole of southern Africa, Tshamekang said they attracted a lot of viewers for this yet unknown television station. This caused M-Net to move fast and secure broadcast rights of the league for a five year period. Locally, they used outside broadcasting facilities to record and broadcast mainly football and other sporting games. Their main local client was the BFA. This caused a lot of complaints about limited coverage from other sporting codes such as volleyball, netball and others.

Right from the report of the 2003 Commissioning Workshop to the 2004 BTV Strategic Plan for Acquisition of Local Programmes, a major concern among local producers was the question of rights. This most crucial element, was then, little understood both within BTV and among local producers. Commissioning was a learning process for both the broadcaster and the emerging industry. BTV management knew very little about models of procuring content, licensing, commissioning, joint ventures, or how to do requests for proposals. The station did not have a business plan, there was no clear channel strategy, programming and scheduling strategy, audience research, or budgeting competencies. There are different models of financing production, which in turn confers different rights of ownership. Deficit financing, prevalent in the USA, entails cost and risk sharing between programme-makers and broadcasters, so that producers may retain greater secondary rights. In the UK, broadcasters tend to pay all the production costs, protecting producers from financial risk but also reducing their secondary rights (Doyle, 2002b). It has been argued sometimes that, it made better sense to invest in local productions where the broadcaster obtained residual value in several alternative windows (Doyle, 2002b). Yet the trend in the UK has been for broadcasters to not exploit the secondary rights, while denying creative owners the chance to further exploit the product. The 100 percent government funded commissioning process nonetheless was a euphoric and most significant development for the budding local film and television production. Besides availing funding for commissioned productions, BTV sought to perform capacity building

of production houses to develop the cultural industry. This was to become a paternalistic development for obvious reasons that there was no industry to talk of in Botswana. BTV was advised at the 2003 Commissioning workshop to clearly define the primary rights it required for broadcasting, and to separate those from secondary rights. The onus was upon BTV to give producers the opportunity of retaining an equitable share of their intellectual properties (2003 Commissioning Strategic Document).

BTV retained full editorial control of commissioned programmes they financed 100 percent. For co-productions, where BTV was the dominant financier, they could insist on full editorial control...where BTV was not a major financier, they could expect to be consulted with respect to all editorial matters; scripts, treatment, performers, the creative team, offline and online approvals (BTV Strategic Plan, 2004: 13, 16). BTV would have 100 percent rights to air within Botswana for the first 3years, with possibility of negotiation with the producer within the same period. The commissioning editor doubted there would be a big outside market for the commissioned works since most of them were quite culturally specific. The Commissioning Editor's personal assessment was that African producers generally produced poor quality work,

They come right out school, never having worked under an experienced director and claim to be producer/directors. Just because the world recognizes their disadvantaged position that they therefore are often given opportunities that many producers from the developed world of their level would never get, they start to think they can get by with mediocre work. They forget that that the world standards are much higher.

### **BTV management and preparations for commissioning**

Government ownership of BTV brought with it cumbersome bureaucratic institutions such as PPADB. Like the distributors of foreign content such as Peter

Spammer, local producers would prefer that BTV be exempt from the government tendering process and allowed to draw transparent and accountable commissioning procedures. The need to establish local producers associations was realised right from the 2003 BTV Commissioning workshop, and it was recommended that BTV assist in helping the industry organise. Several local producers interviewed, including Pascar Proctor and George Eustice felt that that commissioning would be best guided by an industry code of conduct drawn through a voluntary and self regulating, free and independent process.

Commissioning Editor Tsheko said that, they had to learn the ropes of commissioning as they went, drawing up a commissioning strategy and implementing it. One of the first eye-openers for him was attending the 2004 symposium for broadcasters on international development at the World Bank in Washington. Before the end of 2004, he was busy finalizing commissioning briefs, later putting together material for the evaluation process, and doing the actual evaluation. Once tenders were awarded, he had to finalize contracts, and start working on the next commissioning briefs. He also worked closely with the Ministry of Finance to make block payments to the contracted producers. All of the producers would need financial advances as all of them were either new or really financially struggling. The financing would be made per milestone accomplished. Producers would only get the next advance upon showing that they have successfully used up the budget for the previous tasks they obtained money for. They would have to provide a week by week schedule and a budget for each stage. The claim forms for more money would be co-signed by a production monitor and a production controller from BTV. Where possible, sponsors would be found. Efficient cost management if not cost recovery would be pursued as much as possible (Interview with Tsheko).

In the evaluations of proposals, citizen skill development was a necessary factor in the evaluation score sheet of the RFPs (see appendix 22). However, apparently many local producers that tendered for the commissioned works did

not include a budget for skills transfer or human resource training aspect of the commissioning brief, although it was clearly indicated as a key requirement. BTV did not sympathize with the fact that the budget they offered, P3000 (USD 600) per minute, would not adequately cover both skills transfer and production. There was no allowance for extension of original budgets. It is not clear how much actual citizen skill development was achieved from the commissioned programmes.

The Commissioning Editor confirmed that most of the successful pitches were from local companies that entered into what he called strategic partnership with South African companies. He hoped their product would be of better quality and that they would learn a lot from the more experienced South Africans during production. He argued it was necessary to maintain high standards as the local audience was already tuned to superior productions of the SABC and other foreign content through BTV, GBCTV, the MultiChoice pay per view channel DSTV. He did not expect viewers to be forgiving of local producers.

### **BTV commissions and unrealistic expectations**

Perhaps because of the normative language of 'strategic plans', that compels organizations to set themselves 'ambitious' goals, BTV set unrealistically high quality standards for the commissions, while expecting training and development to occur during the production. The language in all BTV commissioning strategy documents is of high quality programmes, meeting high professional standards, and making productions that would be a point of reference for quality. The insistence of BTV on quality while there was hardly any television production experience in the country was misguided. John Clement, a long time video production trainer in Botswana of the Dipolelo Video Arts felt commissioning could have been done differently if BTV did not start off pretending there was an industry. They should have been prepared to start the industry from scratch. Instead of throwing money at individual inexperienced producers, Clement felt

BTV should have spent the funds on a collaborative media development programme. BTV should have brought together producers to work together on projects. Creative and cultural industries depended on individuals with skills, not names of production houses. The two commissioned dramas for example, touched on HIV/AIDS. Health Communication is a specialized field that should not have been left in the hands of amateurs without the necessary professional ethical training. Having been a judge at the annual Artist of the Year Awards, Clement was adamant that local producers in Botswana still had a long way to go. Most produced corporate videos and not art. The emerging infantile industry was still caught in politics of careerism and survival over professionalism. Many went around boasting what brand of the latest piece of equipment they had. Although it was quite understandable that people had bills to pay and families to support, it was also apparent that even the more financially stable still chose careerism over creativity. As a result, by going the tendering route, BTV entered into a zero sum game – BTV lost, it mostly got poor productions, and the industry also lost, no critical mass of trained producers, technical personnel, directors, actors emerged from the commissions. In the end BTV was just happy that commissioned productions did actually go on air.

Instead of BTV introducing an initiative that benefited only a few locals, some voices in the industry like BB Lethola were of the opinion that money spent on commissions would have been better spent on a shopping spree of the many existing productions that were gathering dust in shelves of production houses. Mediocre as the production would be, they nonetheless would be a useful gauge of the state of local production, and which way it needed to grow. The nation would be exposed to its own creativity or lack of. By demanding non-existing quality standards, they argued that BTV was inadvertently forcing local producers to front for South African talent, and so commissioning was missing its mark.

Within the station, the commencement of commissioning was received with some apprehension. Asked what they thought were its implications, staff feared for

their jobs if the station started outsourcing production. On the other hand, one local producer who won a commissioning tender for a drama, was that because BTV had the only cadre of locals working on television production, the station could second some of its staff to local producers for no extra pay since they are already on government payroll. Local producers would cut down spending on technical crews and improve on the quality of their productions. BTV staff would gain invaluable experience working with other creative minds outside the station. The Commissioning Editor did not see that as a possibility. He saw no likelihood that any of the staff would be prepared to work with the outside producers for no extra pay. He however predicted that local producers would poach personnel from BTV. Commissioning was likely to open new opportunities for BTV staff to set up their own production companies and work for government as consultants for better remuneration.

In the 2004 – 2009 Strategic Plan, BTV committed itself to becoming ‘a high performance organization that can compete regionally and globally. BTV was challenged for a number of reasons; whereas BTV was a new single channel free to air government owned station, BBC and SABC were both much older, multi channel, multi genre stations with vast resources and massive audiences within and without their borders. They were also public service broadcasters; with independent regulatory bodies with a mandate to ensure viewers and listeners interests were well served. “The BBC is financed by a TV licence paid by households. It does not have to serve the interests of advertisers, or produce a return for shareholders. This means it can concentrate on providing high quality programmes and services for everyone, many of which would not otherwise be supported by subscription or advertising.”<sup>164</sup> BBC commissioned on a per nation and regional bases, there were separate commissioning strategies for BBC Scotland, BBC Wales, BBC Alba, BBC Northern Ireland and BBC Cymru Wales and BBC English Regions.

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<sup>164</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/info/purpose/>

SABC had its own unique priorities in the commissioning of independent local producers. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) was one such,

Programme commissioning and acquisition are assessed using the following dimensions: Company ownership; company employment equity profile; and empowerment profile of the key personnel used on the production. Empowerment of black South Africans (African, Coloured and Indian) and women in general is considered for all three dimensions. SABC Ltd will increase its investment on black-empowered companies by giving weight to the black empowerment criteria in the sourcing and selection of proposals, ring-fencing budgets for empowerment companies, and by sub-contracting parts of long-running commissioning contracts to small, especially black companies.<sup>165</sup>

Ruth Teer-Tomaselli (2004) reported a concern among stakeholders in South Africa about the possibility of 'quota quickies' emanating from a lack of clear guidelines regarding the use of black independent producers and others previously excluded from the mainstream production industry. The Strategic Plan identified developing the local production industry as a priority, to help the industry to reach a level where they can compete internationally. The evaluation score sheet for the 2004 round of commissions weighted skills development at 10 percent (see appendix 22). However, perhaps because local content production is so new in Botswana, and presumably the field is 'level', there were no provisions that target specific disadvantaged social groups. While BTV intends to support especially producers that are willing to work from different parts of the country, there was no special mention of women, indigenous minorities, youth, disabled and other marginalized groups (Strategic Plan, 2004).

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<sup>165</sup> <http://www.sabc.co.za/portal/site/menuitem.260bcfc84003e70637487e675401aeb9/>

## **Of commissioning and corruption**

Allegations of corruption appear to always follow commissioning. South African Broadcasting Company which has been commissioning content for longer than all other broadcasters in the SADC region has been inundated by corruption claims. SABC awarded R390 million (+-USD 55 million) to independent producers, of which 60 percent of that, a value to R234 million (+-USD 33 million), was placed with Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) companies and production companies that have black shareholders in their 2001/2002 fiscal year. In 2002, Joyce Ndamase, an independent producer submitted a document to the media and the SABC Chief Operations Officer alleging corruption, maladministration and fraud in the commissioning. Commissioning editors and senior executives were alleged to have given tenders to friends and family in return for kickbacks. Separate investigations by the Scorpions investigation unit and accountants Deloitte and Touche were conducted following these charges. New commissioning procedures and policies had to be put in place as the old ones were not tight enough, wide open to fraud and corruption.<sup>166</sup>

BTV commissioning provoked critical questions around cultural production under the stewardship of government. It was not surprising that BTV's very first commissioning process was marred with allegations of corruption. Some citizen film and television producers, notably Billy Kokorwe, secretary of the Citizen Film and Television Producers Association alleged corruption in BTV's local content procurement procedures. In 2004, Billy Kokorwe, together with other local producers such as Tebogo Modiwa were going to petition the government through DIB over the 'Tender Notice TB 2/5/10 2001-2002: Supply of a Television Programme for Government of Botswana - Department of Broadcasting Services – Botswana Television' (see appendix 23). The tender invited local producers to submit proposals to provide BTV with a number of

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<sup>166</sup> [http://www.news24.com/News24/AnanziArticle/0,,2-1659\\_1257711,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/AnanziArticle/0,,2-1659_1257711,00.html)

programmes. Producers had a problem with the provision that the tender may be awarded in all or in part by the PPADB because it was not clear whether companies that focused on specific projects rather than tendering for all genres would not be put at a disadvantage. Kokorwe and others also doubted the competency of BTV staff, including then acting General Manager Phetlhu, calling many of them teachers with no broadcasting experience.<sup>167</sup> In a dramatic turn of events, the same Kokorwe, together with three other local producers who bided for the second round of commissions, Golden Bafana, Eunice Wadikonyana and Basadibotlhe Lethola were the target of allegations of questionable liaisons with BTV management. A group of other local producers wrote an open letter to Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communications and Technology, Andrew Sesinyi, recounting instances they felt he acted above his professional duty to accommodate some of the mentioned four producers, while the evaluation of proposals was going on.<sup>168</sup>

As is often the case with commissioning briefs and strategies, on paper the Strategic Plan for Acquisition of Local Programmes of BTV appeared transparent and open. The strategic goals of the plan were to establish a vehicle that would 'enhance the acquisition of local content; create an environment for creativity and innovation; and to fulfil a public serve mandate, guided by the National Broadcasting Policy, the National Vision 2016 and the Department of Broadcasting Services' Performance Management System. The evaluation of Requests for Proposals (RPFs) looked for audience appeal, unique value, quality assurance, track record of producer, skills development for the future of local independents, and a realistic budget.

A lack of independence of BTV prevented the stations' management from going on to the next level of commissions. What started off as unfounded allegations of corruption on the part of BTV, very common in tendering processes, was to

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<sup>167</sup> Mmegi online, <http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/August/Monday23/24718141451.html>

<sup>168</sup> Mmegi online, <http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/December/Friday9/2052803251713.html>

paralyse not only BTV, but the emerging local production industry. Although DCEC could not establish corruption with the awarding of tenders, political pressure from government caused the Ministry of Science, Communication and Technology (MSCT) to halt the next commissions, presumably to put anti-corruption measures. Newly appointed Deputy Permanent Secretary in MSCT responsible for government media, Sesinyi openly attacked commissioning officers and received a standing ovation from local producers for promising them that he had come to clean up the mess that BTV had made of the last round of commissioning. The Acting General Manager that saw to the success of that first commissioning was redeployed altogether from government media.

Local producers demanded that BTV Commissioning Officers not take part in the next round. They demanded an 'independent' team of evaluators. BTV management approached the Media Studies department at the University of Botswana to setup a team to carry out the independent evaluation (Interview with Prof. David Kerr, University of Botswana). According to the BTV officers in charge of commissioning, local producers could not trust that all the names submitted for the team were not sidekicks of the commissioning officers. At one point, proposals were kept locked in the toilet of the General Manager, Banyana Segwe. There obviously could have been more professional ways of raising the professional integrity of the Commissioning exercise, without causing the station total disrepute in the eyes of producers. The next round of commissions was significantly delayed. Many production companies that set up hoping to get jobs from BTV faced collapse.

By the end of 2006, most of the content of BTV was still procured from overseas distributors. Local content at BTV was still to meet the 60 percent the National Broadcasting Board (NBB) target that BTV hoped to meet, although not under license of the NBB. Comparing the programmes schedules without the commissioned programmes and when commissioned programmes were on, it showed that commissioning significantly increased the share of local content on

BTV. Outside commissioning, on good days like Tuesdays and Wednesdays where with the most number of local programmes, four of the sixteen hours of broadcast time could go to local content. The daily average of local content was only about 2 and half hours of the daily schedule. Saturdays were the best days for local content, because of repeats of some midweek programmes. Local content could take up about seven hours of the 13 hour day (see appendix 24). In 2005, the first crop of commissioned local programmes went air. For the first time during the last quarter of 2005 and the first quarter of 2006, local content reached an all time high of seventeen programmes per week, excluding the daily News bulletins (see appendix 25).

### **Alternative to foreign content: towards a television for Africa**

Lyombe Eko (2001) approached the hope of a truly African mass media from an optimistic Pan-Africanist angle, showing how cinema was one of the key weapons against colonial conquest. 'Black' cinema aggressively reacted against paternalistic and overly racist colonial cinema. Colonial cinema through experiments such as the Bantu Cinema and the Colonial Film Unit, was used to get Africans to accept their lot, making them accept the political and cultural domination of the colonial powers (Eko, 2001:367). In fact, in the view of Keyan Tomaselli, "apart from the work of Regnault, Griaule, Rouch, and a few others, most early films about Africans were patronising" (Tomaselli, (1996a:5). Manthia Diawara (1992) also described the Anglophone colonial African cinema experience as one of neglect. The Bantu Cinema Experiment of 1935 sponsored by the Colonial Office of the British Film Institute sought through film to educate adult Africans how to adapt to new conditions while conserving the best of African traditions. It was almost single handedly produced from beginning to end by Major Notcutt. Within one year he had produced thirty-five short films with commentaries in English, Swahili, Sukuama, Kikuyu, Luo, Ganda, Nyanja, Bemba and Tumbuka, in East and Central Africa. The production was given very minimal technical and equipment support, which fortunately forced Norcutt to use

more locals in the production processes. Another saving grace for the experiment was that it was entirely produced in Africa. The Colonial Film Unit was set up to make war propaganda in order to get Africans to participate in World War II. A film school was initiated in the Gold Coast – present day Ghana in 1949 because, according to a John Grierson report to UNESCO, African audiences could not identify with films produced by the Bantu Cinema Experiment and the Colonial Film Unit. He recommended that colonial subjects be trained to produce the films for their own people (Diawara, 1992:3). The attempt to use film to control Africans was not successful, for in the 1950s and early 1960s, Africa witnessed strong anti-colonial movements and finally the end of colonization.

Black cinema was to take on a Pan-African approach, starting with the First Festival of Negro Arts and Culture in Dakar in 1966 which was a reaction against the cinema of the colonizers/whites. More 'Black' film festivals were to follow within the continent and abroad such as the World Black and African Festival of Arts in Nigeria in 1977, the Festival Pan-Africain du Cinema de Ouagadougou (FESPACO) and Vues d' Afrique which has been organized in Montreal, Canada, since 1985. Within the continent, the most concrete effort towards Pan-African cultural cooperation in television and radio programme exchange was the Union of National Radio and Television organizations of Africa (URTNA) created in 1962. The rationale for URTNA was to respond to the European colonial legacy and subsequent historical phenomena such as the Cold War, and to expose every region of Africa to other African countries (Eko, 2001:372). Advocates for wider distribution of Third World television and film in the North like Manina Lassen-Grzech, former director of Friedrich Naumann Foundation in New York, hoped that URTNA and other Third World programmes exchange centres would be strong platforms for Africans to deliver their own self-representations to the North. Lassen-Grzech maintained that, "the argument frequently offered by film and television buyers from the North about the lack of useful Third World television and film productions was based more on ignorance than on fact" (Lassen-Grzech, 1989:x). Lassen-Grzech listed URTNA and FESPACO among

places where African productions were both available and accessible. However, Eko showed in 2001 that, URTNA still had a long way to go towards its mandate of increasing exposure of African programmes to other Africans across the continent; the volume of programmes exchanged in Africa was modest. The majority of programmes submitted for exchange were rejected for technical reasons and some did not pass the political propaganda test. The largest category of programmes exchanged were African documentaries (Eko, 2001:376). By 2004, URTNA was experiencing a serious financial crisis.

### **Between opposing forces of a nation-building and the expensive task of filling up a daily television schedule.**

Kwame Karikari (1994) aptly points out that the value of radio for its affordability, but also television is indispensable and no longer a debatable issue in modern state entities. They are crucial among other things, for effective communication, education, social awareness, cultural enlightenment, and commercial activity (Karikari, 1994). However, as Denis McQuail also shows, it is virtually impossible to separate between the 'objective' and 'normative' relationship between media and society (McQuail, 2000:142). More difficult, as this chapter has shown, it to put both the objective and normative roles of the media into practice. Public service broadcasting in the context of globalisation, is already a challenging enterprise, particularly in the developing world. Even in Europe, safeguarding of independent, appropriately funded public service broadcasting institutions was identified as essential to the functioning of the media in a democratic society, at the Fourth European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy in Prague in 1994 (Raboy, 1996). In Africa, and particularly Botswana with its small consumer market, alternative funding for national television is almost inconceivable for the time being. BTV attempts to fulfil a public service broadcasting mandate, which is both enabled and compromised by government control of ownership. Government ensures the financial capacity for BTV, albeit limited, to purchase foreign content, make in-house productions and more recently to commission

independent producers. It also allows it in its own terms, constraining BTV's ability to make instant purchases for programmes, which frustrates both sellers and the stations' management. Continuing state ownership and control of BTV can only compromise the ability of the service to contribute to a more democratic society.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **The media regulatory environment in which Botswana Television was born: 1991 - 2005**

#### **Regulating and de-regulating broadcasting in Botswana: The Botswana Telecommunication Authority and the National Broadcasting Board**

Until the post Cold War period, often referred to as the second wave of liberalisation, government or state or public ownership and control of radio and television where it existed in Africa, was accepted, tolerated or even taken for granted as normal (Ansah, 1994). The 1990s marked in Africa more than ever before, a striving for structural reforms and a new order of liberalism, openness, accountability and popular participation among governments. Kwame Karikari (1994) noted that with regard to mass media per se, the process was marked by expansion of ownership, control and output to serve purposes which expressed wider interests than state monopoly provided. Demands for the privatisation of radio and television led by civil society organisations intensified, and governments responded by setting up regulatory frameworks that provided for a greater diversity of broadcasting models. However, he found that in many countries including Ghana, the optimism and euphoria that met the process of decentralisation and/or liberalisation of the media, quickly turned into despondency and cynicism (Karikari, 1994). The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation decentralized and set up FM radio stations in all regional capitals, to promote a measure of diversity particularly in linguistic expression. This did not necessarily ensure that the public had a say or that diverse political opinion is freely expressed (Karikari, 1994). Private ownership of the media, as the US example has consistently shown, does not necessarily ensure pluralism.

Until 1996, the communications industry in Botswana was both very small and under regulated. The Botswana Telecommunications Act of 1996, established a Botswana Telecommunications Authority (BTA) as the vehicle to liberalize the communications industry in Botswana. It marked a historic and progressive era in Botswana's media environment. The tension between regulation and de-regulation also became better illuminated. This BTA was highly ranked in a best practices case study as perhaps one of the most liberal in the region and a possible model for the continent.<sup>169</sup> Since 1996, BTA drew up and implemented a telecommunications policy that placed Botswana teledensity amongst the highest in Africa. By December 2001 the fixed telephony teledensity was 9.5 percent, and the mobile cellular teledensity was 20 percent. The telecommunications industry grew from a turnover of about US\$30 million (P1.5 billion) in 1998 to around US\$130 million (P65 billion), in 2002. In 2004, the communication sector it had grown tremendously,

Fixed telephony lines have grown to 133 740 resulting in teledensity of 8% or 8 lines every 100 people as at the end of April 2004. Mobile lines have grown from 0 to 518 013 as end of April 2004, representing 31% or 31 lines for every 100 people. Fifteen (15) Internet Service Providers have been licensed as of end of Aril 2004. Total telecommunications turnover has grown from an estimated P200 million in 1996 to 1.3 billion as end of financial year 2002/2003.<sup>170</sup>

In 1998, BTA changed the monopoly of the telecommunication market enjoyed the Botswana Telecommunication Corporation (source). More competitors were introduced into the market such as Vista and Mascom Wireless for the provision of cellular networks and more licenses were awarded to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in 1999, using Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT). They provide national and international data services. Government, non-government

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<sup>169</sup> Botswana Telecommunications Authority, <http://www.bta.org.bw/botswana.html>

<sup>170</sup> Botswana Telecommunications Authority, <http://www.bta.org.bw/background.html>

organisations as well as private companies benefited immensely, and more work is on going to improve individual Internet connection, which is still slow and quite low.<sup>171</sup> In 1999, BTA successfully resolved its first interconnectivity dispute involving BTC and the two major cellular operators in Botswana, Mascom Wireless and Vista Cellular in BTA Ruling No. 1 of 1999.<sup>172</sup>

Section 2 of Botswana Telecommunications Act 15 of 1996 was amended to remove broadcasting from the rubric of the Telecommunications Act.<sup>173</sup> Subsequent to that, a Botswana Broadcasting Act of 1998 (Cap. 72:04) was established which in turn established the NBB. As stipulated by the Broadcasting Act, BTA works with the NBB as the secretariat and in an advisory capacity for the development of broadcasting policies, strategies, regulations, legislation and standards.<sup>174</sup> The duties of the Board, first appointed in August 2000 included the evaluation of applications for television and radio broadcast licenses. They monitor programme schedules and content to ensure compliance with license conditions, broadcasting codes of conduct and standards of broadcast material consistent with the development of a policy of competitive, pluralistic, community and public broadcasting in Botswana and the promotion of national aspirations and vision in the areas of entertainment, information and education. They also supervise broadcasting activities, including the relaying of radio and television programmes from places in and out of Botswana to places in and outside Botswana; to allocate available spectrum resources in such manner as to ensure the widest possible diversity of programming and optimal utilisation of the spectrum resources and monitoring and handling complaints against broadcasting stations.

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<sup>171</sup> Botswana Telecommunications Authority <http://www.bta.org.bw/pubs/Ruling%20no%201%20-%20Interconnection.pdf>

<sup>172</sup> Botswana Mini-Case Study 2003, Recent Experience in Interconnection Disputes, International Telecommunication Union.

<sup>173</sup> Broadcasting act, 1998: A.34

<sup>174</sup> Broadcasting Act, 1998, 'secretariat of the board' pg A.30

The Board recognizes three broadcasting models; public service broadcasting, private broadcasting and community broadcasting. Their definition of public service broadcasting is that it is a broadcasting service provided by any statutory body which is funded either wholly or partly through State revenues. Private broadcasting is defined as a broadcasting service operated for profit and controlled by a person who is not a public or community broadcasting licensee. Community broadcasting would be a service fully controlled by a non-profit entity, carried on for non-profitable purposes, serving a particular community, working with the identified community and deriving funding from donations, grants, sponsorship or advertising or membership fees, or by any combination of any of them.<sup>175</sup>

In accordance with the Act, the NBB consists of 11 members appointed by the Minister responsible for broadcasting. In a focus group interview with the Board and their BTA technical support in January 2004, they reported that, from the government side, there was an officer from the Office of the President, one from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and one from the Department of Culture and Social Welfare. There was also a member of the BTA and seven others from a list of 10 nominated by a Nominating Committee. The fact that BTA still acts as its secretariat and 35 percent of the board's members are governmental representatives presents a challenge on the public's perception of the independence of the Board and its integrity. They were quick to point out that in spite of the closed process of appointment by the Minister; the board had reasonable professional integrity. Masego Mpotokwane, the first NBB Chairperson and Mogwera of BTA used the fact that since appointed, the Board had not had incidents that caused for their independent to be doubted.

Making Botswana one of the most liberal in Africa and at the same time protecting the local production industry, particularly in the age of satellite technology is already proving a challenge for both the NBB and BTA.

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<sup>175</sup> See Broadcasting Act of 1998

Broadcasting Regulations released in 2004,<sup>176</sup> the most comprehensive legislation on mass media in Botswana give powers to the NBB to ensure compliance among local broadcasters. Licensees may not broadcast material without the authority of the Board. Regulations provide legal definitions of categories such as advertising, children, licensee, broadcaster, signal, and other such concepts. They also spell out license requirements. They expound on the existing licensing categories recognised by the 1998 Broadcasting Act to include cable broadcasting. At the end of 2005, following the Broadcasting Regulations, the NBB wanted to license the pay-television subscriber network, MultiChoice Botswana, which has been operating in Botswana since 1993. MultiChoice refused to sign and therefore be bound by local regulations. The issue for MultiChoice was that they would have to fulfil a 20 percent quota for local content and local info-commercials. This would also set precedence in other African countries where it operates, a financial investment it appeared MultiChoice was not willing to shoulder. On the other hand, pressure was on the NBB to prove its capacity to enforce compliance with regulations among broadcasters in Botswana. The Board of Directors of MultiChoice Botswana threatened to take the NBB to court, arguing that its jurisdiction was only limited to local broadcasters. MultiChoice insisted they were not a broadcaster but a relayer and packager of content on behalf of MultiChoice Africa.<sup>177</sup>

Until December 2004, the NBB had only issued licenses to two private radio stations, Yarona FM and Gabz FM and one commercial television station, GBCTV. In a historic move, the NBB awarded the national radio broadcaster, Radio Botswana a 10 year public service broadcasting license on 21 December 2004. This was in accordance with the Broadcasting Act of 1998. A P100 000 (USD 20 000) annual fee was paid by the broadcaster to BTA. BTV was not

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<sup>176</sup> Supplement C — Botswana Government Gazette dated 29th October, 2004, *Statutory Instrument No. 97 of 2004*  
Broadcasting Act, 1998 (CAP. 72:04) Broadcasting Regulations, 2004  
(Published on 29th October, 2004)

<sup>177</sup> *Botswana Guardian*, 11 November 2005:3

licensed. A chief broadcasting officer of Broadcasting Services, Banyana Segwe explained that the delay in licensing BTV was due to the fact that it did not fall within any of the categories of broadcasting services that NBB licensed, i.e. public service broadcaster, community and commercial broadcaster. She defined BTV as a state broadcaster. The NBB with the technical assistance of BTA was apparently drafting regulations for the licensing of the Botswana Television.<sup>178</sup>

Botswana is overdue for a broadcasting policy. A Botswana National Broadcasting Policy Draft for Public Consultation (2003), if passed, promises to be the most equitable and progressive media regulatory instrument in Botswana. The draft policy envisions an independent regulator, diversity in broadcasting, universal access and a public broadcasting service that is accountable to the public. It would promote high quality Botswana originated content in programming, giving an equal chance to all to participate in the national discourse. It would also meet high professional standards agreed upon in a common code of ethics.<sup>179</sup>

The Draft recognized the crucial role of broadcasting in providing citizens with information so that they can make informed choices. The Draft Broadcasting Policy detailed among other things that the NBB would ensure that no entity owns one television and radio station that serve the same local market; that there was diversity of News, opinions and entertainment, with local News constituting the bulk of the operators News content. News bulletins would not to be sponsored, and for sponsored programmes the licensee would retain ultimate editorial control that upholds impartiality and accuracy of content. Political parties would not sponsor programmes; and licensees would broadcast a minimum local content of 20 percent for television and 40 percent for radio, spread across the

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<sup>178</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, December 22, 2004 No.244

<sup>179</sup> Botswana National Broadcasting Policy, Draft for public consultation, 2003: 14-16

genres excluding News.<sup>180</sup> In May 2006, a summary version of the Draft was produced.<sup>181</sup>

### **Hampering local visual media production: The Cinematograph Act [CAP.60:02]**

The Cinematograph Act [CAP.60:02] has under increased criticism as a local television and film production grows, for hampering the development of local visual media production. The Act stipulates that no films shall be made in Botswana without written permission of the Minister responsible. Section 10 of the Act also establishes a board of censors. "No person shall exhibit any film at an exhibition to which the public are admitted unless the Board [of Censors] has issued a certificate of approval in respect thereof approving it for such exhibition." Among other things, the board may not approve films and posters that impersonate the President in an offensive manner, ridicule the Botswana Police Force or that disparage public characters. The board may also refuse permission to films and poster that are calculated to hurt religious convictions of and sections of the public, that are racist, suggestive of immorality and indecency, show executions, murders and other revolting scenes, debauchery, drunkenness, show successful execution of crime or violence or deemed to prejudicial to be peace, order or good governance. Local independent film and television producers have called for this Act to be repealed. In May 2006, Press Secretary to the President Jeff Ramsay once again stood up to defend government and blame the media for the continuing existence of the Cinematograph Act [CAP.60:02]. He insisted that the Mass Media Advisory Council had failed to bring in anything on the table as how the law may be reformed.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Sections 3.1 - 12 Draft Broadcasting Policy, 2003.

<sup>181</sup> Botswana Broadcasting Policy Draft, 30 May 2006, Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology: Government Printer, Gaborone.

<sup>182</sup> *Mmegi*, 10 May 2006

## The 2002 Draft Mass Media Bill <sup>183</sup>

In 1997, P.H.K Kedikilwe, then Minister responsible for mass media in Botswana tried to impose a draconian Mass Media Bill, which was strongly resisted by the media in Botswana. Following the ratification of a SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport, which reiterated the call for self-regulatory media complaints councils, a 'Draft Mass Media Communications Bill' was tabled in Parliament in 2002. The Bill proposed accreditation of journalists by the Director of Information and Broadcasting. No foreign journalist would be allowed to cover or report any incident in Botswana without accreditation and local journalists would not report or cover local stories without press cards issued by the said director. Bugalo Maripe (2004) in the 2003 edition of "So this is democracy?" explained the Bill as prescriptive and prohibitive in the sense that anything outside the accreditation standards set by government would constitute a violation and deserve censure. The Minister of External Affairs, Lieutenant General Mompoti Merafhe wanted it passed into law without delay.<sup>183</sup> Private media institutions and civil society were able to successfully put pressure on the legislature to halt the Bill. Ditshwanelo, the Botswana Centre for Human Rights objected to the Bill on several grounds, including that it had a limited definition of Newspaper, appointment of Press Council by Minister, registration only for 80 percent citizen owned companies and accreditation. In August 2003, an array of media stakeholders such as film producers, local journalists, the MISA Regional Information Manager, writers, editors, academics, musicians, MISA Botswana and other members of the civil society were involved in a consultation process to review the Bill, and it was hoped that a revised Bill will go to Parliament in 2006.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Mmualefhe Raditladi, country report for Botswana for the 2002 edition of the Media Institute of Southern Africa's annual publication, "So this is democracy?"

<sup>184</sup> Discussion papers compiled by the Press Council of Botswana, presented at the 'Consultations on the the Mass Media Communications Bill', Friday 22 August 2003.

## The Press Council of Botswana

An arguably positive outcome of the Draft Mass Media Communication Bill was the establishment of a self-regulating Press Council of Botswana. The then Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, Sebetela challenged the newly formed Press Council to come forward with legislation to replace the unpopular Mass Media Communications Bill. The Press Council has produced the much disdained 'Code of Ethics', which has been well received by government. Press Councils have to be received with some scepticism, for they have historically served as platforms for governments to co-opt the media towards self censorship, when coercion by legal instruments either fails or is not deemed politically expedient. Press Councils are often a reaction to conditions of excessive government interference (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1987:101). In apartheid South Africa for instance, the Registration of Newspapers Act (No 92 of 1982) offered Newspapers to choose to either be under the direct control of the state censorship machinery or the code of conduct and disciplinary powers of the Media Council.

In the case of the Botswana Press Council, the Minister of Science, Communication and Technology has the power to make appointments to the executive council and also appoints the chairperson. The Minister is also empowered to appoint an unspecified number of members of the general public into the council. A similar situation exists in Malawi where Board members of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority are selected by the President, and the Minister of Information can exempt any particular radio station from complying with the legal requirements of obtaining an operating license.<sup>185</sup> Self-regulation, though highly welcomed by the media in Botswana as progressive, including MISA, could prove to be a kind of catch 22. Both the Executive

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<sup>185</sup> Media Institute of Southern Africa, 'Licensing and Accreditation – the threat to media freedom in the SADC region, analysis and commentary on the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport, 2001

Secretary of the Press Council of Botswana, Nametsegang Sebege and the Director of MISA Botswana, Modise Maphanyane, expressed concern about lack of trained manpower among local journalists, which makes them easy target for government chastisement and thus more pressure of the self-regulatory machine to enforce tighter self censorship. The idea of self-regulation is thereby immediately compromised by the dominant role of the state in determining members of a body that is already a product and a symptom of compromise.

On an adjudication meeting of Friday 16 December 2005, the Media Complaints Committee of the Press Council of Botswana reviewed a complaint "Complaint 05/012: AIM Corporation v *Mmegi* Newspaper". In November 2005, *Mmegi* published a story, apparently informed by contents of an open letter from some 'concerned' local producers. According to the story, the letter contained complaints from these producers that evaluation of commissioning tenders had not commenced at BTV a month after the submission date of October 12. The letter also apparently accused the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology of holding secret meetings with some four local producers who had also bid for the commissions, Basadibotlhe Lethola, Eunice Wadikonyana, Golden Bafana and Billy Kokorwe. One of them Golden Bafana wrote an opinion letter to the Newspaper denying the alleged secret meeting. A complaint was also presented to the Press Council. They complained that the story was not balanced, and that they needed to know the author of the story. Their complaint was deemed valid by the Press Council, and a notice of complaint sent to both the complainants and the *Mmegi* Newspaper. Acknowledging receipt of the complaint, acting Editor of *Mmegi*, Gideon Nkala informed the Press Council that his paper had run another story by the same author that told the other side of the story. This time it gave her name and not the previous title of staff writer. The Newspaper had also received another notice

from a law firm purporting to represent the complainants, which raised issues as to whether the matter was still open for arbitration by the Press Council.<sup>186</sup>

### **Civil Society and media regulatory in Botswana: From Activism to toeing the party line**

Other than the state and its institutions per se, civil society organizations played a role in the shaping of BTV. A number of non-governmental efforts have emerged in the media landscape of Botswana to lobby for a free media in Botswana. Among the NGOs that have at one point fought for media freedom including the now defunct Botswana Media Consultative Council (BMCC), the defunct Botswana Journalists Association (BOJA), the Botswana chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the Press Council of Botswana, the Botswana Media Women Association (BOMWA) and recently a Botswana Media Workers Union. The budding independent advertising, film and television production industry has also sparked the formation of a number of associations.

The period from 1998 saw a growth in the number of media freedom advocacy groups compared to earlier epochs, and also the most blatant floor crossing, as former media activists came to toe the ruling party line. The classic case was that of Jeff Ramsay, a founder of the Botswana Media Consultative Council who was to become a first Press Secretary to the President. Censoring of the content of the Department has a long history. The C.N. Lawrence Report of 1978 could not ascertain whether government's secretiveness about some issues was always by intent or merely a product of inefficiency on the part of officials or journalists. Lawrence cited an incident where the Botswana Defence Force had shot one Briton and two South Africans in Gaborone. The then Director of Information was reported to have said he had received explicit instructions from the President's office that he was to make no mention of the incident at all (1978:18). The only

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<sup>186</sup> Adjudication Meeting of the Media Complaints Committee, Press Council of Botswana. Held at MISA Board Room at 10.00am on Friday 16 December 2005. Courtesy of Nametsegang Sebege, Executive Secretary of Press Council of Botswana.

report other than foreign reports and rumour that the people of Botswana received was press release from the President's office four days later. This was not a one off incident.

### **The Botswana Media Consultative Council**

The Botswana Media Consultative Council was founded by among other, Jeff Ramsay in 1998, and sought to 'promote and preserve the further development of a multi-media industry in Botswana which is free, ethical, democratic, pluralistic and productive'.<sup>187</sup> It started off on a very high note which was however, short-lived. Starting with a few members at its public launch on 20 October 1998, the BMCC grew to become Botswana's largest, as well as most diverse and inclusive, media NGO. By the end of April 1999 the membership incorporated over forty institutions and seventy individuals. In its hey days, BMCC saw to the establishment of a Media Advisory Council and a proposition to parliament for a Freedom of Information Act. They argued that the lack of such legislation was creating an environment of unnecessary secrecy within government about information that the public had a right to know. They called for government to repeal the Cinematograph Act of 1970, which they blamed for hampering the development of local visual media production for decades. They also appeal for amendment or repeal of such other regressive legislation as the National Security Act of 1986, which gives the state potentially repressive power to penalize legitimate reporting, the Anthropological Act of 1967, which restricts research and limits access to information, and Section 59 of the Penal Code, which provides for penalties for causing public alarm.<sup>188</sup>

The former chairperson of BMCC, Jeff Ramsay, has since become Press Secretary to the President. BMCC now exists only in name, with Beata Kasale as acting chairperson. Kasale was one of the longest serving self taught women

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<sup>187</sup> (<http://www.botswanamedia.bw/bm.htm>)

<sup>188</sup> (<http://www.botswanamedia.bw/body.htm>).

journalists and columnist and managing director in the fastest growing tabloid Newspaper, in Botswana *'The Voice'*. She however made it clear that there was not much happening with BMCC. Ramsay had shifted from being a stalwart champion and friend of a 'free and dynamic media', to being the mouth piece of state power. He had become a producer of the *Tautona Times* (TT), a weekly electronic press circular from the Office of the President (OP). The TT mainly communicates scheduling of public activities of this Office to government-owned media and other interested domestic and international media. It has come to define the core business of the BTV Newsroom; the engagements listed in it being its priority.

At the time of the formation of the BMCC in 1997 Ramsay was at the heart of the opposition of the state's efforts to circumvent the independence and autonomy of the media. He was opposed to a proposed Botswana Mass Communications Bill of 1997, which tried among other things to introduce accreditation of journalists and control the work of foreign and local journalists. He later participated in the successful negotiations for the Botswana Broadcasting Act of 1998 that created space for private broadcasters. In 2003 his main job had become exactly the opposite, to make heard the state's voice. *Tautona Times* no 27 of 2005 largely castigated the media in Botswana for leaving out or omitting the voice of the state in favour of less powerful voices. He questioned the definition of Newsworthiness in Botswana when an official visit of the President to Brazil made more News in Brazil than in Botswana.

A former champion of the voice of the voiceless was now championing for more space for the voice of power. In 2001, as chairperson of the BMCC, Ramsay was celebrating victory with the *Botswana Guardian* and *Midweek Sun* for court order that reversed a decision by government to cease advertising in the two papers.<sup>189</sup> In 2003 he was accusing the two papers and their mother company CBET

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<sup>189</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, [http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20010919&i=Court\\_order\\_pleases\\_media](http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20010919&i=Court_order_pleases_media)

Company for simply being led by the profit motive and carrying content that was clearly calculated to undermine the good name of individuals and institutions (BOPA, 2003). The two papers ran stories that the President could have given clemency to Lehlohonolo Kobedi, sentenced to death for murder. The most disappointing development moment for activists of a free media in Botswana had to be the attendance by outgoing chairperson of MISA, Amilia Malebane of a function of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party in full party colours. While MISA, the public and civil society organisations distanced themselves from the incident, Jeff Ramsay used the *Tautona Times* to try to justify Malebane's conduct, arguing that MISA leadership had appeared at functions of opposition parties, and that MISA had no right preventing members from party activities. "If MISA Botswana is so fastidious about protecting its supposedly non-partisan credentials, why was this year's national overview of Botswana chapter drafted by an individual who is a well known participant of opposition party politics?"<sup>190</sup> MISA went on to question the role of *Tautona Times* and who it spoke for. They contended that it was an unjustified expense to the public considering that its mandate overlapped with that of the existing government-owned press. It was a serialised 'Newspaper' and yet had no editorial committee or Board. In a complaint directed to the Office of the President, the acting chairperson of MISA, Zwide Mbulawa, sought clarity from the Office of the President on whether the sentiments expressed in *Tautona Times*, were those of the President, the Office of the President or those of the Botswana Democratic Party.<sup>191</sup>

The Botswana Media Workers Union (BOMEWU) was officially registered in February in 2005. The aim of BOMEWU was "to promote the role of the press and all media institutions in enhancing the achievement of human rights as stated in the United Nations Charter, to secure complete organisation of all eligible members employed by the Botswana Media Industry and to promote

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<sup>190</sup> *Mmegi*, 17 May, 2006

<sup>191</sup> *Mmegi*, 17 May, 2006

industrial, social and intellectual interest of members".<sup>192</sup> Journalists Against HIV/AIDS in Botswana (JAHABO) was officially registered in May 2005, with the objective to write more and better about HIV/AIDS and to enhance campaigns about the disease. Many other media organisations and associations exist in Botswana, some more successful than others, including the Editors Forum, advertisers associations and writers associations.

### **1991 Windhoek Declaration**

Repression of media freedom in southern Africa has not gone unchallenged. Civil society and media activists have particularly in the 1990s, challenged states to improve their record of media freedom. The 1991 Windhoek Declaration on 'promoting an independent and pluralistic Africa press', although it specifically dealt with print, was the first major step towards a joint effort for greater media freedom. The Declaration called for the end of state media monopolies and the promotion of pluralistic, liberalized, diverse and accountable media. It recalled the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN General Assembly resolution 59(1) of 14 December 1946 asserting that freedom of information as a fundamental human right and among other documents, the UNESCO General Conference of 1989 on the promotion of "free flow of ideas by word and image among nations and within each nation". Through the Declaration, Africa expressed a hope to reduce repression of journalists, remove all kinds of censorship, to end any kind of media monopoly, and to free the media from governments.<sup>193</sup>

Adopted by the African Union heads of state as well as the United Nations and UNESCO, the Windhoek Declaration described "the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press" as "essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic

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<sup>192</sup>MISA Forum, January – June 2005:10  
<sup>193</sup> MISA Southern African Media Directory, 2004/5

development". The Declaration defined independence as "independence from government, political or economic control". The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) was launched in 1992 in accordance with the Declaration as the watchdog that guards observance of the Declaration by each of the SADC countries towards free, independent and pluralistic media. The core business of MISA is to monitor the state of media freedom in the region, towards a conducive environment for a free and independent media in southern Africa. There are chapters in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Secretariat is in Windhoek, Namibia. They record incidents of media freedom violations in an annual publication of entitled "*So This Is Democracy?: State of media freedom in Southern Africa*".<sup>194</sup> The Windhoek Declaration was a culmination of efforts among media practitioners in the Frontline states of southern Africa. In December 1989, for instance, Botswana hosted a seminar on *Democracy and the media in southern Africa*, totally opposed to apartheid in South Africa and seeking greater freedom of expression (van Rensburg, 1989).

On the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, an African Charter on Broadcasting was passed in 2001. The Charter recognized that the Windhoek Declaration focused on freedom of print media, and it sought to specifically set broadcasting standards for Africa. It stated that,

All State and government controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public service broadcasters, that are accountable to all strata of the people as represented by an independent board, and that serve the overall public interest, avoiding one-sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender (African Charter on Broadcasting, 2001:2).<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> 'So this is democracy?' online, <http://kabaso.misa.org/documents/stid2003.pdf>

<sup>195</sup> Final Report "Ten Years On: Assessment, Challenges and Prospects" 3- 5 May 2001 Windhoek, UNESCO, [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=5628&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5628&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## 2001 SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport

Ten years after the Windhoek Declaration in 2001, SADC adopted a Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport adopted in Blantyre, Malawi in August 2001.

“Member States agree to create a political and economic environment conducive to the growth of pluralistic media” (Article 18 [4]), and commit themselves to the “promotion, establishment and growth of independent media, as well as free flow of information” (Article 17 [a]). The Protocol marked a new era in the regional political economy away from uniting against South Africa to integrating her into regional efforts. SADC had to transform when South Africa obtained majority rule from ‘a purely defensive military alliance, against apartheid and settler colonial minority regimes, into an economic and political alliance’.<sup>196</sup>

MISA heralded this protocol as ‘undoubtedly a very bold step by governments in the region to harmonise their laws and policies’. MISA has also strongly called for the scrapping in their entirety, Articles 21 and 22 of the Protocol on Code of Ethics and Licensing (and accreditation) of Media Practitioners respectively. The articles were meant to define regionally and commonly accepted standards for practitioners in the fields of culture, information and sport. MISA however is adamant that lessons from countries like Zimbabwe where government has repeatedly used licensing and accreditation laws to harass private Newspapers and arrest journalists show the negative effects of legislation of the media.<sup>197</sup> This is exactly the reason that the United States of America had advanced in refusing to recognize the UNESCO calls for a New World Information and Communication Order. It gave state actors in developing countries a stronger hand in regulating

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<sup>196</sup> Media Institute of Southern Africa, *Licensing and Accreditation – the threat to media freedom in the SADC region: Analysis and commentary on the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport*, 2001. pp77

<sup>197</sup> Media Institute of Southern Africa, ‘Licensing and Accreditation – the threat to media freedom in the SADC region, analysis and commentary on the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport’, 2001

information flows, and thereby threatening the ability of the profession of journalism to self-regulate. Botswana was the first country to ratify the Protocol in 2001, but the Protocol had not entered into force by 2004 as the number of countries that had ratified it was still under nine, the required minimum. South Africa was among the countries that had not ratified it.<sup>198</sup>

### **Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA)**

Botswana is a member of the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA), one of the initiatives towards regional cooperation on broadcasting in SADC. Member countries decided on the need for SABA after a meeting in 1992 where Chief Executives from broadcasting organisations in the region had met in Zimbabwe for the first time, to discuss licensing for foreign broadcasters. In 1993, after several meetings, first in Zimbabwe, then Namibia and Tanzania, SABA was launched in Gaborone, Botswana. Ted Makgekgenene, then Botswana Director of Information and Broadcasting, was elected first president of SABA. SABA was formed with objectives to harness News exchange and coverage of important events; production exchange/ co-production and training; commercial broadcasting; new technologies and broadcasting laws and media politics. SABA's most important document, "On the Move", adopted in 1995, recognized that change was the order of the day in southern Africa and that broadcasters must be in the forefront of development and custodians of constitutional rights the region had to adjust to emerging free-market policies, the SADC regional bloc had greater potential for cooperation, globalization required for the region to be more competitive, that public service broadcasting needed to be more protected, that the airwaves must be liberalized more to increase choice for audiences, and

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<sup>198</sup> Media Institute of Southern Africa, Licensing and Accreditation – the threat to media freedom in the SADC region: Analysis and commentary on the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport, 2001. pp. 77

that ultimately the media must serve more than the market and legal frameworks, but development, identity and democratic values.<sup>199</sup>

SABA also pledged commitment to universal access to a wide range of information and ideas; freedom of speech irrespective of religion, political belief, culture, race or sex; reliable, varied and balanced informative, educational and entertaining programming; promoting national cultures and identities. SABA is yet to be felt as a powerful contributor to the regional political economy of communication. The association speaks of public broadcasters, hardly a hold all category for broadcasters in the region. An undifferentiated use of the concept of public broadcasting is misleading – southern African countries operate under diverse state-media-market permutations. It may be that SABA's potential is undermined by the tension between residues of state ownership of the media within the region at a time when the bigger, older members like SABC are eyeing the continental and international markets. Television broadcasting in particular at this point remains highly discordant and unfavourable for a unified approach. SABA is linked among others to the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA). A number of media workers in Botswana benefited from Botswana's membership to the CBA photographic competitions, short story Competitions, bursaries, and awards for good journalism. In 2003, Seamogano Mosanako of BTV was granted a CBA postgraduate bursary at Westminster University in the UK. Oesi Thothe, also of BTV, won a CBA travel bursary for the year 2006-2007.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA)

<http://www.saba.co.za/pages/info/anniversary.htm>

<sup>200</sup> Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, <http://www.cba.org.uk/bursaries/2006-7TravelBursaries.htm>

## **BTV and Media regulation, between free market and protecting local cultures**

From the preceding, it emerges that, on paper BTV was born within one of the most enabling media environments in Africa. More than before in the history of Africa, the 1990s and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in a new era that placed freedom of media as both a basic human right, and saw the establishment of civil society organisations that guard against threats to that freedom. BTV also emerged at a time when the global function of capitalism pressurised cultural industries the world over to churn out profits or perish. The tension between market liberalisation – deregulation of cultural products and protectionism to support ailing national cultural products – re-regulation (Thompson, 1997) is at its worst. \*

Media regulation is at the core of debates about how states can best 'govern cultures' and 'governing by culture' (Hall, 1997), at a time of the global pressures on them to privatize industries and dismantle barriers to free trade and communication, i.e. to de-regulate. On the frontier of culture, the Third World and First World are similarly threatened, for the threat on culture is a threat on national identity and what Stuart Hall calls 'the final frontier', personal subjectivity. The European Union demanded exemption of cultural products at the 1993 round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Canadians, French and others also made futile attempts to protest against the commoditization of culture (Thompson, 1997:1). For developing countries, the new media technologies, and their ability to compress space and time, both threaten to widen the information divide, and to expose their already challenged 'nation-building' projects to further attack. The Third World is under threat from 'a syndrome' which has been termed 'McDonaldization', the homogenized, westernized 'world culture' (Hall, 1997:210) as television stations like BTV have to rely heavily on foreign content to fill up their schedules. "[C]ultural exports of the technologically over-developed 'West' weakening and undermining the capacities of ...emerging societies to define their

own ways of life and pace and direction of their development” (Hall, 1997:211). This is where as Kenneth Thompson aptly pointed out, government become torn between media regulation and media 'de-regulation'. The former refers to policies that promote notions of the national interest and citizen participation and the latter to policies that promote market competitiveness (Thompson, 1997: 14).

## Chapter Eight

### The state of democratic communication in Botswana

Raymond Williams (1962, 1976) said about democratic communication that it was “firmly against authoritarian control of what can be said, and against paternal control of what ought to be said” (Williams, 1962, 1976:133). In a true democracy, citizens enjoyed the right to transmit and the right to receive. These were basic rights, and decision making in a democracy ought to happen only after open and adequate public discussion, to which all were free to contribute and the decisions remained open to challenge and review (Williams, 1962, 1976:134). Speaking more directly to the Third World situation, a momentous report to UNESCO by Irish jurist Sean MacBride (1980), reiterated the danger for any government being the sole judge of what people need to know and even less of what they have to say, because no form of indoctrination was without fault (Masmoudi, 1992:35).

The distinction made by Graham Murdock (1982) between financial control and management when dealing with questions of media control was a good starting point for understanding power and control at BTV. The state, the financier, made significant attempts to define how BTV *ought to* operate – in defence of state policies and in praise of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). The producers, journalists and technical management at BTV did not always exploit the significant freedom they enjoyed compared to other countries in the region to the best advantage of their profession. Public debate suffered and so did Botswana’s standing as the beacon of democracy in the continent. Often in Africa, public service broadcasting is reduced to one common denominator, universal access.

The source of funding for public service broadcasters has historically been the strongest challenge against commercial broadcasters. The largest, the BBC, obtains its funds strictly away from advertising. On the other hand, by 2005, SABC received a whopping 85 percent of its income from advertising, and only 3 percent from the government for very specific educational programmes. BTV that often attempted to live up to the model, received 100 percent of its funding from the Botswana government, something John Reith, the first Director General of the BBC would have found an anathema (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005). It became more confusing when Radio Botswana was licensed a public service broadcaster by the NBB and BTV was not, at the end of 2004. It was said that BTA was drafting regulations for the licensing of BTV,<sup>201</sup> but by the end of 2006, BTV was still unlicensed. However, it did not seem that a public broadcasting license had changed anything about the operation of Radio Botswana. There was no evidence of a process of reform to ensure that it worked differently from before it obtained the license. It remained firmly under state ownership and control. There was no political will on the part of the state in Botswana to realise public service broadcasting.

### **Lessons from South Africa**

In neighbouring South Africa, when a newly-democratic Board of the SABC was instituted in 1993, it set about transforming the SABC into a better public service broadcaster. Interestingly, it was the imminent victory of the African National Congress (ANC) in the 1994 elections that led the then ruling National Party (NP) to establish an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) as a matter of urgency in 1993 (Barnett, 1999:281). The Triple Inquiry, established by the IBA Act, launched an investigation into the state of editorial independence at the SABC because they appreciated the fact that 85 percent of South Africans relied on SABC as their main source of News. Bodies such as the Freedom of Expression

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<sup>201</sup> *Botswana Daily News*, 22 December 2004

Institute (FXI) made submissions on better News production, focusing in how best journalists could remain true to stories, not party or racial lines (FXI, 1999).<sup>202</sup> Consultation had its limitations, for although civil society organisations agreed that the SABC should reduce its dependence on advertising revenue as this would compromise its public service broadcasting role, this did not happen. IBA was incorporated into the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) that prescribes specific conditions with regard to programming and quotas for local content (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005).

As in South Africa, the licensing of Radio Botswana into a public service broadcaster should have been accompanied by a shift from state control and censorship towards a redefinition of the role of the state to that of ensuring effective regulation. Changing the role of the state in broadcasting, particularly in developing contexts such as Botswana where there is no vibrant alternative broadcasting is a major risk. Clive Barnett (1999) showed that when the reform process of the SABC reorganising it into commercial business units in 1991, those on the left saw this as a strategy by the state to break up the national public broadcaster and shift responsibility from the state to the market. South Africa was able to put in place important safeguards to ensure that the market did not displace public service broadcasting ethos. In Botswana, the NBB could not in 2005 compel the international pay – per – subscriber television network, MultiChoice Botswana, to meet any local content quota. Local content quotas encourage a variety of programming, sourced not only from abroad, but also from indigenous producers (Teer-Tomaselli, 2004).

Whereas in Botswana, the nation-building role of mass media was understood by the BDP government as constructing a single, overarching national culture of identity, premised on the Tswana dominant culture, in South Africa according to Barnett, policy makers conceptualised it primarily as facilitating processes of

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<sup>202</sup> Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) (1999) Submission to the SABC Board's enquiry into editorial independence and other matters. July 1999. Johannesburg, South Africa.

exchange and dialogue between the different cultural, regional, and linguistic communities (Barnett, 1999:275). The distinction made by Graham Murdock (1982) between financial control and management when dealing with question of media control was a good starting point for understanding power and control at BTV. The state, the financier, made significant attempts to define how BTV *ought to operate* – in defence of state policies and in praise of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). The producers, journalists and technical management at BTV did not always exploit the significant freedom they enjoyed compared to other countries in the region to the best advantage of their profession. Public debate suffered and so did Botswana's standing as the beacon of democracy in the continent.

### **Capitalism, state authoritarianism and communication for democratisation in a global context**

In the Anglo-American media debates, broadcasting is often projected as endangered in the increasingly capitalistic global context. The media is owned by fewer and fewer hands, and audiences bombarded with content that promotes consumerism rather than critical engagement with matters of governance. Hamid Mowlana (1997) pointed out that at the global scale, "the call for equal access to information and resources has been replaced by a worldwide movement towards a market economy and capitalism, headed by the U.S and the E.U" (Mowlana, 1997:8). Third World efforts towards balanced information and communication flows disintegrated. The 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union as a major competitive power made it even more politically and economically difficult for smaller countries to inject themselves into the increasingly global communications (Mowlana, 1997:19). Robert McChesney, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky have also shown how in the U.S, the media was getting richer at the expense of democracy,

Our era rests upon a massive paradox. On the one hand, it is an age of dazzling breakthroughs in communication and information technologies... on the other hand, our era is increasingly depoliticized; traditional notions of civic and political involvement have shrivelled (McChesney, 1999:1-2).

However, writing about a liberal authoritarian and paternalistic state similar to Botswana, Eric Kit-wai Ma (2000) showed how media analysis for such situations as China could not be understood through these same radical Marxist Anglo-American discourses that privileged economic power in media politics. Similar to Botswana, the Chinese state is a bureaucratic regime that maintains its power by legal and administrative means than strong coercive apparatuses. However, the post 1989 China media environment is one of a state-led market transformation. Like the U.S, China also takes advantage of the market by promoting a consumer culture that satisfies social desire, "in China, lively and commercially vibrant media are actually essential to the continued governance of the state" (Kit-wai Ma, 2000).

If political and economic contexts are different between countries, there is a single similarity; citizen participation in important decision-making is suffering across the world as a result of concentration of ownership and control of the media, either in a few corporate magnates or on governments. Voter apathy is a concern in Botswana as it is in the U.S. The 2002 Democracy Research Project under the auspices of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) found that particularly young people and women in Botswana abstained from voting in large numbers.<sup>203</sup> In China and Botswana, state authoritarianism and not purely market concerns was limiting available views, but effectively avoiding what Antonio Gramsci called a 'crisis of authority'. With the help of strong bureaucratic machinery, both governments were able to command a social consensus without having to resort to coercive force to maintain dominance. Chinese state authoritarianism takes advantage of both bureaucratic controls and the market to enhance its

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<sup>203</sup> <http://botswana.fes-international.de/02aPoliticalReforms.htm>

dominance. The Botswana state prefers media state monopoly and has done very little over the forty years of independence to encourage diversity in the local broadcasting landscape. Botswana has a rich national media, with BTV possessing some of the best television technology. Yet BTV, even more than Radio Botswana, does not enjoy editorial independence from government, thereby weakening democracy. Authoritarianism can only for a time, suppress the imminent crisis of democracy that media control eventually will lead to.

Solly Nageng's (1997) rather vulgar Marxist position that, "the media in Botswana, as elsewhere, are an ideological instrument that disseminate the dominant ideas of the ruling class", is to a large extent true. Like many vulgar Marxist postulations though, Nageng did not unpack the said ruling class, it remain undifferentiated and unanimous. Theories of power, such as those by Louis Althusser (1984) on *Ideology*, Antonio Gramsci (1972/1992) on *Hegemony*, have often been applied simplistically to arrive at far reaching conclusions such as that the media is a mere tool of ruling political interests. The ruling elites in Botswana have held differing views of the quality of service of its broadcasters. Cabinet ministers have disagreed about Radio Botswana and the same should be true for BTV. In 1984 during a session of parliament, Cabinet Minister Chapson Butale was to have a heated exchange with the then minister responsible for Radio Botswana. Butale castigated Radio Botswana for being a 'gumba-gumba' service, filled up with foreign bubble gum music and failing to reach out to villages and inform people about useful government programmes. "We dish out a lot of money to connect government to the people...they should interview people out in villages and hear how people feel...[feature] things like roundtable rather and foreign music...it must be traditional" (Botswana Hansard, February 1984:19). The Member of Parliament echoed sentiments similar to those of John Reith when he envisaged the BBC. The rebuttal by Minister Kwelagobe, then the man in charge of broadcasting was very protective of his department. "Radio Botswana is a vulnerable condition, they don't have cupboards to hide their mistakes, if they make a mistake, that mistake will be

known in a matter of minutes or hours, but [for other departments] mistakes are stuffed in drawers and cupboards...I am the type of person, if you criticize my department and I know there is no malice in it, I admit it...there are some people who are ready to jump on criticizing other people's departments whilst theirs are also in a mess" (Botswana Hansard, February 1984:24).

Local content in the understanding of Members of Parliament back in 1984 was interviews with people in all parts of Botswana about how policies are applied, how they are affecting them and how they can get involved particularly in agricultural policies. In the words of an Honourable Peter Mmusi, "radio, an information department in a developing country is a very important instrument of development" (Botswana Hansard, February 1984). By development, particularly in these early days of Botswana's economic success story was a top-down paternalistic dishing out of resources especially to farmers through programmes such as Services to Livestock Owners in Communal Areas (SLOCA) and the Agriculture Arable Land Development Programme (ALDEP). Much debate occurred in Botswana regarding government's efforts to modernize agriculture. Many of the efforts did not success as they had failed at inception to involve the beneficiaries. In effect, political leaders in Botswana expected of mass media to earn them support from the electorate (Botswana Hansard, February 1984).

The link between media or more broadly communication and development is a tenuous one. Development has meant different things at different epochs; from civilizing or modernizing presumably backward communities (Boadu, 1981), to cultural imperialism of the Third World by developed economies (Schramm, 1981), to participatory engagement between citizens and development agencies (Servaes, 2002). Jan Servaes (2002:275) warned that there is no one way to understand the link and that "the attempt by local power elites to totally control modern communication channels – press, broadcasting, education and bureaucracy – no longer ensures ... support of controlling forces, nor for any mobilization around their objectives, nor effective repression of opposition".

## Youth and Africa's second liberation struggles: Unpacking the 2001 Botswana National Policy on Culture

Edwin Wilmsen (1988) showed that, from around 1843 to the turn of the 20th century, some Tswana chiefs, especially of the Bangwato and Kwena, and later Tawana, were able to recruit other small disparate ethnic groups including the San, Bakgakagadi, Pedi, Kaa, and others into a critical mass and consolidate their position from the periphery to almost uncontested dominance in the region. Through methods like *kgamelo* or *mafisa*, of systematic dispossession and mortgaging of assets of the poorer ethnic groups like cattle, Tswana chiefs established the formative stages of Botswana's modern state (Wilmsen, 1988:). However, it was the first President of Botswana and heir of the Bangwato chieftainship, Sir Seretse Khama that championed the nation-building project in the early independence period. Khama spoke at many forums about the need for *kagisano*, unity among local cultures to Botswana's future. One of his famous statements, made at a BDP conference in Francistown in 1972 was,

Our aspirations, our goals, our politics, our principles must be identified and expressed in terms, which our people understand. This means that we must build them on the foundations provided by Botswana's culture and by Botswana's values and traditions.<sup>204</sup>

From the point of nation-building, culture was seen by the state as central to the imagining of citizenship, so that the people of Botswana seem themselves as glued together by a shared "Botswana's culture" (NPC, 2001). Nationalism, referred to as 'culture', by Khama, dominated the early independence years, but as in other parts of Africa, nationalism was soon to be overtaken by national development plans and policies that concentrated more on infrastructure and modernizing the then predominantly rural economy (Nyamnjoh, 2002). Botswana was not unique in the growing relegation of 'culture' as nationalist slogans of de-

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<sup>204</sup> Foreword of the Botswana National Policy on Culture (NPC), Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, approved by Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2001 – Directive No. CAB 17/2001.

colonization were replaced by growth the many failed attempts to economic development. Perhaps as a result of this failure, the late 1980s witnessed what Francis Nyamnjoh and others often referred to as the second wave of liberation struggle, of obsession with belonging and questions of ethnic identity (Nyamnjoh, 2002). In the case of Botswana, the 1990s saw unprecedented panic, about moral and cultural decay among both traditional and political elites. Culture re-emerged, and came back to the centre, hence the drawing of a National Policy on Culture (NPC) in 2001. /x

Encounters with other cultures, the policy document laments, may enrich or weaken the indigenous cultural values and social norms, hence the need for the development and stimulation of the national culture which will undoubtedly endow the people of this land with the capacity for selective assimilation of cultural values, norms and practices from foreign lands (NPC, 2001:6). The main objective of the policy is thus to facilitate a strategy for building the fragmenting and fragmented nation and forge a Botswana identity that is distinct from other nations before it is too late (NPC, 2001: foreword).

The policy document operates rather uneasily on two notions of culture; as ideal and idealized commonly held indigenous repertoires or stock of knowledge that all the citizens of Botswana ought to know and as certain artistic performances and practices. The first notion, strongly connected to the idea of nation building, calls on mainly the youth, to find their way back to traditional institutions for 'enculturation' and 'cultural transmission'. The document acknowledged indirectly that it however does not exist and would have to be invented. To start the process of inventing nationhood, the policy draws on dead and dying institutions of the dominant ethnic majority native Setswana speaking groups. The policy speaks of diversity and yet shows a clear bias towards dominant Tswana cultures, making their repertoire such as bogosi, mephato, bojale, bogwera, meila, patlo, bogadi, seem commonly shared. As a result, the policy document is itself a weapon of cultural imperialism and parochialism, entrenching not only /x

prescriptions of what culture ought to be, but also inequalities in the ownership of whatever it is that could become 'Botswana's culture' is. Not enough effort has been made in the policy document to reflect Botswana's cultural diversity or to draw from it.

The second notion is that of culture as a set of very few practices, mainly artistic but also found in traditional medicine. Culture becomes mainly an activity, epitomized in cultural festivals, song and dance, traditional and contemporary music and arts. Interesting about this perspective about culture is the need the policy identifies; of commoditizing this aspect of culture. The emphasis is on 'packaging' cultural activities for the market as part of the 'Buy Botswana' initiative that started in the 1980s. Section 5.6 goes "Assert our own cultural values, publicise and popularize our cultural products both nationally and internationally through vigorous and varied programmes of artistic performance and marketing" (NPC, 2001:08). This would be done by among other things 'providing training for cultural practitioners... [with] skills to produce cultural goods and services which can be exchanged for cash'.

Paradoxically, it is not the performers of 'culture' in this second use that are named the 'key role players' by the policy document. These are instead noted as the Central Government, Botswana National Cultural Council, local authorities – it does not say who these are, *diKgosi* – the Chiefs, and Non Governmental Organizations. The 'performers' of culture themselves, who appear to be mainly perceived to be the youth; local artists, creators, writers and the media, are only referred to as key targets of funding, educations and marketing by the policy.

Emerging from the policy document is the tension gripping developing nations in the arena of culture, between the youth, undeniably the performers of culture, and the 'key role players', its custodians. They youth may perform culture, but they are obviously not to be trusted to preserve it, hence the need for more 'authoritarian' key role players in this highly endangered sphere called culture.

This I suggest, encapsulates the paternalistic official policy in Botswana about citizens; they are not decision makers, but rather, recipients of whatever goodies the government has in store for them. The government is Santa Claus, and they the children. The need for custodians of culture who are not the youth themselves, and more specifically, the identification of 'traditional' institutions that embodied culture is very interesting. DiKgosi, the traditional chiefs, are intensified as key on the preservation of culture. In fact, the modern state machinery, having stripped them of much of their traditional powers via its institutions such as the courts, the police, the army, Parliament and the Presidency, has relegated them to simply being the custodians of culture. The documents identify them together with dying and dead traditional institutions such as *mephato* (tasks forces made of males of the same age groups), *bogwera* – initiation ceremonies for boys) and *bojale* – for girls.

The discourse of youth as the main targets of cultural imperialism rather than agents for cultural production is pervasive. A study done by Blake Lloyd and Julia Mendez (2001) for example on Botswana Adolescents' Interpretation of American Music Videos, concluded rather uncritically that although a significant number of adolescents in the capital city of Botswana, more than two thirds, had access to television, and spent a substantial amount of time each week watching American videos, adolescents from Botswana seemed to perceive images on the surface, lacking a deeper understanding of culturally specific language and symbol usage. This statement makes it seem as if it were to be expected that they did, when the adolescents in fact were not, beyond watching American television, a part of the American society and therefore not to be expected to 'deeply understand' a language and symbol use that was culturally specific to America. New communication technologies such as television appear to be giving younger generations a platform to be both custodians and performers of culture.

## **At the deep-end: Women and the birth of Botswana Television**

Women made a tremendous output towards the media as we know it in Botswana. Rare in Africa where women remain at the margins of decision-making, the birth of BTV was unique. According a study by *Gender Links* in collaboration with MISA, the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), done in 12 SADC countries during September 2002, there is "evidence that women are both under-represented and portrayed in limited roles in the News".<sup>205</sup> In Botswana, the study showed that BTV included more women sources than other broadcasters, Radio Botswana and Gabz FM. It also beat local Newspapers like the *Botswana Daily News*, *The Voice*, and *Mmegi*. Women more than men, made News relating to their relationship status, such as wife, mother, daughter. They also spoke more about issues affecting children, gender violence and HIV/AIDS than sports, politics or development. The percentage of women journalists at BTV stood at 48 percent, higher than the regional average of 38 percent. Radio Botswana, at 41 percent also had twice the number of women journalists compared to the regional average of 22 percent (GMBS, 2002).

Even in the United States, by 1988 it was 'still being debated whether a woman's voice could hold the nations' attention in the anchor position on the CBS Evening News', (Sanders and Rock, 1988; Lafky, 1995). Television was a new powerful medium in Botswana, very political and little understood, but women were at the helm of it. Producing was crude and learned by rote. Besides two people, none of the first crop of producers had done any audio visual production. Those that had, had only ever done video production, never television production. The same was for other portfolios such as directing, editing, camera, and script writing. All producers had never been assistant producers, directors that had never worked under any director, editors that had never been editing assistants. BTV programme production was both pioneering and gambling with the reputation of

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<sup>205</sup> Gender Links, [http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page.php?p\\_id=236](http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page.php?p_id=236)

the Station. At the beginning of 2001, about five months since it had gone on air, a newly appointed Director of the Department, Sesinyi, was convinced the station should have not gone on air when it did, especially looking at the in-house programmes offering.

Despite the many mistakes and challenges, BTV became a national phenomenon largely because of the courage of women. From interviews with them, women at BTV had to keep the station running in spite of the chaos that the project was right from the beginning. Felicitus Mashungwa and later Kitso Mosieman had to self-teach the role of a Channel Controller, often with very little guidance. Matida Mmipi was de facto Assignment Editor for the Newsroom in the first three years of the station. Mpho Kgosidintsi, and now Polly Mosate procured both local and foreign content for the station, often dealing with tedious tendering processes and the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board. Lerato Ntuara and Maggie Mabechu made sure the schedule was filled up on a daily bases and on time. Ntuara at some stage also did News reading and Mabechu continuity presenting on top of their other responsibilities. Keneilwe Segopolo, Doreen Moapare and Mosetsanagape Maribe were some of the first reporters, producers and editors of the BTV Newsroom, defining the roles for those that came later.

In 2003, much to her own surprise, Mosieman was redeployed to Channel Controller, a very demanding position which in the beginning she had no idea what it entailed. She learnt through many mistakes and although she continued to learn new things, had grown more confident about what she was doing. She called it the last and most crucial point of gate-keeping. It is the final point for self-censorship, for once programmes go on air, the station has to wait for the public and government reaction. Everything that goes on air at BTV is ultimately the responsibility of the Channel Controller, both foreign and local content. The schedule has to be well balanced, correct content for the targeted audience, which also has possibility of attracting advertising. Mosieman had to prevent a presenter of children's programme from appearing in an advert of a brewery. She

had to prevent a xenophobic public information advert going on air. A Channel Controller decides that fate of both in-house and externally sourced programmes, particularly if they do not comply with official state policy on certain issues. The station was also instructed to cut down the number of times First Peoples of the Kalahari activist, Roy Sesana appeared on BTV. The deported former University of Botswana Politics Professor Kenneth Good appearing together with Roy Sesana in a documentary could not be allowed on air. Some of her decisions were not well received by the producers. At one point, Mosieman was assaulted by one of the BTV producers. Channel Control also covers imaging and branding of the station, commissioning, archiving, and in-house productions (Interview with Mosieman, 2006).

Felicitus Mashungwa was Head of News and Current Affairs at Radio Botswana and was redeployed to the position of Channel Controller for BTV. In 2003, there was a major reshuffling of staff between the Departments of Information Services and Broadcasting Services. Mashungwa was moved from Channel Control to Head of News and Current Affairs when Norman Patlakwe was relocated to the newly established section of Public Affairs in the Department of Information Services. Mashungwa was not happy with the re-deployment, but in her new position, she started to establish a working system in the Newsroom. She began by giving all editors a chance to act as assignment editors so that the best at the job could be recommended to take up the substantive position. Bureaucracy was to give the position on an acting capacity to the longest serving member of the Newsroom who had previous experience from Radio Botswana against Mashungwa's recommendation. Mashungwa was the last substantive Head of BTV News and Current Affairs for the next two years. During her tenure, the Newsroom was better organized. She reduced the amount of overtime claims by introducing a shift system. The system for leave days was also better administered. BTV News coverage of political campaigns in the run up to the 2004 elections was less restrained. BTV organized two live public campaigns bringing together all the political parties (Interview with Mashungwa, 2004),

although the debates were never to go on the scale originally planned.<sup>206</sup> At the beginning of 2005, there was once again a reshuffling exercise that took her back to Radio Botswana. A reporter, Badumedi Matsetse said in 2006 that the BTV Newsroom had become a mess,

About the News room here in Gaborone, the structure looks dilapidated. We used to have assignment desk, but it is now defunct and no communication to reporters has been given. It is a struggle to go to a story, one has to follow and literally beg camera section and transport for help. It is so unprofessional (Matsetse, email, 2006).

Phetlhu in particular can be celebrated for pioneering local television content in Botswana, both in-house and commissioned. When the BBC came, she was made the first Head of Production. She headed and guided the production team on the first generation of in-house productions. Many of producers had no previous experience in television and although they had great ideas, needed close assistance to bring the ideas into practicable programmes. Phetlhu later became the first woman General Manager of the station, taking over at a very turbulent period of the station. Oshinka Tsiang took over from Simon Higman as the first local to be General Manager. Tsiang was pushed to resign from the position in 2002 amidst allegations that he was pro-opposition parties. Simon Moilwa took over until his untimely death in May 2003, and Phetlhu was appointed on an acting capacity. Her two year reign, the longest anyone had served in the position since the birth of BTV, was marred by allegations of corruption from local independent producers and lack of editorial freedom.

In 2006, she was basically demoted from Acting General Manager of BTV to a Principal Officer in a different government department of Sports and Recreation. In spite of the hard work she invested in the birth of BTV, some colleagues, local producers and some political leaders had successfully cast suspicion on her

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<sup>206</sup> *Botswana Guardian*, 15 October 2004

ability to run the station. When interviewed, Phetlhu listed a number of achievements she was proud of. She had developed a Commissioning Strategy from scratch. She travelled abroad and within the region, learning from among others the Canadian Banff Film and Television Festival, SABC, the Copperbelt regional channel of the Zambian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. Phetlhu appreciated the unique position that BTV was at; a free to air channel where there was no advertising industry or local television production industry. The station had to cope without trained personnel, but had to find its niche in the regional economy of television production. Efforts to commission had previously failed, but she was able to successfully lead the first round of commissioning in 2004. Ten million pula (USD2 million) worth of locally produced programmes successfully went on air between 2005 and 2006, and every penny could be accounted for. She was replaced by another woman with a wealth of experience in radio broadcasting, Banyana Segwe.

In the main, women in media practice in Botswana have consistently shown resilience in the face of aggressive patriarchal cultures in the country. Radio Botswana has for a long time produced programmes targeting women such as *Tsa bo mmaetsho* – women's corner, and *Tsa boitekanelo*, on primary health care. Yet gender blind reporting, blatant and subtle stereotyping of women remain as some of the challenges facing the media in southern Africa. In conjunction with MISA, Gender Links carried out a gender and media baseline study (GMBS) 2002 in SADC countries. The study revealed that overall women made only 17 percent of News compared to 83 percent for men. Women were visible in the media mostly as presenters and reporters. They were however very vocal on gender equality, gender based violence and HIV/AIDS issues.

A Botswana version of the study showed that women's views and voices were grossly underrepresented in the Botswana media, including BTV. Women constituted only 16 percent of News sources. BTV had the highest proportion of women sources at 24 percent. Radio Botswana only had 11 percent women

sources. In comparison with other countries in the region, where women in the media workplace feature mostly as presenters, at BTV 48 percent of reports were from women. Electronic media in Botswana also seemed to be biased towards youthfulness. The majority of BTV journalists fell within the age category of 20-34 years, very few in the 35-49 category and none in the 50-64 categories.<sup>207</sup> Other countries in the region such as South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe have had media women association for some time, but in Botswana, the Botswana Women in Media Association (BOMWA) was only launched in 2003.<sup>208</sup>

### **BTV and communication for democratisation**

From preceding chapters, it became apparent that although the state in Botswana did persistently attempt to control the media, ultimately, it was the personnel of mass media institutions that by their day to day decisions, defined role of the media towards or against development. From the Newsroom to *TalkBack* to the commissioning process, BTV undertook to define its role in the development of Botswana. News contributed sometimes in a small way but sometimes in important ways to public policy. *TalkBack* sought to set the agenda for effective communication about HIV/AIDS. The commissioning process sought to develop an 'independent' local film and television production industry. In the process, local media managers were often caught in local politics of power and control.

The Newsroom was first guided by Chris Bishop to define itself. Bishop was to leave under allegations of state interference in his work and that of the Newsroom. From that point on, working in the Newsroom was to be a test of wits; to succumb to the ill-defined state control or not to. One manager quit because it was hard to know where the buck stopped; another argued her allegiance was first to the profession of journalism and yet another justified the arm of the state

<sup>207</sup> <http://www.misa.org/gmbs/botswanareport.pdf>  
<sup>208</sup> <http://usembassy.state.gov/botswana/pr120503.html>

as gate keeping. Eventually all the middle management of the Newsroom until 2005 had left it under some kind of pressure, redeployed to other departments and sections or all together quit the Department of Broadcasting. The Newsroom at BTV will continue for a foreseeable future to battle for legitimacy and to battle to circumvent hegemonic tendencies; whatever they may be at every disjuncture.

*TalkBack* presented a different kind of power dynamic. Its subject matter being HIV/AIDS and its audience being teachers and students, *TalkBack* was never under a state directed crisis of hegemony. The Ministry of Education was an important partner, but through its bureaucratic machinery, not by direct instructions on editorial content from the Minister of Education. It was perhaps the best educational programme that BTV ever had, taking advantage of the new communication technologies such as short message texting to interact with its audiences. When producers are not under constant purview from state power, it is possible to look beyond structural challenges of hegemony to discern producer subject relations.

The commissioning process gave BTV a leverage to be the locus of power. The commissioning editor, the channel controller, the general manager and the tender evaluation committee made decisions that made and broke hopeful local producers. A very high standard of programmes was expected from the inexperienced local production houses. Producers were left with little choice but to venture into partnerships with more experienced South African production companies like Ochre Media. Local producers continue to wait for the next commissioning morsel from the broadcaster, which has been delayed by allegations of corruption in the first round.

The procurement of content, from the local and the international market was yet another locus of power for the broadcaster. It was a platform that it could use to make its mark towards the development of Botswana. It became a platform to frustrate the ambitions of the local producers. Very few local productions were

licensed in the five years that the station had been operating. Under Phelthu, local producers were in a way expected to meet the standards of neighbouring broadcasters like SABC and ETV. As already noted, Press Secretary to the President Jeff Ramsay said that cheap productions from America and the United Kingdom were on the other hand tolerated by BTV.

African journalists, producers and independent television and film producers operate partly by their professional training, the dictates of institutions they work for, and the cultural capital of the societies they exist within. In the particular context of Botswana, where institutions that should protect the media from government control are either absent or weak, universal ideals were often not enough. Media practitioners were more likely to find support in the local discourses, repertoires and cultures that call upon all, regardless of status, to tolerate opposition. Once evoked, *kgotla* and similar metaphors commanded all, including political leaders, if they wished to claim affinity to the national to observe them. Failure to do so was tantamount to 'losing one's culture', worse, being 'neo-colonialist', and a traitor to the imagined shared Botswana community (Kerr, 2001).

### **Indigenising theory: The *kgotla* meets the state, television and freedom of expression.**

'Indigenizing' theory for the particular context of Southern Africa and the Third World is a necessity (Tomaselli and Dunn, 2001). Particularly the media in Africa, has to be understood within Africa's unique history with colonialism, capitalism, race and racism, nationalism, democracy, one partyism, ethnicity, patriarchy, civic participation, indigenous knowledges, gender, and the global flow of communication. At turn of the century, the project to de-westernize media studies, and de-parochialise universalistic observation of the media based on Western media experiences was revived (Curran and Park, 2000). Western theories of the media are mainly premised on media-state relations in a largely

de-regulated environment. In Botswana, the divide between the state and national media is less clear. BTV and other national media are state-owned.

Beyond political economy questions, it is increasingly being recognised that media practice by Africans cannot totally be understood from Western perspectives of the trade. Louise Bourgault (1995) highlighted the fact that 'the media in Black Africa or sub Saharan Africa were unique because in no other region of the world had peoples been so quickly shifted from face-to-face communication to electronic communication (Bourgault, 1995:2). To indigenize theory does not mean to ignore important contributions that have been made by critical theorists from the West. It is an acceptance that, while useful, they are simply inadequate – populations in Africa post colonialism, post apartheid and post the Cold War live within an entirely different set of worldviews and cosmologies, histories, and cultural and political experiences (Tomaselli, Muller and Shepperson, 1996:xii). Jurgen Habermas was committed to the removal of restrictions on communication as the basis of an ideal future society. His critical departure from Karl Marx was that communicative action (speech acts or equivalent nonverbal expressions), more than purposive-rational action (work), if left to occur undistorted, could bring about a rational society (Ritzer, 1996:293-294). With the origin of stock markets, postal services and routine production of News, communication became channelled mainly to the needs of merchants rather than for a participating public. Very soon after, the press was systematically made to serve the interests of the state, forever displacing a former vibrant public sphere of face-to-face undistorted communication. Late seventeenth and early nineteenth century Paris and London was, according to Habermas, the golden age of an unfettered public sphere that was more representative of the mood of the public. Private individuals, middle class males, read News sheets and Newspapers and met as equals at salons and coffee houses, to openly discuss issues of public concern, and could criticise the actions of government through face-to-face open debate. Privatisation of mass media had displaced this sense of communal mutual responsibility with politically

calculated public spectacles that manipulated public opinion. The majority of the population was now excluded from public debate (Habermas, 1989).

To the extent that Habermas locates the possibility of a healthy public life on the availability of reciprocal speech – unconstrained communication where citizens can critically interrogate the state, his project has universal appeal. Also, by observing how media historically came to serve vested interests, his project has universal appeal. In the specific case of Botswana, where there traditionally existed a space of face-to-face interface between ordinary citizens and the political leadership, Habermas' nostalgic gaze at Europe of old has a strong resonance with traditional forms of public debate in Botswana at the *kgotla*. The *kgotla* transcended the ideal type public sphere remembered by Habermas. At the *kgotla*, not only men of property, but commoners also came face-to-face with their leadership. There was direct interface between the public, albeit the male public, and decision making,

All matters of public policy are dealt with finally at an assembly open to all men of the tribe, and variously termed *pitso*, *lebatla*, or *phutego*, Such assemblies are held very frequently, at times almost weekly, and they usually meet early in the morning in the tribal council-place, close to the chief's residence. Normally only the men present in the capital attended, the business discussed and decisions reached are communicated, if necessary, to the inhabitants of outlying villages through their headmen...Since everyone present is entitled to speak, the tribal council provides a ready means of ascertaining public opinion. The decisions reached are generally those already formulated by the chief and his personal advisers, who because of their standing are able to persuade the others to support them, but it is not unknown for their wishes to be overruled. The discussions are characterised by considerable freedom of speech, and, if the occasion seems to call for it, the chief or his advisers may even be severely criticised (Maudeni, 2004a:620).

In the case of BTV, which only started in the age of direct satellite broadcasting, in no other epoch did a service skip that many technological stages. Yet compared to many African countries, Botswana appeared by many international measurements, to be doing very well in terms of its democracy. In the specific case of Botswana, several perspectives have been offered to explain why Botswana was able to succeed where many other African countries failed. As shown in chapter one, the most common explanation has been to liken Botswana to developmental states of Asia and Latin America. The state in Botswana is presented as benevolent, transforming material lives of people, protecting human rights and practicing political democracy through policy intervention (Edge, 1998; Tsie, 1998; Maundeni, 2004a). An increasingly popular postulation is that, the modern state emerged out an ancient kgotla tradition, which compelled political leaders to rule by consent from their publics. David Kerr (2001) and Deidre Donnelly (2001) argue that in order to understand the way that media practioners in African contexts are straddling the tension between western liberal demands and values, and the cultural capital on which they are subjectively positioned. They both suggested that it was important to examine indigenous structures of communication in Africa, and in the case of Botswana, the tradition of kgotla.

Whereas Habermas saw mass media as the enemy to a past golden age of a healthy public sphere, Zibani Maundeni (2004a), was more optimistic about change. Habermas argued that, what we got from contemporary media was all staged, non of it reflected public opinion, so that mass media re-feudalised, cancelled out the strides that had been made to bring in the era of open rational debate among equals. Mass media was taking society backwards, to the feudal period of 'feudal courts' and other spectacles. Maundeni on the other hand sought to show how, the kgotla – a feudal structure, had revitalised, not re-feudalised the public sphere, particularly the civic culture. The kgotla – both in its physical actual form, and as a symbol of ancient tolerant local political cultures of Botswana were drawn from to explore home-grown alternatives to blue prints

borrowed from other cultures. The tradition of the kgotla, is placed in this chapter, at the heart of the modicum of the freedom, limited as it was, that BTV enjoyed, especially in its early days.

### **The kgotla and new sites of cultural production: a counter hegemonic discourse**

*'Mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe'* – all opinion expressed at the kgotla is precious, and *'mmualebe o bua la gagwe'* – even a discordant opinion has a right to be heard. Yet another local proverb goes, *kgosi ke kgosi ke batho*; a chief obtains his authority from the people. These resonate with Western cornerstones of a modern democracy; of majority rule and pluralism. In the post-independence period, the kgotla was appropriated both a site of romanticism and critique. It took on the modernization process in its stride. As modern Botswana negotiated its nationhood, the kgotla often provided the meeting point between tradition and modernity. The kgotla tradition and form took in newer forms of mediation such as print, radio and television and Internet to further its own agendas. In the 21st century, the kgotla was integral in direct and indirect ways to most contemporary spheres of conversation and decision making, from boardrooms to classrooms to Internet communities to mass media communication. University of Botswana Internet community, and the e-dumela Botswana Internet community for students at tertiary level, among others, directly referred to the tenets of the kgotla as guiding principles of their output. Media, independent or government-owned and controlled also drew from the kgotla, besides the conventional norms and ethics of journalism and cultural production. It also advanced these platforms. Very often they threatened to render it obsolete.

The very proliferation of new sites of cultural production rendered the kgotla an increasingly necessary gatekeeper of what 'culture' is. The Botswana National

Policy on Culture (NPC)<sup>209</sup> for instance, placed it at the centre for the 'promotion, protection and preservation of culture' (NPC, 2001:32), and as the grass root authority on culture. DiKgosi – traditional chiefs, were charged among other things with the responsibility of "maintaining the environment of peace and democracy through the promotion of participation and tolerance at grassroots by men, women and youth through the concept of '*mmualebe*', and preservation of the kgotla system" (NPC, 2001:33). The NPC revealed a developing nation's struggle to balance between the global and the local, between modernity and tradition, culture and technology, the future and the past, the youth and the elders. The kgotla came out in the NPC, as both a site of cultural production and the site for preservation and protection of cultural capital. The NPC operated rather uneasily on two notions of cultural capital; as an ideal and idealized set of commonly held indigenous repertoires that all citizens of Botswana ought to share and as an arena of artistic performances and practices. The first notion, strongly connected to the idea of nation building, called on mainly the youth, to find their way back to traditional institutions for 'enculturation' and 'cultural transmission' (NPC, 2001).

Towards 'preserving, protecting and promoting' culture, the policy called on the nation to recall local discourses such as the kgotla, diKgosi – chiefs, *mephato* – age regiments, *bojale* – adolescent girls initiation schools, *bogwera* - adolescent boys initiation schools, *meila* – negatively sanctioned social norms (NPC, 2001:33). The policy tended to privilege institutions and repertoires of the dominant majority *Setswana* speaking groups perhaps at the expense of the multiple other rich idioms and philosophies from the diverse cultures in Botswana that could contribute to enriching the national cultural capital.

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<sup>209</sup> National Policy on Culture (NPC) put in place in 2001 by the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, approved by Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2001 – Directive No. CAB 17/2001

## Romanticising the kgotla

By its rootedness in the past and culture, the kgotla had the possibility of better harnessing a sensibility towards respects oppositional voices than 'foreign' constructions. Besides the kgotla, other texts from the local cultural capital could also be invoked, such as *maitseo* and *botho* – respect and humaneness towards elders, for a better media environment in Botswana. A trap often encountered in looking at traditions to understand the present, is a tendency to romanticise and sometimes even exaggerate its contribution. This was apparent in Habermas' lamenting of the dearth of the public sphere. Traditions are often held sacred and benevolent. Maundeni went on so much as to argue that, the kgotla tradition of open non confrontational discussion was so entrenched in modern Botswana that the state, media and community were united in their disdain for the very uncultured 'street encounters'. He opposed suggestion by Ian Taylor (2002:8) that "the Botswana government has exhibited highly undemocratic tendencies to portray those organs of civil society it deemed beyond its control as foreign stooges, and has not been shy to play the race card against any foreign supporters of civil society in adversarial relationship with Gaborone (Maundeni, 2004a:621)". True to Taylor's observation, Maundeni went on to argue that a Survival International (SI) campaign outside the Botswana High Commission in London in 2001 was violent and could not enjoy 'moral and media support' locally. "The staging of street encounters by Survival International fundamentally misunderstands the country's political culture, in which criticism in each other's presence is highly regarded and passionately promoted by the civil society, state, and the media" (Maundeni, 2004a:621). SI was protesting against Botswana diamonds that they claimed were not going towards development but genocide of the San peoples. By Maundeni's own admission, taking to the street was not unknown in Botswana, but in order to demonstrate that the West did not always have to be the point of reference on democratic discourses, he tended to exaggerate the possibility of local indigenous alternatives. Suddenly Botswana's

myriad of civil society organisations and mass media were all swept under the same carpet with state hegemonic discourses.

P.T. Mgadla (1998) was more reserved in his praise of the kgotla – “before taking major decisions...the chief had to consult his advisers...but history is replete with Batswana leaders who designatedly deviated from it. There were leaders who were autocratic, who did not consult, and who attempted to solve problems of the polity single-handedly (Mgadla, 1998:9-10). History repeats itself. Like any practice, the kgotla came under immense pressure as postcolonial realities of contradictory capitalist development began to challenge the cultural moral fabric of the Botswana state and the media. The kgotla was not an unproblematic space, it was both progressive and exclusionary. Like the kgotla, BTV and most forums of ‘open debate’, were gendered spaces. Issues pertaining to indigenous minorities, children and women enjoyed much less visibility compared to male dominated arenas of party politics and sports. Men made most of the News bulletin. Even Internet communities that regard themselves as kgotla tend to be male dominated.

However, the kgotla tradition often transcended particular individuals’ views and attitudes towards open debate. As an indigenous discourse for freedom of expression and by its rooted-ness in ‘local culture’, the kgotla has often been evoked metaphorically to harness a sensibility among political leaders and a kind of moral obligation towards respect for oppositional voices. All called together to this forum, including political leaders, if they also wish to claim affinity to ‘our national culture’ were inherently trapped between restricting freedom of expression in cultural production and legitimizing and rationalizing their actions within a cultural framework. Once kgotla traditions of tolerance were evoked, failure to observe them was tantamount to ‘losing one’s culture’, worse, being ‘neo-colonialist’, a traitor to the imagined shared Botswana community (Kerr, 2001). At the kgotla, even Presidents came not just as first citizens, but also as ‘traditional’ and ordinary ‘children’ born and bred in *Setswana* cultures. A

government-owned television did not have the same leverage to approach the President other than as the first citizen. At a kgotla meeting, ordinary people, especially if they are older than the President, expected him to tolerate open criticism, which BTV could hardly expect. Minister of Science, Communication and technology, Legal Advisor to the President or acting General Manager of BTV could try to limit debate or close discussion, just in the way that some diKgosi and *malope a kgosing* – the Chief's right hand persons historically did. This has never stopped the kgotla from favouring open debate, to the extent that inequitable access to the forum permitted. For its repertoire of culturally entrenched written and oral traditions, the kgotla had the most potential to escape censorship by state power in the manner that other new forms of media could not. For this reason, it was also quite possible that for as long as newer spheres of cultural production aligned their roles closely to that of the kgotla, they could better stretch the tight economy of freedom of expression in Botswana by the State. They stood a better chance by calling on the kgotla, to be more effective public spheres. The kgotla could be the source of their re-vitalisation.

### **BTV and invoking the kgotla**

A national broadcaster, in the view of former Acting General Manager of BTV, Kesholofetse Phetlhu was that Botswana's journalism needed to reflect qualities of a well behaved and well rounded child in its dealing with senior government officials. It had to show respect at all times. Phetlhu felt that journalists such as Outsa Mokone, a local private Newspaper journalist renowned for his fearless reporting, needed to show respect to elders. Her guiding principle as she went about her work was the way she has been brought up in her family, to respect elders. In her opinion, the attitude of a journalist to authority reflected their bad up-bringing. They at BTV were guided by *botho* more than anything else, she said. "We are moral beings, from birth," after all, Phetlhu insisted.

The kgotla has traditionally encouraged opposing views. For this reason, decision-making forums of every scale in Botswana were often rich with proverbs about freedom of expression, drawing from the kgotla tradition. BTV, as with other spheres of conversation and decision making in Botswana, appropriated the kgotla in ways that were at the same time oppressive, instrumentalist, paternalistic as they were liberating, open-minded and progressive. The kgotla was at once as an emblem of freedom of expression and of constraint and unequal access. In the absence of legally protected editorial independence and an independent broadcasting regulator between the state and BTV, it was apparent that such a 'traditional' 'shared' metaphor as the kgotla contributed significantly to provide the checks and balances against covert disregard of dissent and difference. Without the kgotla metaphor, editorial control of media content by the state of the media it owned could have been worse. Although section 12 of the Constitution of Botswana provided for freedom of expression, government media policy was not as transformative as policies for social welfare programmes. Nor could BTV could rely on protections found in Western discourses of freedom of the media. It was daunted instead by oppressive state apparatus – legal and hegemonic, that pushed journalists and producers towards self-censorship. Without a supportive traditional discourse that celebrated tolerance towards oppositional opinion and open debate to fall back on, the task of cultural production for BTV would be much more difficult.

For BTV, starting off with the best technology and the least trained human resource, studio talk shows were a must right from the beginning. Besides two commissioned dramas and a documentary series that were aired between 2005 and 2006, BTV local content comprised mainly of studio-based programmes. Talk shows brought people into discussion, and this misled a Botswana political scientist, Zibani Maundeni (2004b) to assume that they were an 'enormous contribution... to participatory democracy' in Botswana (Maundeni, 2004b:48). Jean Seaton's response to such misplaced optimism was to warn that 'some

groups – stronger and richer, and with better access – are always able to secure more attention than others” (Seaton, 1997:1).

Botswana Television invoked the *kgotla* as its metaphor for open debate and the philosophy behind some of its content. “Programming is based on and aims at reflecting the democratic tradition of Botswana by adhering to the principle of balanced reporting, showing both sides of the story and adhering to objectivity,”<sup>210</sup> according to a former director of the station. The weekly studio debates on politics and governance in particular emulate the ideals of the *kgotla*. *Matlhoaphage*, a political match between the ruling party and opposition parties was intended to expose Botswana's politicians and their party manifestos to citizens as a way of enhancing political awareness.<sup>211</sup> ‘*Matlhoaphage*’ is part of a *Setswana* proverb that translates to the necessity of direct confrontation in resolving issues. *The Eye*, carried similar intentions as *Matlho-a-phage*. In fact they both drew from the literal eye as an optical organ to emphasise face-to-face communication as well as seeing for oneself. The now defunct *Mmualebe* – the programme that gets you talking, was a 30-minute studio-based discussion that aimed to get people to discuss mainly social issues of governance and politics. *Mmualebe o bua la gagwe* is a *Setswana* proverb that loosely translates to there being no right or wrong opinion in the *kgotla*, as encapsulated the concept of democracy, which the country is renowned for.<sup>212</sup>

A lesser invoked tenet of the *kgotla*, *mo laa kgosi o a bo a itaela* – those that encourage tyranny of a *kgosi* – the chief, do so at their own peril, might be useful for calling the government towards a less stifling position vis-à-vis the media it owns. It could serve as a reminder for a government currently in power that, a culture of fear it instils in the media can and will work against it if it ceases to be in power, and future governments are likely to follow the same tradition. In 2003, the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology that BTV undertook a

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<sup>210</sup> [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from\\_the\\_director.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from_the_director.html)

<sup>211</sup> [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/local\\_programmes\\_matlho\\_a\\_phage.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/local_programmes_matlho_a_phage.html)

<sup>212</sup> [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/local\\_programmes\\_mmualebe.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/local_programmes_mmualebe.html)

decision that BTV would desist from covering political rallies. The reason advanced was that the station did not have enough resources to give all political parties equal coverage. Since then, in the words of a leader of one of opposition parties; the station became red. Red is the official colour of the ruling party. BTV is to always cover public meetings attended by the President and Vice-President meetings. In the run up to 2004 general elections, these addresses were mainly the ruling party's political rallies and the supporters would be wearing the party colours; red, black and white, while the opposition party colours became less visible.

Observing BTV bulletins of the week of December 1 2003, however, it became clear that the ruling party would also not totally escape the wrath of the tyranny of its own making. Results of "*Bulela ditswe*" the ruling party's primary election had come out. They were headline News for all the Newspapers and radio stations in the country. The BTV News bulletins had nothing on them. One of the reporters asked at an editorial meeting if they would simply ignore the results even as they knew they were of public interest. He was reminded by colleagues that the Minister Boyce Sebetela had stated categorically that political parties were not to be covered by the station. They also added that BTV had not reported results of other political parties, notably the unexpected loss by a very popular Robert Molefhabangwe of opposition Botswana National Front. The resolve not to budge by the News team was hardened by an incident where the Minister personally threw out the BTV camera and reporting crew from Parliament when they came to cover its proceedings. A few weeks before he had ordered the national radio broadcaster, Radio Botswana to stop a call-in segment of a morning show allegedly being a platform of anti-government propaganda.

As a physical space, in its idealized form, the kgotla provides for a Habermasian idea of co-presence; face-to-face straight talk where the best argument wins. It can thus be seen as an alternative to the more 'staged' new forms of mediation, which Habermas argues have turned what used to be unfettered public exchange

into an orchestrated spectacle. The kgotla though, as the following section shows, has not totally been able to escape becoming part of the media spectacle. The kgotla was sometimes a kind of genre in its own right in BTV local content. BTV almost religiously broadcasts kgotla meetings when the President or Vice President is addressing communities at their local dikgotla. Habermas saw this appropriation of the public sphere by broadcasting as a re-feudalisation of the public sphere. Public spheres are rendered sites of spectacle to ensure that the nation was constantly aware of state power. Kenneth Thompson, on the contrary maintained that precisely because new media expands visibility of face-to-face debates such as kgotla meetings to citizens that would not have been physically present at these debates, it enables them to join in conversation. Co-presence of face-to-face communication under new information technologies ceases to be spatially bound.

### **The *kgotla* turned into a spectacle: BTV and the Mogoditshane demolitions**

An interface between television and the kgotla in Botswana tended to prove Habermas' re-feudalization theses. The disparity between a kgotla version and the television version of the same event personally witnessed by the researcher was startling. The State President Mogae, had come to address the community of Mogoditshane, a village in the outskirts of the city about government's uncompromising stance against illegal land self-allocation that the village had become notorious for. Government was demolishing all homes built on illegally occupied plots. Some members of the public were asking for a more humane solution, of government providing necessary paperwork to legitimise the occupations because the homes housed children and their poor families trying to make a living under harsh conditions of high unemployment and a skewed economy.

When the President ended his speech on an unrelenting note, a member of the crowd remarked aloud “*ga re go utlwe*” – we can’t hear you, indicating his disapproval of the President’s hardline position. The President heard this and retorted in *Setswana*, “*ga o sa nkutwe ke tla go kabolola ditshoka!*”, if you can’t hear me, I will have to clean out your ears! In *Setswana*, as in English, it can also mean to teach someone a lesson. Although he meant it literally, the President played right into those opposed to his position. At the question and answer session, a number of speakers successfully turned this comment from being towards a particular individual. They used his very own words to caricature him into a boastful and uncaring President against a helpless nation – which was to some extent true. However, the moment came to pass and the meeting ended as is the norm on a calm note; the President was thanked for coming and food and entertainment provided for him and his entourage.

Mogoditshane is infamous for being something of a melting pot and a site of crime, lack of traditional values such as *botho* – respect for authority, and general disrespect for the law. It is a village known in popular discourse as a place where swear words and obscenities are exchanged over fences between neighbours, between children and their parents, where age and authority do not command respect. The television News bulletin successfully made a montage of the actual event and stereotypes about Mogoditshane to create an even more heated spectacle than the actual kgotla meeting. There was no longer a sense of a bell curve that the meeting took; slow start, a heated middle and a calm end. The two-hour meeting was reduced into a series of hostile accusations and counter accusations between the President and members of the public, ‘Mogoditshane style’. Most fascinating was how the editing had been used to further electrify the ‘heated exchange’. Questions and responses to them were not left in sequence they had come at the kgotla. They were rearranged during editing so to match a comment to a question best suited to it. Television did not merely mirror the kgotla meeting as it has unfolded. It took advantage of techniques available to it

such as editing and juxtaposition to fashion it to its own conventions of communication.

The kgotla and other local philosophies have a lot of scope to circumvent other threats to freedom of expression such as the Cinematograph Act of 1970 [CAP.60:02]. It stipulates for instance that “no film shall be made within Botswana for public exhibition or sale either within or outside Botswana except under and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a filming permit issued by the Minister under this part.” Further, “No person shall exhibit any film at an exhibition to which the public are admitted unless the Board [of Censors] has issued a certificate of approval in respect thereof approving it for such exhibition” [CAP.60:02, 60:24]. The Cinematograph Act has been blamed for hampering the development of local visual media production for decades. *Thokolosi*, one of the two dramas that BTV commissioned at the end of 2004 and produced by Norman Mloi brought about important issues about creative freedom, editorial control on the part of BTV, public opinion and state intervention. It started showing in February 2006, and within the first months, stirred an uproar that generated much public debate on radio, television and print media (*Mmegi*, Thursday 9 March 2006; MISA, March 2006). *Thokolosi* was based on an existing myth about the village of Bobonong in Botswana. The myth was that the people were masters of witchcraft and could turn corpses into ‘*matholwane*’, – *Thokolosi*, superhuman slaves. A number of people including the Member of Parliament for the area and academics took up issue complaining that the drama would perpetuate negative stereotypes about some ethnic groups in Botswana and was counterproductive for nation-building (*Mmegi*, Thursday 9 March 2006).<sup>213</sup> It appears that the BTV Commissioning Editor and his team had not found any problem with the drama, since it went on air. It was only when it got to the public that they faced criticism. The initial reaction by Minister Pelonomi Venson was that the whole thing was drama, and that there was no need to take the exploitation of local myths personally. The matter gained more momentum such

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<sup>213</sup> *Mmegi online*, <http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/March/Thursday9/266470321427.html>

that, the producers had to add, midway, a disclaimer that events and people depicted in the drama were all fictitious (MISA, March, 2006).<sup>214</sup> Venson later had to apologise to the public for BTV's 'oversight', most likely under pressure from Cabinet. A delegation was sent to the kgotla of Bobonong to apologise to the villagers, few of whom had actually seen the drama for lack of television sets.

There was a need therefore to go beyond official utterances about the kind of service that Botswana Television was or ought to have been. By looking at the encounter between the medium and the operational and qualitative productive processes within the station, a better understanding of cultural production under government was made possible. Operative discourses about television at BTV revealed the ways in which some actors more than others inventively appropriated and exploited television technology towards greater editorial freedom, under the same conditions of government control. BTV also had to endure a highly charged but infantile independent local production industry that looked upon the station as the source of their bread and butter. Many a time, the lack of relevant training on television militated against efforts to run the station in spite of limited experience. At key moments the station personnel used the limited resources in their disposal with varying effort and success to escape complete control by any force, private or government. There appeared to be more room than was currently exploited for BTV to be a greater public sphere in spite of the immense constraints; of government relentlessly seeking to control it, a lack in human resources, organisational incapacity, and the challenges on the cultural production in the developing world.

### **Conclusion: BTV and the crisis of public service broadcasting**

An attempt has been made through empirical research to map a theoretical framework for the understanding of television and cultural production for developing contexts such as Botswana. Charles Manga Fombad (2002) qualifies

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<sup>214</sup> MISA, <http://www.misa.org/cgi-bin/archives.cgi?category=1&view=3-06>

Botswana's government owned national broadcasting as public service broadcasting or as he calls it, '*public service media*' (PSM). "PSM in almost all African countries was taken over and controlled by the state and used merely as instruments of propaganda for the ruling parties, rather than a medium for transmitting the knowledge and information which people need to know to make informed decisions". Fombad pushes an argument that, Botswana is a special case in Africa where media has been free since 1972-1973 (Fombad, 2002:651) while under government. Botswana continues to perform more than many other Third World countries in so far as international development and democracy indicators, whilst national television and radio broadcasters are state-owned and controlled. This thesis showed, first with Radio Botswana but principally with BTV that cultural production could occur productively under the paternalistic liberal authoritarian Botswana state. A freer media environment especially of national media would have ensured Botswana an even higher standing in the continent.

The case of Botswana, of state control of media seemingly co-existing with exemplary democracy, has a potential to entrench state authoritarianism in Africa, particularly in aspects of media freedom. The lesson to newly democratizing African countries such as Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo could be that a totally free media may not be all that necessary to achieve stability. In fact, since Botswana's stability was achieved by using national media to project government policies and the rule of the BDP as the only available alternative to the anarchy that any other dispensation would otherwise bring, we may see a greater linking of internal stability to media control. This is particularly so when government media was also often labelled by its management, political leaders, academic and popular discourse, as public service broadcasting. Former Botswana Communications Minister Lephimotswe Sebetela was largely unheeded in 2004 in his attempt to explain to the nation that government media, BTV and Radio Botswana, were not public service broadcasters.

Public service broadcasting according to Ruth Teer-Tomaselli (2005:199) is a term frequently used but seldom understood. In Botswana, the term has been used to mean media managed by public or civil servants, run on government funding, and geared at promoting government policies. The two government broadcasters, radio in particular, are the most relied on sources of information in Botswana. Considering that broadcasters have often been faced with either making a profit or going under, government ownership of national broadcasting in Botswana protected it from market failure. To the extent that the Botswana government funded the expensive production of local News, in-house productions and commissioned independent productions for BTV, it contributed to the perception that governments have a potential to serve citizens better than markets,

Typically, markets don't produce sufficient quantity or quality of programming in education, research, children's programming, dramas in [local] languages and other specialised programming...commercial broadcasters don't provide for the poor, the old, the uneducated or for those who live in remote areas, far away from the urban centres (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005:202).

It is however, generally perceived as the best broadcasting model, "the chance for ordinary people to receive unbiased information, and be able to voice their own concerns, not simply the concerns of the politicians" (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005:204). The September 2002 conference on public service broadcasting in West Africa held in Accra, Ghana, agreed that the cornerstone of a true public service broadcaster included providing balanced, accurate and relevant information and programmes to the public that reflect the peoples' voice. To this end, public service broadcasters required to be legally defined, to operate under legally protected independent regulatory bodies, and to enjoy editorial

independence guaranteed by law and respected in practice.<sup>215</sup> The 1991 Windhoek Declaration, the 2001 African Charter on Broadcasting and subsequent civil society efforts in the southern African region also heralded public service broadcasting as the best broadcasting model towards democracy. As Teer-Tomaselli aptly made the point, parameters of public service broadcasting are largely normative – they were about how broadcasters ‘ought to act’, but in practice, it is largely not the case (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005:199). Seamogano Mosanako aptly summarised the challenge facing BTV when she wrote, “BTV has to prove that apart from patriotism, there are many reasons why Batswana should watch it. Such a justification should be based on the provision of quality local programmes that capture Tswana values, attitudes, opinions, and ideas and develop national unity” (Mosanako, 2004:60). Maggie Mabechu (2001:101) captured the reality of BTV, when she wrote, “the calm depicted in daily transmission belied the storm...” resulting from the station’s relationship with government. In actual fact, the situation has so deteriorated since she wrote in 2001, that, even the transmission is no longer smooth.

The encounter between state – control and cultural production at BTV was mitigated by informal subcultures that emerged from the very early days of the station, or collusion, resignation and resistance with or against the status quo. The productions were fashioned under an environment of state – control and self-censorship. This did not occur in a sterile environment without faces; BTV did have faces that steered it in one direction and not the other. The faces and television technology operating under state – control were held together by what Vincent Mosco (1998) called mutual constitutiveness; each sphere was mutually determinant and determining of the other’s actions and utterances. When all sides were taken to impact on each other in a two way fashion, the question becomes not only the extent to which government interfered with or controlled BTV; but also the extent to which the BTV staff shaped the nature of such

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<sup>215</sup> Recommendations: Public Service Broadcasting in West Africa,  
<http://www.africafilmtv.com/pages/features/NF174recommendations.htm> 7 November 2006

control. BTV was fully government funded, it was a government department and thus, it was almost pointless to speak about state interference. To ask this question was to force a different broadcasting model upon BTV that was not a state – propaganda machine, to pretend it was some kind of 'public service broadcaster'. What made the discussion worthwhile was that, while for all institutional and legal intends and purposes, BTV was a government department, the employees' themselves never completely gave up on some level of journalistic professional ethics. They could never accept direct intervention by government Ministers on content as normal course of business. They wish to do their work 'professionally', by which they said meant following the norms and values of independent, watchdog journalism rather than being dictated for by the state how to do their work. To see beyond official structural restrictions imposed on BTV by state ownership can help towards a better understanding of whether the staff at BTV operate according to 'he who pays the piper picks the tune'. Alum Mporu also contended that "it is not necessarily the origin of funds, but rather principles, philosophies and mechanisms of programme selection and commissioning that influence the integrity of [broadcasting]" (Mporu,1996:12).

With specific reference to BTV, which is government owned and controlled and yet endeavours to be a site of cultural production and a kind of public sphere, the *kgotla* metaphor had much more potential than was exploited. Without a 'local' discourse that promoted tolerance towards open debate, cultural production at the station would be hindered not so much by commercialisation as by the dominant position of the state vis-à-vis civil society and producers of cultural products. Together with received Western discourses on freedom of expression and democracy in Africa, the *kgotla* metaphor could create a leverage for the station to negotiate some kind of legitimacy to include in their content, criticism of government. Discourses on rights in Africa such as the right to freedom of expression therefore, although undeniably Western in origin, "did not start scribbling on a *tabula rasa*" (Donnelly, 2001:267). The role of watchdogs and objective informers is tested by the fact that, in the process of producing cultural

capital, media practitioners in the developing world have to survive governments that often own and control most of the resources. On the other hand they have to work within the constraints of the global information technology divide. Most important, their output can only be of relevance if it settles textually and contextually within local cultures, discourses and repertoires (Bourgalt,1995; Donnelly, 2001; Kerr, 2001). The kgotla came to shape even one of Africa's most technologically advanced and new television station, BTV. Like every other institutions in the rapidly changing post-colonial African context, broadcasting has to constantly be "critically examined and re-shaped to concur with new political and social values and new norms of public accountability" (Mpofu, 1996:6) and local older traditional discourses within which it emerges.

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### **Personal Interviews and dates**

Dr Masego Mpotokwane – Chairperson, National Broadcasting Board, September, 2003

Bishy Mmusi – Chief Broadcasting Officer, Botswana Telecommunications Authority, September, 2003

National Broadcasting Board Secretariat, October, 2003

Hon Boyce Lephimotswe Sebetela – former Minister for Communications, Science and Technology, October, 2006.

Modise Maphanyane – Executive Secretary, MISA – Botswana, October 2003; March, 2005

Nametsegang Sebege – Press Council for Botswana, February, 2006.

Habuji Sosome – former Director, Department of Broadcasting Services, October, 2003.

Raymond Tsheko – BTV, Commissioning Editor, October, 2004; April, 2006

Felicitus Mashungwa – former BTV, Head of News and Current Affairs, October, 2003.

Martin Hillman – former Head of Operations, November, 2003.

Ted Makgekgenene – former Director, Department of Information and Broadcasting, February, 2006.

Norman Patlakwe – former producer, BTV, Current Affairs, December, 2003; May, 2006

Kesholofetse Phetlhu – former BTV Acting General Manager, October, 2003; May, 2006.

Robert Gray – former BTV Training manager, September, 2006

Oshinka Tsiang – former BTV General Manager, September, 2003; July, 2006

Busi Butale – former BTV producer, July 2006

Valerie Seemule – Assistant Commissioner of Labour, February, 2006

Morwalela Kesalopa – BTV in-house producer, May, 2004.

Kefilwe Mokgaotsane – BTV News reporter, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

Janet Mudongo – BTV News reporter, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

Alpheons Mokohe – BTV Current Affairs, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

Neoyame Setsile – BTV News producer, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

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Thebe Mogapi – BTV Assignment Desk, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

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Doreen Moapare from November, BTV News editor, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

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Linnet Habana – BTV News reporter, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

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Joshua Ntopolelang – BTV Current Affairs, July, 2004.

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Solly Nageng – BTV in-house producer, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

Mpho Kgosiidintsi – BTV Marketing, May 2004

Lerato Ntuara – Transmission, from November, 2003 – December, 2004

### **Interviews with local independent producers**

Bibi Lethola, December, 2004  
Ernst Engels, November, 2004  
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John Clement, June, 2006.  
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[http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_BWA.html](http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_BWA.html)  
<http://kabaso.misa.org/documents/stdid2003.pdf>  
<http://www.bankofbotswana.bw/files/attachments/2005%20imf%20article%20iv.pdf>  
<http://www.bartleby.com/151/bc.html>  
[http://www.botswanaembassy.org/092903\\_1.html](http://www.botswanaembassy.org/092903_1.html)  
[http://www.botswanaembassy.org/111303\\_1.html](http://www.botswanaembassy.org/111303_1.html)  
[http://www.botswanaembassy.org/111303\\_1.html](http://www.botswanaembassy.org/111303_1.html)  
[http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from\\_the\\_director.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/from_the_director.html)  
[http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding\\_principles.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/BTV/guiding_principles.html)  
<http://www.freetheworld.com/2003/1EFW2003ch1.pdf>  
<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?>  
[http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry\\_of\\_state\\_president.html](http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry_of_state_president.html)  
[http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry\\_of\\_state\\_president.html](http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry_of_state_president.html)  
[http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry\\_of\\_state\\_president.html](http://www.gov.bw/government/ministry_of_state_president.html)  
<http://www.irinnews.org/print>  
<http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/4/248.htm>

<http://www.naca.gov.bw/documents/Dec%202002%20Surveillance%20Report.pdf>  
f  
<http://www.news24.com/News24/AnanziArticle>  
<http://www.ochre.co.za/>  
<http://www.ppadb.co.bw>  
<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/misc/chicago/647455.html>  
<http://www.sadocc.at/news/2003-357.shtml>,  
<http://www.samdef.com/about.htm>  
[http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/newstf/archive\\_home/archive2005/jan05.htm](http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/newstf/archive_home/archive2005/jan05.htm)  
[http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/newstf/archive\\_home/archive2005/jan05.htm](http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/newstf/archive_home/archive2005/jan05.htm)  
<http://www.thuto.org/ubh/cinema/bots-cinema-studies.htm>,  
[http://www.transparency.org/news\\_room/latest\\_news/press\\_releases/2005/cpi\\_2005\\_18\\_10\\_05](http://www.transparency.org/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2005/cpi_2005_18_10_05)  
<http://www.unbotswana.org.bw/undp/docs/National%20Poverty%20Workshop%20Report.pdf>  
[http://www.unbotswana.org.bw/undp/news\\_230904.html](http://www.unbotswana.org.bw/undp/news_230904.html)  
[http://www.unbotswana.org.bw/undp/news\\_230904.html](http://www.unbotswana.org.bw/undp/news_230904.html)  
[http://www.weforum.org/en/fp/gcr\\_2006-07\\_highlights/index.htm](http://www.weforum.org/en/fp/gcr_2006-07_highlights/index.htm)  
<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Africa%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm>  
<http://www.wfcr.org/about/>  
<http://www.worldaudit.org/press.htm>  
<http://www.worldaudit.org/press.htm>  
<http://www.terrorismcentral.com/Library/Government/US/StateDepartment/DemocracyHumanRights/2001/Africa/Botswana.html>

### **Botswana Newspaper sources**

*The Botswana Daily News*  
*The Botswana Gazette*

*The Botswana Guardian*  
*The Midweek Sun*  
*Mmegi/The Reporter*

**Botswana National Archives**

Botswana National Archives OP 25/7/1  
Botswana National Archives, S. 370/10  
Botswana National Archives, S.582.9 (1a)  
Botswana National Archives, S.582/9

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# APPENDIX 1

Growth Competitiveness Rankings (Source: World Economic Forum)<sup>114</sup>

Growth Competitiveness	Macroeconomic environment
1 Botswana	1 Botswana
2 Tunisia	2 Tunisia
3 South Africa	3 South Africa
4 Mauritius	4 Morocco
5 Namibia	5 Gambia
6 Gambia	6 Algeria
7 Egypt	7 Namibia
8 Morocco	8 Egypt
9 Tanzania	9 Mauritius
10 Ghana	10 Senegal
11 Algeria	11 Ghana
12 Malawi	12 Uganda
13 Senegal	13 Nigeria
14 Uganda	14 Tanzania
15 Kenya	15 Kenya
16 Nigeria	16 Cameroon
17 Zambia	17 Madagascar
18 Cameroon	18 Ethiopia
19 Ethiopia	19 Mali
20 Mozambique	20 Mozambique
21 Madagascar	21 Chad
22 Zimbabwe	22 Zambia
23 Mali	23 Malawi
24 Angola	24 Angola
25 Chad	25 Zimbabwe

## Public Institutions and Technology Rankings

Public Institutions	Technology
1 Botswana	1 South Africa
2 Tunisia	2 Mauritius
3 Malawi	3 Tunisia
4 Gambia	4 Botswana
5 South Africa	5 Namibia
6 Mauritius	6 Egypt

<sup>114</sup>World Economic Forum

[http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Global\\_Competitiveness\\_Reports/Reports/ACR\\_2003\\_2004/GCI%20and%20Subindex%20Rankings.pdf](http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Global_Competitiveness_Reports/Reports/ACR_2003_2004/GCI%20and%20Subindex%20Rankings.pdf)

7 Namibia	7 Morocco
8 Egypt	8 Kenya
9 Tanzania	9 Zimbabwe
10 Ghana	10 Uganda
11 Algeria	11 Gambia
12 Morocco	12 Tanzania
13 Zambia	13 Nigeria
14 Ethiopia	14 Ghana
15 Senegal	15 Senegal
16 Mozambique	16 Zambia
17 Mali	17 Mozambique
18 Uganda	18 Cameroon
19 Zimbabwe	19 Malawi
20 Angola	20 Algeria
21 Kenya	21 Madagascar
22 Cameroon	22 Angola
23 Madagascar	23 Mali
24 Nigeria	24 Ethiopia
25 Chad	25 Chad

# APPENDIX 2

2

From: Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane  
P.O. Box 1671  
Mogoditshane  
Tel: 3185315(h)  
72406951(c)  
Email: [Mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:Mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw)

23 October 2003

Head of News and Current Affairs  
Botswana Television  
P/Bag 0060  
Gaborone

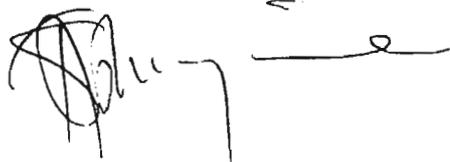
Attention: Ms Felistus Mashungwa

Dear Madam,

**Re: Assistance for Field Research at Botswana Television**

I kindly request cooperation, facilitation, and assistance from your office towards the undertaking of field research by myself. This is towards complete fulfilment of a PhD in Media and Culture with the University of Natal in Durban entitled "State control, nation-building and commercialisation as determinants of Botswana Television." The process involves participant observation of the process of News and Current Affairs production and documentary analysis of any available material surrounding the production. Find attached a copy of the research permit issued to me by the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology.

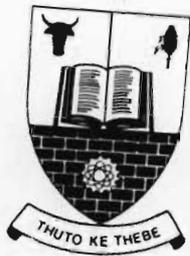
Looking forward to working with your team,



Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane

rte

2



# University of Botswana

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Private Bag 00705  
Gaborone, Botswana

Telephone: (267) 355-0000 Switchboard  
Telephone: (267) 355 + Extension Fax: (267) 355-2543  
Telex: (267) 2429 BD Telegraph: University Gaborone

To: Director, Department of Broadcasting Services

From: Sethunya Mphinyane, Dept of Sociology, University of Botswana.

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Subject: **Study of Engineering section of Broadcasting Services**

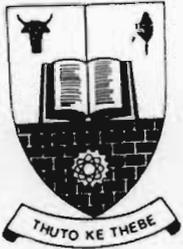
As you are aware, my study on Botswana Television and other sections of the Department of Broadcasting Services continues. At this stage, I need to comprehend the engineering side of things and would appreciate admission into the section. The week beginning Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April would suit me well.

Looking forward to your usual timely response,

Thank you,

Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane (Ms)  
University of Botswana.

Cc: Mr Reetsang  
Mr Batsalelwang  
Mr Manyake  
Mr Majumane  
Mr Mogotlwanne.



# University of Botswana

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Private Bag 00705  
Gaborone, Botswana

---

Telephone: (267) 355-0000 Switchboard

Telephone: (267) 355 + Extension Fax: (267) 355-2543

Telex: (267) 2429 BD Telegraph: University Gaborone

---

**From:** Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane African Scholars Program [asp@fivecolleges.edu]

**Date:** 19 May 2004

**To:** Kesholofetswe Phetlhu, Acting General Manager, Botswana Television

**Subject:** Mphinyane's research on Programmes Procurement at Botswana Television,

Greetings,

I kindly ask to be permitted to spend a few hours with the Programmes Procurement Division of Botswana Television and to ask questions where necessary to understand how programmes are selected and procured. This is part of my on-going PhD research project that I have already sort permission from the Ministry to undertake (find copy of letter of permission attached).

Thank you,

Sethunya T. Mphinyane.

Cc: Programmes Procurement Division, Botswana Television

# APPENDIX 3

3

## MPHINYAT

---

**From:** George Eustice [george@redstonefilm.com]  
**Sent:** 17 November 2004 12:48  
**To:** MPHINYAT  
**Subject:** RE: Interview with local producers

Next week is better. How about Monday at 10am. Plot 19744 Phase 2.

Thanks,  
George

**George Eustice**  
**Red Stone (Pty) Ltd**  
**Film and Television**  
**Private Bag 00255**  
**Gaborone, Botswana**  
**Tel: +267 3919144**  
**Fax: +267 3919142**  
**Cell: +267 71657060**  
**george@redstonefilm.com**  
**www.redstonefilm.com**

-----Original Message-----

**From:** MPHINYAT [mailto:MPHINYAT@mopipi.ub.bw]  
**Sent:** 17 November 2004 11:49  
**To:** george@redstonefilm.com  
**Subject:** Interview with local producers

Hello to you,

I am Sethunya Mphinyane, a student studying the local production industry. I need to have a chat with you to understand how local producers relate with the commissioning project that Btv is undertaking at the moment. Some of the key issues we will need to chat about are: whether commissioning is likely to make a difference for local producers; whether or not local producers are capable at present to produce high quality work; the partnerships that you maybe engaged with more experienced outside producers; the challenged of the industry; the future of production in Botswana, and many other related issues. Anytime during working hours this week and next week will be good for me. Please make time for this at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane  
P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,  
Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)  
00267 3185315 (h)  
email mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw; sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com

---  
Incoming mail is certified Virus Free.  
Checked by AVG anti-virus system (<http://www.grisoft.com>).  
Version: 6.0.797 / Virus Database: 541 - Release Date: 15/11/2004

26/11/2004

**MPHINYAT**

---

**From:** Moabi Mogorosi [yin\_yang006@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** 18 November 2004 15:44

**To:** MPHINYAT

**Subject:** RE: Interview with local producers

I am attending the Sithengi World Cinema Festival in Cape Town and thus I will not be able to meet you. I hope and trust other producers will be able to help you. Thank you.

Moabi

26/11/2004

**MPHINYAT**

---

**From:** ernst engels [engels@info.bw]  
**Sent:** 18 November 2004 13:42  
**To:** MPHINYAT  
**Subject:** RE: Interview with local producers

Mug and Bean, Game City?!

Thank you, where about do I see you on Tuesday 23 Nov, 12 am?

Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane

P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,

Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)

00267 3185315 (h)

email mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw; sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com

---

**From:** ernst engels [mailto:engels@info.bw]  
**Sent:** 17 November 2004 22:10  
**To:** MPHINYAT  
**Subject:** Re: Interview with local producers

Hi Sethunya, Like to discuss your issues! What about Tuesday 23 Nov, 12 am?

r

Hello to you,

I am Sethunya Mphinyane, a student studying the local production industry. I need to

26/11/2004

**MPHINYAT**

---

**From:** Dipolelo Video Arts (Pty) Ltd [storyline@botsnet.bw]  
**Sent:** 17 November 2004 13:21  
**To:** MPHINYAT  
**Subject:** Re: Interview with local producers

Hi, Sethunya –

We're insanely busy right now, but I'd be happy to talk with you by phone.

Our landline is 3167336.

regards

john

---

DIPOLELO VIDEO ARTS (PTY) LTD  
STORYLINE TELEVISION [tm]  
John Clement & Renee Gilbey, Partners  
P.O. Box BR-40037  
Gaborone, BOTSWANA

TEL (+267) 316 7336

EMAIL [storyline@botsnet.bw](mailto:storyline@botsnet.bw)

---

----- Original Message -----

**From:** MPHINYAT  
**To:** [storyline@botsnet.bw](mailto:storyline@botsnet.bw)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 17, 2004 12:00 PM  
**Subject:** Interview with local producers

Hello to you,

I am Sethunya Mphinyane, a student studying the local production industry. I need to have a chat with you to understand how local producers relate with the commissioning project that Btv is undertaking at the moment. Some of the key issues we will need to chat about are: whether commissioning is likely to make a difference for local producers; whether or not local producers are capable at present to produce high quality work; the partnerships that you maybe engaged with more experienced outside producers; the challenged of the industry; the future of production in Botswana, and many other related issues. Anytime during working hours this week and next week will be good for me. Please make time for this at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane  
P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,  
Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)  
00267 3185315 (h)

26/11/2004

## MPHINYAT

---

**From:** Jafta Serero [jserero@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** 17 November 2004 18:15  
**To:** MPHINYAT  
**Subject:** RE: Interview with local producers

Hello Sethunya,

I'm sorry I do not take any media interviews. The best person to talk to is Mr G. Eustice of REDSTONE Film, he's also the President of Botswana Producer's Association. His e-mail address is ([george@redstonefilm.com](mailto:george@redstonefilm.com))

Regards

Jafta Serero ([www.funbizz.co.bw](http://www.funbizz.co.bw))

-----Original Message Follows-----

**From:** "MPHINYAT" <[MPHINYAT@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:MPHINYAT@mopipi.ub.bw)>  
**To:** <[jserero@hotmail.com](mailto:jserero@hotmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Interview with local producers  
**Date:** Wed, 17 Nov 2004 11:56:43 +0200

Hello to you,

I am Sethunya Mphinyane, a student studying the local production industry. I need to have a chat with you to understand how local producers relate with the commissioning project that Btv is undertaking at the moment. Some of the key issues we will need to chat about are: whether commissioning is likely to make a difference for local producers; whether or not local producers are capable at present to produce high quality work; the partnerships that you maybe engaged with more experienced outside producers; the challenged of the industry; the future of production in Botswana, and many other related issues. Anytime during working hours this week and next week will be good for me. Please make time for this at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane

P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,

Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)

00267 3185315 (h)

email [mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw); [sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com](mailto:sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com)

---

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26/11/2004

## MPHINYAT

---

**From:** mike proctor [procmike@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** 18 November 2004 10:11  
**To:** MPHINYAT  
**Subject:** RE: Interview with local producers

call the office on 3935414

>From: "MPHINYAT" <MPHINYAT@mopipi.ub.bw>  
>To: <procmike@hotmail.com>  
>Subject: Interview with local producers  
>Date: Wed, 17 Nov 2004 11:52:21 +0200

>  
>  
>Hello to you,

>  
>I am Sethunya Mphinyane, a student studying the local production  
>industry. I need to have a chat with you to understand how local  
>producers relate with the commissioning project that Btv is undertaking  
>at the moment. Some of the key issues we will need to chat about are:  
>whether commissioning is likely to make a difference for local  
>producers; whether or not local producers are capable at present to  
>produce high quality work; the partnerships that you maybe engaged with  
>more experienced outside producers; the challenged of the industry; the  
>future of production in Botswana, and many other related issues. Anytime  
>during working hours this week and next week will be good for me. Please  
>make time for this at your earliest convenience.

>  
>Thank you,

>  
>  
>Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane  
>P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,  
>Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)  
>00267 3185315 (h)  
>email mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw; sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com  
>

---

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26/11/2004

small local film companies indeed, the big guys came, asked for information and help and next produced the Discovery Network and other films. And indeed the South Africans. A good company like Red Stone nearly folded which with all the hard and dedicated and quite professional labour from George Eustice was telling me that Camelthorn had to brace itself for a fight. We have still a couple of other projects, two Water films; one on *awareness and conservation*, hanging with DWA and Water Utilities, just waiting for that one promise of 7 months old and now with the absurd low waterlevel in the Gaborone Dam, becoming vast a hot issue and one with Geol. Surveys, Free University of Amsterdam and others on the *Past of the Kalahari Water*.

Thanks again, I must provide a full update for our Trustees and call for a meeting, much is changing at this time; progress at last!

regards,  
Ernst

---

**From:** MPHINYAT  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 November 2004 6:05 PM  
**To:** NPARSONS  
**Subject:** Btv commissioning

Dear Neil,

It's Sethunya at the Dept of Sociology. As you may be aware, I am doing my PhD on media and culture. The recent commissioning exercise by Btv is of particular interest to me as perhaps the biggest milestone towards a proper local film industry in Botswana. I learnt from George Eustice that his Redstone is working with Camel Thorn Media for Development Trust that you are a member of on a drama Btv has awarded. I would therefore like to have a chat with you, besides the fact that you are the one person who has chronicled the development of film in Botswana. I got a paper you wrote for a course you are teaching online. How's sometime tomorrow?

Thanks,

Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane  
P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,  
Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)  
00267 3185315 (h)  
email mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw; sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com

**MPHINYAT**

**From:** Chebani, Clement [Clement.Chebani@debeersgroup.com]  
**Date:** 17 November 2004 20:18  
**Subject:** RE: Interview with local producers

Sethunya

Very unfortunate that I won't be able to meet with you since I am engaged during the requested weeks. I would have very much loved to share my opinion with you but the timing is not right for me. I can only be available from 28th November, which I believe is not good for you.

Instead, may I recommend one of the best local Producer/Director, Shike Olsen. You can contact him on cell# 72144808 or email him on [shike0@yahoo.com](mailto:shike0@yahoo.com)

Clement Chebani  
Tel: (+267)3644531  
Email: [clement.chebani@debeersgroup.com](mailto:clement.chebani@debeersgroup.com)

---

**From:** MPHINYAT [mailto:MPHINYAT@mopipi.ub.bw]  
**Date:** 17 November 2004 11:55  
**To:** Chebani, Clement; [clement.chebani@debeersgroup.com](mailto:clement.chebani@debeersgroup.com)  
**Subject:** Interview with local producers

Hello to you,

I am Sethunya Mphinyane, a student studying the local production industry. I need to have a chat with you to understand how local producers relate with the commissioning project that Btv is undertaking at the moment. Some of the key issues we will need to chat about are: whether commissioning is likely to make a difference for local producers; whether or not local producers are capable at present to produce high quality work; the partnerships that you maybe engaged with more experienced outside producers; the challenged of the industry; the future of production in Botswana, and many other related issues. Anytime during working hours this week and next week will be good for me. Please make time for this at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Sethunya Tshepo Mphinyane  
P.O. Box 1671 Mogoditshane,  
Botswana. Tel 00267 72406951 (cell)  
00267 3185315 (h)  
email [mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:mphinyat@mopipi.ub.bw); [sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com](mailto:sethunyamphinyane@hotmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

26/11/2004

Do you think you consider yourself to by now understand the individual personalities of the News and Current affairs desk?

You have said that you think it is unjustified for outsiders to doubt the editorial independence of Btv, why?

What difference do you think it would make for Btv to operate outside government?

Where do you see yourself going in Btv in terms of personal growth and professional growth?

How do you think working for government media differs from working for private media, if at all?

What was been the most fulfilling moment of your stay at Btv?

Do you see yourself being with the station for the next two or more years?

Explain to me the coming of the Swedish to the station, for the newsroom in particular, what will that entail?

Thank you.

**Interview Questions for Montlennyane Baaitse**

## Interview Questions for Kesholofetse Phetlhu

Dear Ms Phetlhu,

My research at Btv is so far going on very well. In order to substitute my personal observations, I would like you to answer a few questions below for me. You are at liberty not to answer all or some of the questions. Except for the most senior staff, no name will be attached to the information provided on any of the drafts or the final product. I will very much appreciate your participation.

When and why did you join the media industry?

What portfolios have you served in during the time?

How does your stay here compare to your time with RB1?

Where do you see yourself going in Btv in terms of personal growth and professional growth?

What do you think are the major challenges facing Btv currently?

How do you think working for government media differs from working for private media, if at all?

What do you think about Btv having the same editorial practices and editorial meetings with BOPA and other government news agencies?

You have said to me that you think it is unjustified for outsiders to doubt the editorial independence of Btv, kindly explain to me why this is the case.

What difference do you think it would make for Btv to operate outside government?

What was been the most fulfilling moment of your stay at Btv?

Do you see yourself being with the station for the next two or more years?

Thank you for your time.

Dear Monty,

My research at Btv is so far going on very well. In order to substitute my personal observations, I would like you to answer a few questions below for me. You are at liberty not to answer all or some of the questions. Some of the questions are based on observations made on actions you took and statements you made. Except for the most senior staff, the information provided will not be attached to any name on any of the drafts or the final product. I will very much appreciate your participation.

When and why did you join the media industry?

What portfolios have you served in during the time?

When did you join Btv?

Why?

What positions have you served in at Btv?

How does your stay here compare to your time with RB1?

How do you compare the news room of Radio Botswana to that of Btv?

What do you think about Btv having the same editorial practices and editorial meetings with BOPA and other government news agencies?

Is reporting for television any different from reporting for radio?

What do you think are the major challenges facing Btv currently?

You have said that you think it is unjustified for outsiders to doubt the editorial independence of Btv, why?

What difference do you think it would make for Btv to operate outside government, if at all?

You are the second after Mosetsana as the assignment editor in the exercise to find who is most suited for the job. What do you think about the exercise?

What are the challenges you are facing as an assignment editor?

You have expressed concern on the lack of trained manpower at Btv. In what ways do you think this affects the output of Btv?

Questions for Mr Seisa. Date:.....

Raymond (Shuko responded)  
to the questionnaire

### **Part 1: Commissioning at Btv:**

As part of my PhD process, I have to understand the role of Btv in the promotion of a local content production industry in Botswana.

You were in charge of commissioning at Btv until early this year; explain to me the nature and scope of your work during your time as the commissioning editor?

Why was a commissioning section established by Btv, i.e. provide the history of commissioning by Btv and what prompted it. Kindly map out for me the initial mission and vision when commissioning was conceived.

What steps and activities were undertaken towards ensuring the success of commissioning during your time as the commissioning editor? Kindly provide any documents that can help me to better appreciate the commissioning process.

At some stage you contracted a South African company, Underdog Productions, to help you develop a commissioning strategy. Why, and what were the results?

Who did you consider as relevant stake-holders as you jumpstarted the project? What was the response of the stake-holders to your proposals?

What adjustment if any, have been made as the process unfolded?

What kind of budget has been allocated for this project?

How do you see commissioning contributing to the success of Btv and the nation?

What are the major challenges facing the project of commissioning?

Where do you see the project in five years?

### **Part 2: Question for Mr Seisa as the current Head Production**

From the position of Commissioning Editor, you became the Head of Production; my research also entails appreciating the production of local content by Btv. This makes it necessary to as well interview you on issues relating to in house local content production.

What is the nature and scope of your current position as Head of Production? Kindly map out for me how the Production department of Btv is organized. How is it connected to other sections within the station?

How do you define local content at Btv? Do you have any guidelines or documents that guide how you come to define content as local?

How many productions are you at the moment heading?

What are the benefits of producing in house?

What are the challenges of producing in house?

What are the key areas of concern regarding producing in house?

How is commissioning likely to affect in house production?

Production of local content in the Third World, which is expensive, is often feared to be threatened by cheaper foreign content. How are you at Btv handling the dilemma between cheap and easy access to foreign content and expensive but necessary local content?

What is the future of in house production in the face of commissioning? Are we likely to see a reduction in in-house productions?

What are the main concerns raised by your viewers regarding what they see on the screen that is produced locally?

Thank you,

Sethunya Mphinyane.

A.O.B

I would like an interview with the former Director of DIB, Mr Ted Makgekgenene. Do you have any idea how I can get in touch with him?

# APPENDIX 4



Republic of Botswana

## Ministry of Communications Science and Technology

Private Bag 00414, Gaborone, Botswana, Tel: (+267) 3907230, Fax: (+267) 3907236

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Ref: CST 16/9 I (17)

09 October 2003

Ms Sethunya Tshepho Mphinyane  
P O Box 1671  
Mogoditshane

Dear Madam

### **RE: APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH PERMIT**

Your application to carry out research in Botswana from October 2003 – December 2005 under the title “**State control, nation-building and commercialisation as determinants of Botswana Television**” is hereby approved.

You are reminded that copies of your research report must be deposited with the organisations listed in Annexure 1 as well as Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology at the end of your research work.

Yours faithfully

I. M. Nganunu  
PERMANENT SECRETARY

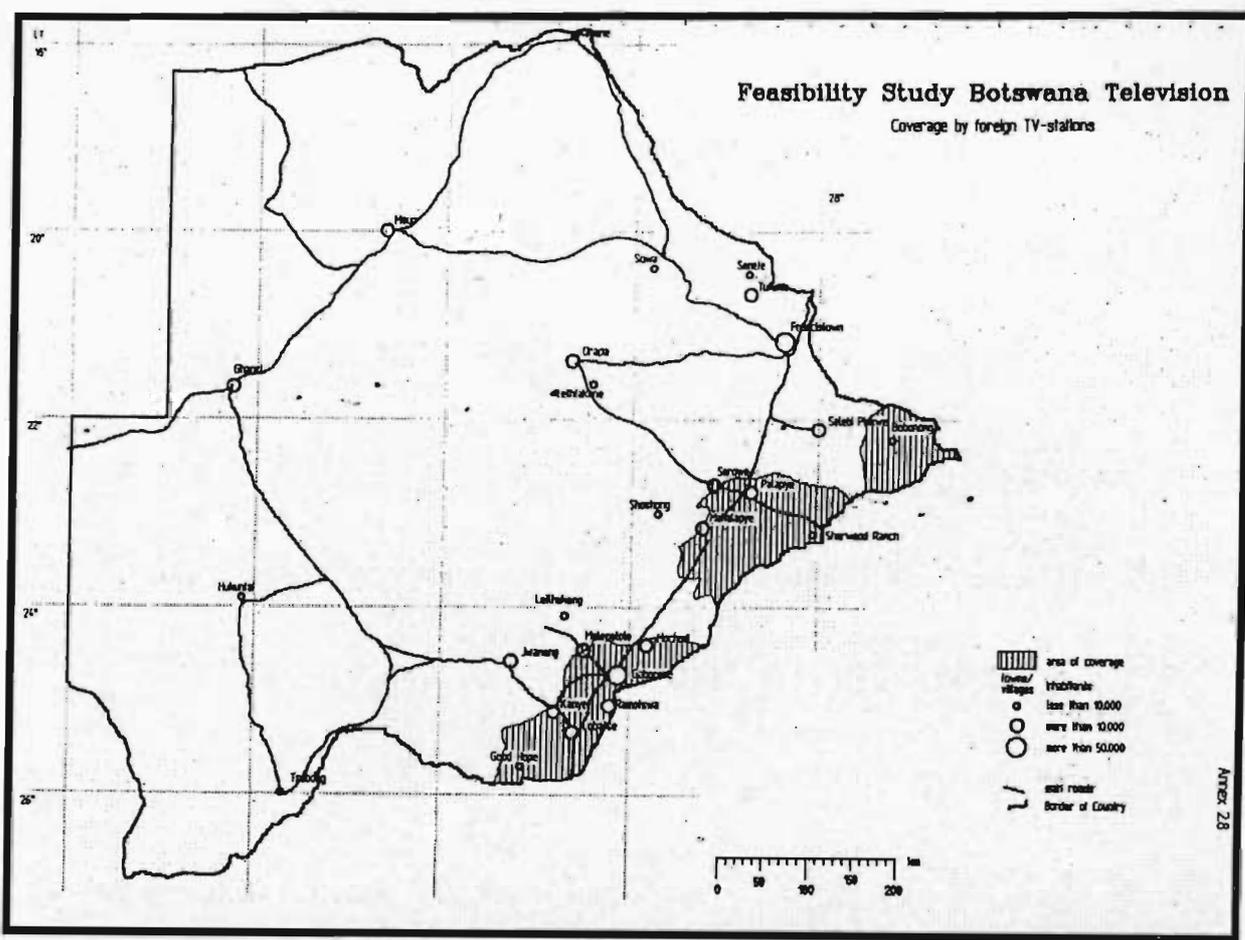
/Encl.



This Ministry supports the Vision 2016 in terms of creating “an educated and informed nation”, “a prosperous, productive and innovative nation” and “an open, democratic and accountable nation”

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 2 **APPENDIX 5** 5

Coverage by foreign television stations in Botswana (Studio Hamburg Report)



# APPENDIX 6

In Table 18 on page 21 above, town residents (62.2%) are more likely to have at least one radio set at home than in City (56.5%); Urban Village (60.4%) and Village (52.4). However, those who live in the City are more likely than either Village or Town dwellers to own more than one radio sets.

Table 19: Number of TV Sets Available in Household by Location

Location	Number of Television Sets										Total	
	None		One		Two		Three		Four		Count	%
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent		
City	147	25.8	327	57.4	72	12.6	21	3.7	3	.5	570	100.0
Town	181	44.5	175	43.0	44	10.8	7	1.7	0	.0	407	100.0
Urban Village	205	38.5	268	50.3	56	10.5	3	.6	1	.2	533	100.0
Village	154	73.3	48	22.9	7	3.3	1	.5	0	.0	210	100.0
Total	687	39.9	818	47.6	179	10.4	32	1.9	4	.2	1720	100.0

In Table 19 above we observe, on the other hand, that City dwellers are more likely to own television sets than either Urban Village or Village dwellers. In fact City (12.6%) and Town (10.8%) dwellers are more likely to own two television sets than both Urban Villages (10.5%) and Villages (3.3%). In terms of video machine ownership, more Village (89%) than City and Town dwellers do not have video machines at home.

On the other hand, more City (45.8%) than Town or Villages dwellers have at least one video machine. And with respect to car radio ownership, regardless of the number of sets, City dwellers are more likely than either Town or Village dwellers to have car radios.

# EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Appendix 7.

These procedures are for all employees of the Department of Broadcasting Services and Department of Information Services who deal with news, current affairs and programmes – journalists, broadcasters, camera persons, photographers, graphic designers, marketing officers, DJs and all freelancers falling within these categories. All concerned are expected to strictly abide by these procedures.

As employees of the Department of Broadcasting Services and Department of Information Services we recognize the fact that state media organs – Botswana Television, Radio Botswana, Daily News, Kutlwano and Botswana Press Agency – are funded by the public and therefore exist to serve the public. We also believe that to effectively serve the public we need editorial independence backed by a high degree of responsibility and accountability. This calls for the adoption of editorial guidelines and codes of ethics.

To uphold principles of editorial independence and the right of the public to know, state media employees will;

- Provide leadership in broadcasting and print media in Botswana through quality news, current affairs and programming free of political, commercial or any other interference.
- Provide Botswana with quality coverage and analysis of events taking place in their country, the SADC region, Africa and the world without fear or favour.
- Report and present news, current affairs and programmes honestly by disclosing all essential facts.
- Base programmes on fairness, openness and straight dealing. Contributors will be treated honestly and with respect. From the start, programme producers will be as clear as they can about the nature of the programme and its purpose. They will be open about their plans and honest with everyone taking part in a programme.
- Respect the right of listeners', viewers and readers to hear and read a variety of views by not suppressing or distorting facts through wrong or improper emphasis.
- Seek balance through the presentation of all sides to a controversy and at the same time recognizing that this may not always be possible in a single programme or news bulletin, but should be done within a reasonable time.
- Present editorial decisions on news merit by investing on the editorial staff the authority for all editorial decisions and directions without any external influence.
- Recognize that fairness does not mean being unquestioning, or that every side of an issue should receive the same amount of time.
- Uphold the journalistic principle of the protection of sources.
- Take care in the presentation of brutality, violence, atrocities and personal grief.
- Respect a person's legitimate right to privacy and not intrude into private grief and distress, unless it is justified by overriding considerations of public interest. Reporting of a person's private life will only be justified when in the public interest and this includes detecting or exposing criminal conduct, detecting or exposing seriously anti-social behaviour, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled where such a person is doing something in private which he/she is publicly condemning.
- Not allow advertising, commercial, political or personal considerations to influence editorial decisions and directions.
- Not take any editorial position in reporting and programming.
- Be insensitive in reporting HIV/AIDS related issues and dealing with victims of disasters such as floods, veldt fires, earthquakes, bombings, etc.
- Show sensitivity in reporting stories and issues involving children, disadvantaged communities and women.
- Not broadcast or publish material which is likely to incite or
- Ensure that news will not contain obscene language or gratuitous sexual exposure.
- Ensure that news or programmes do not contain hate speech or expressions likely to incite hatred and conflict.
- Not broadcast or publish material which is likely to incite or perpetuate hatred against or gratuitously vilify any person or section of community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual preference, age, disability, religion or culture.
- Avoid any conflict of interest during their duties be it political, commercial or otherwise.
- Be responsible for all editorial decisions and directions and resist any form of external influence.
- Forbid our editorial staff from accepting gifts, favours, special treatment or privileges which may compromise their professional integrity.
- Ensure that during political and election broadcasts the public is fully informed about the policies and programmes of all political players.
- Ensure that stories, news items and programmes offer viewers, listeners and readers an intelligent and informed account of issues that enables them to form their own views.
- Ensure that compiling reports, our editorial staff check their facts and editors take proper care not to publish or broadcast inaccurate material.
- Ensure that content of news and programmes is accurate and in context, impartial and balanced.
- Ensure that interviews are well informed, prepared for and may be searching, sharp, skeptical but not partial, discourteous or showing an attachment to one side of an argument.
- Ensure that no programme should be planned, commissioned or broadcast for commercial purposes, except insofar as programming overall may attract appropriate advertising
- Ensure that programmes are made solely for audiences and listeners and no programme should be aimed at attracting advertising revenue from a particular advertiser, company or individual.
- Ensure that in phone-in programmes the presenter or moderator takes special care to maintain fairness, impartiality and balance and allow a wide range of views to be broadcast.
- Recognize religious sensitivities and ensure that offence is not caused unwittingly by needless use of profane language. Factual programmes may question some aspect of a religion but comedy and entertainment programmes should avoid poking fun at religion, causing real distress and offence.
- Give prompt replies to complaints even if initially it is simply an acknowledgement while the complaint is being investigated.
- Foster open dialogue

APPENDIX 7

# Accuracy Checklist

Appendix 3

To enhance the quality of stories and programmes journalists should always research to get the necessary and relevant background. The Mass Media Complex has a rich reference library which is available to journalists seven days a week. Newspaper cuttings and bound newspapers are a rich resource for research. Another research institution is the Botswana National Archives. There are also private libraries for institutions and schools.

The Botswana Press Agency Stylebook provides guidelines on how to practice ethical journalism. It advises that "Botswana journalists have a responsibility to practice ethical journalism. The three tenets of journalism: accuracy, balance and fairness, should be adhered to in each story published or broadcast. No journalist has the right to publish anything that is not accurate, balanced or fair. Instead, they have the obligation to balance truth-telling, remain independent and minimize harm. Ethical journalism can be learned, just as writing and reporting skills are learned. It relies on individual responsibility, accountability and truth-telling."

- Ensure that you have a high level of confidence about facts in your story or programme and sources that provide them.
- Attribute or document all facts.
- Double-check key facts.
- Ensure that all the factual statements in your story or programme reflect the truth.
- Present quotes in your story fairly and in context.
- Do not quote anonymous sources unless you are prepared to defend them publicly.
- Do not use objectionable language or pictures in your story.
- Present your news story, current affairs and any programme honestly by disclosing all essential facts.
- Balance your story or programme by presenting all sides to a controversy.
- Uphold the journalistic principle of the protection of sources.
- Respect a person's legitimate right to privacy by not intruding into private grief and distress, unless there is an overriding consideration of public interest.
- Do not allow advertising, commercial, political or personal interests or considerations to influence your story or programme.
- Be sensitive in reporting HIV/AIDS related issues and in dealing with victims of disasters.
- Be sensitive when reporting stories and issues involving children, disadvantaged communities and women.
- Ensure that your story or programme reflects the cultural diversity of Botswana and avoid stereotyping.
- Do not include obscene language or gratuitous sexual exposure in your footage or story.
- Ensure your story or programme does not contain hate speech or expressions likely to incite hatred and conflict.
- Avoid conflict of interest be it political, commercial or otherwise.
- Do not accept gifts, favours, special treatment, lifts or privileges that might compromise your professional integrity.
- Do not accept money to do a story or programme.
- Always prepare for interviews by researching to ensure that you are informed and understand the subject and focus of the interview. Be firm but partial and fair to the interviewers.
- Recognize religious sensitivities and ensure that offense is not caused unwittingly by needless use of profane language. Do not make fun of any religion.
- Base your story or programme on fairness, openness and straight dealing.
- Treat contributors to your programme on fairness, openness and straight dealing.
- Treat contributors to your programme honestly and with respect.
- Be clear about the nature of your programme and its purpose right from the beginning and be honest with everyone taking part in the programme.
- Confirm and verify all possibly defamatory material.
- Do not try to sneak in defamatory material by suggestion with words such as allegedly or reported.
- Do not colour your story with opinions.
- Be careful of statements made by police or court officials outside court.
- Be careful of arrest reports, damage suits and criminal court hearings.
- Double-check everything that can be double checked.
- Never falsely identify yourself to gain access to persons or places and then write stories on the experience.
- Keep biases and opinions out of the news stories.
- Do not engage in shameful reporting methods. Hidden tape recorders, extorting information, or paying for information are repugnant practices.
- Exercise caution in set-up photographs or pictures.
- Ensure that your captions do not suggest something that the picture is not.
- Do not change or alter photographs or pictures in any way other than cropping to mislead readers or viewers.
- Ensure your photographs or pictures are accurate representations of the situations they portray.
- When in doubt do not broadcast or publish.

APPENDIX 3

# A PPENDIX 9

## Original sketch programme schedule<sup>159</sup>

	1730-1800	1730-1800	1800-1830	1830-1900	1900-1930
Monday	Children's Entertainment	Educational	Family Entertainment	Family Entertainment Soap	News
Tuesday	Children's Entertainment	Science	Family Entertainment	Family Entertainment Soap	News
Wednesday	Children's Entertainment	Youth	Family Entertainment	Family Entertainment Soap	News
Thursday	Children's Entertainment	Educational	Family Entertainment	Family Entertainment Soap	News
Friday	Children's Entertainment	Youth	Family Entertainment	Family Entertainment Soap	News
Saturday	Sports	Sport (Cont)	Youth	Youth	News
Sunday	Movie	Movie (Cont)	Family Entertainment	Family Entertainment	News

<sup>159</sup> Mmegi/ The Reporter, 15-21 May 1998, Vol. 15 No. 19, pg B14

# APPENDIX 10

Relocation-vo

Duration: 0'59"

Government's campaigns to tell its side of the story on the Relocation of Basarwa have been long, and more often than not, set back by statements made by Survival International. However, they continue to explore avenues in which they can win this campaign. In 2002 they launched a Website mainly set to address the issues of the relocation and to counteract statements by Survival International. Government's efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

Clip- Maribe

In the latest of their approach to this problem, they recently took a group of Journalists and Members of Non Governmental Organisations to both the old and new settlements. Observations made by the Journalists and the Civil Society could make a difference to the Campaigns.

Clip- VOX

The reality on the ground has seen many change their stance on the matter, including the head of NGO's.

Clip- Moletsane

Government does not undermine the impact of statements made by Survival International, especially that they link the relocation to the Backbone of Botswana's economy, diamonds.

Clip- Maribe

As the campaign continues, perhaps with support from NGO's and all those who tell the truth the way it is, this issue will finally fade off, and let Basarwa enjoy the services given to them by Government without anyone spoiling it for them.

# APPENDIX II

11

National Television Advert (Mmegi/ The Reporter 15-21 May 1998 Vol.15 No. 9, pp B/14 Courtesy Of the Botswana Press Agency Library )

**Republic of Botswana  
Department of Information and Broadcasting**

**National Television Service**

Applications are invited from suitably academically qualified Citizens of Botswana - **Diploma level and above - for training positions** (regardless of age or experience) with impending National Television Service.

Although it could be useful in some areas, previous working experience is not essential, but the candidates most likely to succeed will exhibit a high degree of self-motivation, plus a strong interest and aptitude for working in television: coupled with a desire and willingness to learn - and to keep on learning!

Application forms can be obtained from the Information Office in Gaborone and the following District Information Offices - Molepolole/ Kanye/ Tsabong/ Ghanzi/ Maun/ Serowe/ Kasane/ Francistown/ Hukuntsi.

Completed forms, accompanied by a brief handwritten letter and a succinct CV, must be returned to The Director, Ref. TV 002, Department of Information and Broadcasting, Private Bag 0060, Gaborone, Botswana NO LATER than Friday 29th May, 1998.

NB Since we are anticipating a substantial response we shall be contacting only successful potential candidates. Therefore, regretfully, if you have not heard from us within 21 days of the closing date you must consider your application to have been unsuccessful.

### 7 Course Fees

#### *1 The six month certificate course*

The course fee per student will be **£53,640** per student

This covers the following:

- ◆ Tuition charges
- ◆ All mandatory text books, course notes and supporting course materials\*
- ◆ Accommodation charges
- ◆ Transport costs within the UK
- ◆ Assessment and certification

\* Students may wish to purchase additional study materials at their discretion and cost. The Sony Training centre may be able to negotiate discounted prices on the students' behalf.

#### *2 On-site pre on-air training and rehearsals*

Six days pre on-air training and rehearsal - **£6,000**

This covers the following:

- ◆ Professional fees
- ◆ Training materials
- ◆ Travelling costs
- ◆ Subsistence

#### *3 Additional consultancy*

At list rate of £700 per day plus expenses.

#### *4 Specialist technical engineering training*

Price and content to be negotiated separately and dependent on the mix of equipment type and manufacture used in the installation. It is expected that this training will be delivered on-site and may be in conjunction with the pre-on air training in which case a substantial discount to list prices will be applied.

Invoices will be raised in Sterling or Euro as appropriate and will be payable within 30 days of the invoice date. Late settlement will attract an additional administration fee of 2.5% of invoice total.

## The Training Proposal Pricing

Phase 1            On-site Foundation Module  
Phase 2            5 weeks Basingstoke based training

*£8225 per student*

This includes accommodation and transport in the UK for phase 2 and also flights and expenses for Phase 1.

Phase 3            On-site pre on-air training and expenses

*£3500 + subsistence*

**Prices valid until 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998**

Phase 4            Additional Consultancy

*£700 per day + expenses*

### Invoicing

Invoices will be raised in sterling and are payable within 30 days of the invoice date.

### Course Time Plan

	Module 1							Module 2						Module 3						
Day	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Date																				
AM	Foundation						Move to Sony Training Centre	Cameras and Video				F	R	Audio and Audio				F		
PM	Module					A		Acquisition				A	D	D	Acquisition				A	D
Location	Botswana							Sony Training Centre, Basingstoke												

	Module 4							Module 5						Module 6								
Day	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Date																						
AM	Magnetic Recording and				F	R	Editing and Post				F	R	Programme		A		A	R	C, R			
PM	Recording Machines				A	D	D	Production				A	D	D	Production		Revision	A	D	-		
Location	Sony Training Centre, Basingstoke																					

Note - elements of programme production will be found in all previous modules.

- A = Assessment
- RD = Rest Day
- C = Award of Certificates
- FD = Field Day (visits, practical exercises etc.)
- R = Reporting

# APPENDIX 13

ROB GRAY VISUAL ARTS AND MEDIA  
Trading as THE TELEVISION LEARNING ACADEMY

Mr. P Matsetse  
Administrative Secretary  
Presidents Office.  
Jan 6, 1999  
Fax 09267350858

From R.P.C Gray  
Head Training Botswana Television

Dear Sir

I feel it my responsibility to report my observations regarding the Botswana Television Training Project. If one looks at the enormity of the project as a whole, it is confusing to say the least, at how little emphasis, or so it seems, is placed on the success of this programme. Any training programme of worth relies on adequate teaching aids as well as the people and facilities relating to the programme. I would like to point out three areas that need attention.

- a) The facilities contract with SABC.
- b) The teaching aids and secretarial staff on hand.
- c) Recruitment and Evaluation.

- a) I have little knowledge of the exact deal that was done with the SABC regarding the hire of BOP-TV television facilities. What I do know however is that I was consulted from time to time regarding requirements and methods for training television personnel. In fact it was me that suggested to David Millard that he contact BOP studios as a possible training venue. I must note that I was not under contract at this stage and my advise was given free, with imminent contracts dangled as a carrot. It appears that either the SABC is not meeting it's contractual obligations or the facilities were hired on a "you make do with what you get" basis. If the former, the origin of the problem is clear. Negotiations leading up to November 23, 1998, with the SABC, were conducted by persons with little or no understanding of training needs and related logistics within the television environment. To date, other than the studio, the rest of the facility ( cameras and editing suites ) crucial to the successful implementation of the course, have not been functional. There is almost an air of " It's just another third world country, they will accept whatever comes their way". The first month of training was also hindered by SABC/BOP TV internal politics. This caused difficulty in communicating with the BOP-TV staff, contracted by Botswana Training Project, together with the facilities. This caused frustration amongst the delegates from Botswana and the contracted lecturing staff.

I must add that for someone of my experience and the responsibility designated to me by your government, I find it strange that I was not included in any type of decision making in terms of facility acquisition.

- b) I realize that saving money is important, but if one looks at the overall budget and expenditure, the cost of a few computers, a data projector and an administrative secretary as, discussed and requested months before, is comparatively low. The lack of these has somewhat minimized the potential learning possibilities and generally slowed the process. There have also been complaints about the facilities supplied for news training. The scary thing is, that apparently news was an after-thought as far as training is concerned.
- c) Recruitment and evaluation has been somewhat of a hit and miss affair. Your consultants instructed a policy of multi-skills training. This has caused untold confusion amongst delegates and tutors. When questioned on the training approach, the ball is conveniently thrown back into our court. It seems that no proper research or planning took place. I am trying to rectify this problem by creating actual job functions for students within the training process. I hope to achieve this by running a five hour a day

broadcast from the BOP-TV studios. I reiterate that at the time of writing the necessary facilities are still not available. Also, why is there a double evaluation process for recruitment? The students are interviewed and selected on merit. They are then put on an "evaluation course" and then sent to me for further evaluation, under the impression that the job they will eventually do is their choice. The way it should be done is by categorizing the broadcast job functions and selecting prospective employees according to their respective aptitudes. The broad categories are Production, Operations and Engineering. It seems ludicrous that someone taken on as an engineer is given the choice to be a director. Also worth noting is that the introduction course run at the Botswana University does not meet broadcast criteria. A simple quiz has proved my point.

I have the success of this project and my professional reputation at heart. If this letter gives the impression that I am protecting myself, then I have succeeded in my communications. I believe in prevention rather than cure. I would ask you please not to discuss this matter until I am granted an interview with your goodselves.

Yours Sincerely

Robert P.C. Gray

# APPENDIX 14

14

ROB GRAY VISUAL ARTS AND MEDIA  
Trading as **THE TELEVISION LEARNING ACADEMY**

## **BOTSWANA TELEVISION TRAINING**

**6/12/98**

Kevin

Please attend this meeting.

### **MEETING 10/12/98**

Ken

Moolji

Rob

#### Agenda

1. Transport
2. Staff attitude
3. Monthly Report
4. Contract Signing
5. Tapes
6. Training in Hotel
7. Secretary for January
8. Information regarding new equipment
9. Invoices (Rob, Martin)

Rob Gray

Once again, Hunt kept out of important proceedings. Hunt only appeared at his convenience.

# A PPENDIX 15

15

35mm Camera plus stock  
See letter to Richard Makgotlho

Student placements for January 1999

2

To date the students have grasped the essential fundamentals of broadcast television. Through consultation and evaluation the following allocations have been effected. These selections are not cast in stone and should be seen merely as a departure point towards specialization.

Lorato Tshipinare	Producer/Director ( presenter )
Neo Mosimanyana	Producer/Director
Amilia Malebane	Producer/Director ( presenter )
Kabelo Tamocha	Camera
Solly Nageng	Camera ( presenter )
Peter Batsalelwang	Camera

Syvia Bodika	Sound Engineering
Takebalebe Gaobolwe	Sound Engineering

Oshinka Tsiang	News ( presenter )
Simon Moilwa	News ( presenter )
Reginald Richardson	News ( presenter )
Norman Patlakwe	News
Raymond Tshoko	News
Kefilwe Mkogaotsane	News
Doreen Moapare	News ( presenter )

Lorraine Molefe	Graphics
-----------------	----------

Lucky Moffat	Engineering
Chiche Mabenga	Engineering
Tshene Majingo	Engineering
Evelyn Walebowa	Engineering

The students experiencing career problems are the engineering students, Doreen and Evelyn. The engineering students need hands on experience. I believe that there are negotiation underway. Let me know if I can be of any help.

## Summary

The lack of facilities have caused a lot of anxiety amongst students. This reflects an unfair attitudes towards the intentions, capabilities and endeavours of Botswana management and lecturing staff. Also, the amount of choice the students are allowed is making somewhat of a mockery of the intended broadcast infrastructure. The student should be told that placements wrong or right, will be made as follows: News and Production immediately after the assessment course in Botswana. The rest, such as cameramen, sound editing and other operational areas will be placed by myself and staff in BOP. Those chosen as News and production will still be given the induction course with the rest at BOP-TV. These placements can be changed if warranted and at the discretion of the Training Management Team. I request that management issue some sort of directive to this effect. Two last points. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for Richard to sort out the facilities by the end of December 1998. Another trainer is required to help cope with the ENG work load. I have already investigated this in the light of my meeting with Mrs. M.J. Sayed.

# APPENDIX 16

6

ROB GRAY VISUAL ARTS AND MEDIA  
Trading as **THE TELEVISION LEARNING ACADEMY**

## **BOT 1 Television Training Dummy Broadcast**

Further to discussions with Botswana Television Project Management, it has become a matter of urgency to run Dummy Broadcasts as a fast track training method. I have been informed that all delegates are on probation with DIB and that final allocations will be made on merit. The responsibilities assigned below serve as a departure point for the Dummy Broadcast exercise, and have been made after due consideration.

Acting Managing Editor News	Oshinka
Assignment Editor/s	Simon / Norman
Journalists	Reginald
Journalist	Doreen
Journalist	Kafilwe

Newsreaders  
Oshinka  
Simon  
Amelia

Current Affairs Host  
Oshinka  
Simon  
Norman ( pending auditions )

Weather  
Reginald  
Doreen

Morning Show Host  
Amelia  
Solly

Sports Programme Producer/Director      Raymond

Morning Show Producer / Director  
Amelia  
Leroto

Magazine Hour Producer/Director  
Evelyn

Editor  
Solly

# APPENDIX 17

7

## Email on BTV 'rankings'

From: kgopisi Sylvia [kgopisisylvia@yahoo.co.uk] N.B. The researcher requested a copy from one of the journalists

Sent: Wednesday, December 31, 2003 11:38AM

To: [news@BTV.gov.bw](mailto:news@BTV.gov.bw)

Cc: [sphetlhu@BTV.gov.bw](mailto:sphetlhu@BTV.gov.bw)

Subject: HOW YOUR REPORTERS RATE

## END OF YEAR RATINGS- UP TO 10 MARKS

### 1. SYLVESTER

He is a man of good ideas and has outstanding grasp of both the international and local issues. But he should work on improving his communication skills 7

### 2. KAGISO

Has not yet shown his true reporting colours though he seems to possess some of the admirable ingredients of a good journalist. He should work on his shyness to gain full confidence of himself. But he looks better on the screen 7

### 3. KEFILWE

Has demonstrated passion and skill in her career. With little or more improvement she can make it to the top. She is not a pushover on many issues 8

### 4. LINET

She is naturally intelligible [intelligent] but her talents seem to lie somewhere outside this profession. I think a special desk should be created to cater for her abilities 6

### 5. DITLHOKWA

He seems to be a bit shy though he remains one of the most analytical and passionate reporters. He also possesses leadership skills 8

6. CHRIS

Chris is intelligible [intelligent] and hardworking.....possesses all the qualities of a good journalist though he can be nusty [nasty] at times. His strength lies in his ability to express himself in the Queen's language 8

7. JANET

She is an energetic reporter who likes her job as well as exposure. But should work on her temper and public relations skills 7

8. JOHN

This man should understand the difference between the public and private media. He is a typical journalist but suited in a private set up. He is fearless, trouble seeking and manipulative reporter 6.

9. MOROKE

Is a talented, energetic and passionate reporter though he is a bit pompous. He should learn to appreciate other people's abilities and strengths. But he is one of the most articulate and conversant individuals 8

10. LENTSWE

Should work on attaining full confidence of himself. He is an improved presenter with seemingly sound leadership skills 8

11. BEAUTY

A well behaved individual who isn't experimentative. He [she] can do better in the field of marketing and public relations 8

12. JULIUS

Appears to be a bit riskful and trouble-seeking though he remains an ordinary and down-to-earth individual. 7

13. ZIMONA

Seems to be losing his fire though gradually becoming a good television presenter 9

# APPENDIX 18

18

## **Synopses for Sedibeng**

([http://www.btv.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_sedibeng.html](http://www.btv.gov.bw/local_programmes_sedibeng.html))

Every person has a meeting place, whether it's a town square, an acropolis, a kgotla, a parliament or around the fire. Sedibeng is one such meeting place. Literally translated, Sedibeng means "at the well." You see the well provides precious water. It's where people meet to not only draw water, but to exchange stories, greetings, ideas etc. Therefore our magazine programme Sedibeng taps on this theme to showcase diverse experiences by Batswana from all walks of life. It has featured Botswana's heroes and heroines from the 1999 Miss Universe Mpule Kwelagobe to the first woman High Court Judge Unity Dow and some of the artists and unsung heroes of the past. It also showcases some of the interesting places in Botswana. The programme Sedibeng, aims at giving a family audience a change of pace and lighter mood following Setswana News bulletins. Sedibeng format includes short films, primarily profiles of individuals and other light features on a variety of subjects. It also features music and studio discussions.

## **Synopses of *Mantlwaneng***

([http://www.btv.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_mantlwaneng.html](http://www.btv.gov.bw/local_programmes_mantlwaneng.html))

*Mantlwaneng* is a local magazine program for children. Its target audience is Pre School to primary school children. *Mantlwaneng* in Setswana means "children's play ground". It is a forum that nurtures future leaders, in line with national traditional values as epitomized by Setswana proverb "mmangwana [mmamotse] o bonwa *Mantlwaneng*", meaning a mother can be identified at *Mantlwaneng*. At *Mantlwaneng* children imitate the roles of elderly people and family life with the view to making them responsible future leaders. *Mantlwaneng's* format reflects the ideals that are reflected in daily: Kids star: this segment showcases talented Batswana children around the country. These talents vary, and include music, dance, sports, entrepreneur skills etc. Demonstration: In this segment, children are taught on how to make various things using materials that are available at home, including trash, as well as teaching children how to keep their surroundings clean and organized. For instance, making desk tidy by creating containers such as moneyboxes from plastic bottles. How things are made: school holidays are usually school trips for most children. They tour various factories to see how various items are made. Hence in this segment, we feature a field video in which we show production processes of certain goods and services. The segment is informative and educational. Fun segment: In this segment we showcase games, events etc. Give away: *Mantlwaneng* is an interactive programme that allows kids at home to write letters, on any subject of their choice. Children, who have written outstanding letters, win themselves prizes such as books, scratch pad or are invited to the studio.

## Synopses of *Matlhoaphage*

([http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_matlho\\_a\\_phage.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_matlho_a_phage.html))

This is a programme that features political debate between Botswana's political parties in order to grant them the opportunity to air their respective political philosophies without clouding news and other regular BTV programmes. The programme brings along the ruling party together with opposition parties and topics are selected with the intention to seek political accountability from the ruling party whilst at the same time giving opposition parties the opportunity to sell their political programmes. Ever since the launching of BTV it has become evident that politicians recognise the power of the audio-visual medium as more and more of them demanded increased air time to communicate their philosophies to their electorate and constituents. Inevitably, more air time was demanded by politicians in the news and other BTV programmes. In order to avoid the politicisation of the news and regular programming of BTV, management deemed it appropriate to introduce an exclusive programme that will give the politicians the platform or forum to air their political philosophies exclusively without interfering with the rest of BTV programming and editorial content. *Matlhoaphage* is a political match between the ruling parties and opposition parties and its main target or audience, are viewers of all ages who are interested in party politics. It exposes Botswana's politicians and their party manifestos, enhances political awareness, will possibly reduce voter apathy and redirects the energies from seeking more air time on BTV programmes intended for other purposes. The programme is based on the philosophy by Management that the Public Service Media can never win a battle for the limelight once politicians engage in a concerted fight for greater exposure. The limelight is the politician's lifeline. *Matlhoaphage* is thus an appeasement programme for the politicians, an informative forum for the electorate and a special forum for entertaining heated political exchanges

among party politicians. It is a reflection of the political complexion of Botswana. You either love it or hate to love it<sup>219</sup>.

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<sup>219</sup> [http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_matlho\\_a\\_phage.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_matlho_a_phage.html)

### **Synopses of *The Eye***

([http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_the\\_eye.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_the_eye.html))

*The Eye* is BTV's flagship current affairs show that goes behind the news headlines to give you an in-depth perspective to major local and sometimes regional issues. The maxim is what is the real picture and how does it affect people. The programme is broadcast every Tuesday evening from 8.00 - 8.45pm. We also feature studio discussions with top newsmakers and people affected by stories we cover. Our weekly newspaper review has proved a hit with our audience.

### **Synopses of *What's the score?***

([http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_whats\\_the\\_score.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_whats_the_score.html))

This is a cool show which came out of an original idea to feature weekend events on the Friday edition on Sedibeng. When Sedibeng was scaled down from five days to two, we realized we were not covering the weekend sports and entertainment scene. So the producer, Sam Ngwenya approached the then Channel Controller Oshinka Tsiang with the idea and the rest as the cliché goes, is history. *What's The Score?* features weekend sports previews; reviews, news and gossip. On the showbiz side the emphasis is on the weekend gig guide around the country, major entertainment social events as well as entertainment news. If BTV has ever been confident about the future of a show, *What's The Score* is it. So keep watching this space because it's going to get cooler. Martin Nkwe and Gregg Lesibe present the programme every Friday at 2030 hrs.

### **Synopses of *Mokaragana***

([http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_mokaragana.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_mokaragana.html))

We have an obligation to expose the best of Botswana's music talent. *Mokaragana* (fun) is where we keep this promise. It is an interactive studio base programme with audience and record groups as they perform. We also interview the performers to find out what challenges they meet in their careers and hopefully enable budding musicians to learn from them. The programme is broadcast on Saturday's 0715 hrs.

### **Synopses of *Flavourdome***

([http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_flavourdome.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_flavourdome.html))

*Flavourdome* is an international music show with on location links. The vivacious Sithandwa Mmopi has hosted the show since it started. She conducts interviews with local and sometimes international entertainment personalities to add more value to the show. The show is broadcast every Friday after the seven o'clock news. Regular features include: WHO IS DAY - which allows viewers to write in and wish friends happy birthday and anniversaries if it falls on a Friday. FAME SPOT - is a celebrity corner where we dig into local DJ's and television personalities life.

## **Synopses of *Mmualebe***

([http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_mmualebe.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_mmualebe.html))

The programme that gets you talking goes on air each Monday and Thursday night at 8.30. *Mmualebe* is a 30-minute studio-based discussion that gets people to discuss mainly social issues affecting Batswana. This show thrives on a clash of opinions over pertinent social issues. *Mmualebe* is a concept that lies at the core of Botswana's social behavior. It encapsulates the concept of democracy, which the country is renowned for. The word literally means you are entitled to voice your opinion even if it's wrong. With this programme BTV seeks to spread social debates as widely as possible. We believe that only through the contest of views and opinions can socially harmony emerge. Plans are underway to transform the look of the show to make it more interactive and exciting.

## **Synopses for *Sports Hive***

[http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_sports\\_hive.html](http://www.BTV.gov.bw/local_programmes_sports_hive.html)

*Sports Hive* is a weekly programme that brings to you sports highlights, previews, reviews as well as discussions of various sport issues - complex, controversial and otherwise. It is an educational and entertaining programme for both the light and serious minded sports followers. *Sports Hive* updates you on the most recent developments and we strive to go beyond the headlines and bring you quality programmes. *Sports Hive* positions itself in the mainstream of sport development and we unearth indigenous efforts to take sport to a great height. We show you both young and old talent through features and profiles. For much more watch your premier sports programme *Sports Hive* every Wednesday at 2030 hours.

## **Synopses for *Tshamekang***

([http://www.btv.gov.bw/local\\_programmes\\_tshamekang.html](http://www.btv.gov.bw/local_programmes_tshamekang.html))

At BTV we believe that without sports we are dead. *Tshamekang* takes on this challenge. It is the premier weekend, afternoon sports programme. Featuring both live and recorded sports events with studio discussions and live links broadcast from 1400 hrs to 1900hrs, Saturday and Sunday. We talk to leading sports personalities to help analyze sports issues and events. Ninety per cent local content is our ultimate aim balanced with an offering of top international sporting events. Our current menu includes the Botswana Premier league football, volleyball and boxing. Our foreign content features the English Premier league, NBA and sports magazine programmes such as Gillette World Sport Special and Football Feva. The name *Tshamekang* is deliberately coined to instill and promote a sense of participation in sports. Thanks to the Producer Ray Tshoko and a host of talented young men and women who man our outside broadcast facility, *Tshamekang* has not missed a day on the air since the station was launched. There are great days ahead for this show. So come on sports fans play ball.

# APPENDIX 19

**PPADB approved payments for foreign programmes - 2005** (Courtesy of the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB), <http://www.ppadb.co.bw>)

Tender No: TB: 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: DBS Request for authority to purchase television programs from Sports Brand Media Group @ USD31 460.00 and Upton International Sports and International @ USD77 475.00 for a period of one (1) year. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 27.01.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Information Services' request to purchase Children's television programmes from the list of approved list of TV producers as follows:

Kohinoor Promotions @ USD50 830.00

Fairmead Consultancy @USD105 865.00

Transworld Television Corporation @ USD115 750.00

Berjaya Distribution @ USD33 637.00

Daro Film Distribution @USD79 200.00

Sandon Associates @ USD8 400.00

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date:06.06.06.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Service's request to purchase the next three episodes of "Political Assassination" from Seed Entertainment @ USD1 800.00. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 29.09.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Service's request to purchase the next series of the District (SR 2) and Sesame Street (SR 36) from Transworld Television @ USD11

000.00 and USD13 000.00 respectively. Bid Award Decision: Approved.  
Submission Date 29.09.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Service's request to purchase the two television Talk Shows namely, Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Phil from Berjaya Distribution @ USD74 750.00 and USD149 500.00 respectively. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 29.09.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Service's request to purchase the next 260 episodes of "The Bold and the Beautiful" from Ensemble Trading @ USD78 000.00. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 29.09.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Service's request to purchase the next series of FBI Files (30), Friends (73), Smallville(22) and Fame LA from Berjaya Distribution all @ USD58 477.50. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 29.09.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase Children's Programmes as follows:

5 from Richard Stewart Enterprises at US\$51, 200.00

7 from Fairmead Consultancy at US\$60, 425.00

6 from VGI Entertainment at US\$32, 000.00

5 from Berjaya Distribution at US\$58, 075.00

2 from Daro Film Distribution at US\$7, 425.00

2 from Ensemble Trading Company at US\$14, 170.00

1 from Kohninoor Promotions at US\$299.00

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase TV Documentaries from the following companies:

7 from Daro Film Distribution @ USD 34 965.00

5 from Film Resource Unit @ USD 2 400.00

3 from Fairmead Consultancy @ USD 34 100.00

1 from VGI Entertainment @ USD500.00

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase one TV Music Programme from Richard Stewart Enterprises @ USD 26 700.00. 2 from Daro Film Distribution @ USD800.00. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase TV programmes in the category of Sports:

4 from Upton International at US\$72, 025.00;

4 from Sports Brand Media Group at US\$77, 610.00

1 program from Kohinoor Promotions at US\$14, 300.00.

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase TV Filler Programmes from the following companies: 5 from VGI Entertainment at US\$6, 960.00 and from Richard Stewart Enterprises @ USD3 120.00. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase from Movies and mini series the following companies:

87 from Berjaya Distribution @ USD 78 300.00

3 from Daro Film Distribution @ USD 7 700.00

2 from VGI Entertainment @ USD 3 200.00

1 from VGI Entertainment @ USD 500 00.00

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request to purchase five TV Drama Programmes in the category of Social, documentary and action dramas for the 21:20 hours slot; science fiction for the 19:20 hours slot; family drama for the 19:20 hours slot and youth series for the 17:30 hours slot from Daro Film Distribution @ \$70,400.00. Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 04.11.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request for a waiver to renew the programs supplied by Berjaya Distribution as follows:

Comedies-Moesha, Jamie Foxx, Steve Harvey

Dramas-Strong Medicine and West Wing

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 21.10.2005

Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Services' request for authority to renew the following Television Programmes:

BBC World from BBC World Distribution Limited

American Chart Show from JCA TV

Vibes and Rewind from World Wide Entertainment

World Wide Entertainment (Wrestling)

Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 22.12.2006

**PPADB approved payments for local canned programmes**

**Figure x: Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcasting Service's request to purchase unsolicited television programmes from independent producers, Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 24.06.2005**

Name of Programme	Original Price	Negotiated Price
AV Communications – Portrait of a Leader	P222 750.00	P126 225.00
Leading Edge Technologies – Legends of Democracy	P295 515.00	P90 000.00
TM Pictures – Crossroads of Healing	P174 025.50	P114 400.00
Rano's Pictures – National Eisteddfod	P180 000.00	P36 000.00

**Figure X: Tender No: TB 2/5/10/2001-2002: Tender Title: Department of Broadcastings' request to unsolicited television programmes, Bid Award Decision: Approved. Submission Date: 06.06.2005**

NAME OF PRODUCER	NAME OF PROGRAMME	AMOUNT
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Jimmy Lekhuthile	The Boy & Tears	BWP7 500.00
Cynthia Mothelesi	Wanawasaku	BWP9 000.00
Pojo (Pty) Ltd	I am Special	BWP8 250.00
Ditiragalo Media	Selelo Sa Malema	BWP10 000.00
Ditiragalo Media	Molenza	BWP15 000.00

NAME OF PRODUCER	NAME OF PROGRAMME	AMOUNT
Ranos Pictures	Botswana Life - Choral	BWP180 000.00
Africa Sounds Investments	Alfredo Mos Live	BWP64 900.00
Flame Power	Straight Talk	BWP60 000.00
Counter Attack Productions	Orange Insomnia	BWP57 200.00
Agape Investments	Born to Dance	BWP45 000.00
AV Communications	The Zion Singers	BWP74 738.00

NAME OF PRODUCER	NAME OF PROGRAMME	AMOUNT
Ditiragalo Media	Helpless Souls	BWP76 000.00
Ditiragalo Media	Inventory	BWP76 000.00
Ditiragalo Media	Imbrasia Belina	BWP76 000.00
Ditiragalo Media	Invasive Species	BWP76 000.00
Ditiragalo Media	Ipabalelo Tseleng	BWP57 600.00
Ditiragalo Media	Mogoditshane	BWP76 000.00
Blocks Technology Group	Fish Keitseng	BWP42 000.00
Counter Attack Productions	Battle of Dimawe	BWP86 240.00
Pojo (Pty) Ltd	Orphaned By Death	BWP55 070.00

# APPENDIX 20

10<sup>th</sup> February, 2004

## TELEVISION EXHIBITION CONTRACT

1. LICENSOR:
2. ADDRESS:
3. LICENSEE: Botswana Television
4. ADDRESS: Botswana TV Building  
Seboni Drive  
GABORONE  
Botswana
5. TITLE/S OF PROGRAMMES LICENSED:
6. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF RUNS: 2 (two).
7. LICENCE FEE: 1. USD....per episode  
One thousand US Dollars  
fee shall be net of any and all taxes and bank charges.
8. LICENCE PERIOD: 2 years commencing 1 January 2004 until 31 December 2005
9. PAYMENT TERMS: Total licence fee payable to:  
- Bank:  
- Account Name:
10. LICENSED RIGHTS & TERRITORY: Non-exclusive free terrestrial television rights for Botswana
11. FORWARDING INSTRUCTIONS: Masters to be supplied on loan for a period of 60 days, by Licensor and couriered at Licensee's cost.
12. REMAINING TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT: This Agreement shall be subject to the terms and conditions set out in the schedule of terms and conditions as last.

gupton @ Mweb.co.za

# APPENDIX 21

Flix Multimedia	Kabo Monare	3974129 / 71406630	<a href="mailto:kabomonare@hotmail.com">kabomonare@hotmail.com</a>	no ✓
<sup>room</sup> Showtime Prods.	Lekgotla Seru	3915163 / 3903792 / 71836843		no ✓
abi Ali Productions	Moabi Mogorosi	71857790	<a href="mailto:vin_yang006@hotmail.com">vin_yang006@hotmail.com</a>	no ✓
Spencer Moreri	(Freelancer)	72542142		✓
Billy Kokorwe and Ken Barlow Pictures	Puni Mapini / Billy Kokorwe	3902720 / <del>2100745</del> 3924039 / 72631474	<a href="mailto:tvtraining@it.bw">tvtraining@it.bw</a>	no ✗
Basement Media	David Moepeng	3912305 / <del>72290045</del> 72692404	<a href="mailto:davidmoepeng2002@yahoo.com">davidmoepeng2002@yahoo.com</a>	no ✗
Communications Botswana	Jeff Malaba	71600689		no ✗
JJ Graphix	Hendrix Montshiwa	3163052 / 717236561	<a href="mailto:jmontshiwa@yahoo.com">jmontshiwa@yahoo.com</a>	no ✓
Phil McCowen	(Freelancer)	72250052	<a href="mailto:phil_mccowen@yahoo.com">phil_mccowen@yahoo.com</a>	no ✗
Kem Productions	Moses Masuga	3974158 / 71476230		no ✗
Tim Liversedge Productions	Tim Liversedge	6860202 / 6862340		no ✓

KGABO Productions 71313000

Richard Marksing Productions 72320099

Page Communications - O. Ntamatse 71610817

Dorcas Bere 72588600 / 72682223

Call

Ben on Monday - Ben - 72532421 for Tuesday app.

Handwritten notes at the top right of the page.

Botswana Film, Video, Television Producers

Company Name	Contact Person	Phone	Email	BFPA Member
Red Stone	George Eustice	3919144 / 71657060	<a href="mailto:george@redstonefilm.com">george@redstonefilm.com</a>	yes
Creative Liquid	Shike Olsen	72144808	<a href="mailto:shike0@yahoo.com">shike0@yahoo.com</a>	yes
AV Communications	Golden Bafana	3971520 / 71722492	<a href="mailto:oodi-cast@info.bw">oodi-cast@info.bw</a>	yes
Tsa Motshikinyego Pictures	Eunice Wadikonyana	3939944 / 71646499	<a href="mailto:tmpictures@botsnet.bw">tmpictures@botsnet.bw</a>	yes
Africa in Motion Prods.	Bibi Lethola	72531385	<i>Monday - 13:30 @ 3164406</i>	yes
Boma Prods.	Maungo Mooki	3182466 / 71642235	<a href="mailto:mook1@botusa.org">mook1@botusa.org</a>	yes
Soul Power	Mike Proctor	3935411 / 72101061	<a href="mailto:procmike@hotmail.com">procmike@hotmail.com</a>	yes
Matinee Media	Pascar Proctor	3918516 / 71548004	<a href="mailto:matinee@mega.bw">matinee@mega.bw</a>	yes
Counter Attack	Dwyan Alford	3181503 / <i>72366836</i>	<a href="mailto:dwyan99@yahoo.com">dwyan99@yahoo.com</a>	yes
Counter Attack	Clement Chebani	3644531 / 71776217	<a href="mailto:clement.chebani@debeersgroup.com">clement.chebani@debeersgroup.com</a>	yes
Camel Thorn Media	Ernst Engels	3938537 / 72108511	<a href="mailto:engels@info.bw">engels@info.bw</a>	yes
Flame Power	Thuso Oitsile	3939740 / 71221155	<a href="mailto:thuso@mega.bw">thuso@mega.bw</a>	yes
Sequence	Jafta Serero	3626300 / 72247149	<a href="mailto:jserero@hotmail.com">jserero@hotmail.com</a>	yes
Spectrum Multimedia	O. Letsididi	3922679 / 71610217	<a href="mailto:projahcob@yahoo.com">projahcob@yahoo.com</a>	yes
Feni Gasanelwe	(Freelancer)	71891788		yes
Ndipo Mokoka	(Freelancer)	71302502	<a href="mailto:ndipo@redstonefilm.com">ndipo@redstonefilm.com</a>	yes
Morati Molosiwa	(Freelancer)	71510933		yes
Ben Ngwato	(Freelancer)	3182466 / 72532421		yes
Dipolelo Video Arts	John Clement & Renee Gilbey	3167336 / 72231397 / 72639825	<a href="mailto:storyline@botsnet.bw">storyline@botsnet.bw</a>	no
Econ Network	Obi Erobu	3951870 / 71553377	<a href="mailto:erobuo@yahoo.com">erobuo@yahoo.com</a>	no
Vivid Vision	Tumelo Mokgosi	71673231		no
Worldview Botswana	Alice Marope	3184110 / 71792500	<a href="mailto:view.bots@info.bw">view.bots@info.bw</a>	no

*2 days @ 5*

*CEO's "u are very unprofessional, u dont send CEO smses"*

*all on Monday*

*perfect... 4pm Thursday*

# APPENDIX 22

## EVALUATION SCORE SHEET FOR FAMILY GAME SHOWS, RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME & CHILDREN'S GAME SHOW

What follows is a sample of criteria for the submission of a drama treatment and proposal. These criteria can be used by broadcasters and producers.

### Criteria

The following criteria will apply to the evaluation of submissions:

Audience Appeal			15%
	Theme	10%	
	Target audience	05%	
Unique Value			15%
	Broadcaster's Mandate	05%	
	Structure/ Format	10%	
Quality Assurance			45%
	Technical Input value	10%	
	Treatment	15%	
	Competence	10%	
Project Costs	Creativity & style	10%	
Skills Development			10%
Financial Assessment			10%
Track Record			05%

P.T.O right to the  
bank.

# Ministry of Communication, Science & Technology

## DEPARTMENT OF BROADCASTING SERVICES

TENDER NOTICE - TB 2/5/10 2001-2002

### *Supply of a Television Programme for the Government of Botswana - Department of Broadcasting Services- Botswana Television.*

Tenders are invited for the supply of a 13 x 26 minutes, high quality, locally produced Drama Series reflecting major themes in the lives of Batswana. Key to the channel will be a great story that is entertaining, inspiring, colourful and lively blended with warmth and intelligence, which will have a strong appeal for an increasingly young-minded audience. All parts must be packed with interesting, uncompromising scenes and not afraid of challenging the societal norms and values. A combination of strong writing, relevance to the contemporary lives of Batswana and a competitively priced series will be paramount in achieving Btv mandate.

Request for Proposals entailing terms and conditions can be down loaded from the government web site at <http://www.gov.bw/business/tender.html>.

However copies of the same can be obtained @ P50.00 a copy during government working hours from Monday to Friday with effect from 19/05/04 at the following address. Mass Media Complex, Botswana Television, PLOT No 37795, Willie Seboni road, Gaborone west Phase II, Gaborone.

Contact Person; Raymond Tsheko, Tel; 3658044, *e-mail* [rttsheko@btv.gov.bw](mailto:rttsheko@btv.gov.bw)

Tenders in triplicate must reach the Board Secretary, Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board, Plot 1267, Lithuli road, Gaborone, Botswana ( between Oxford Furnishers and Auto Haus) **not later than 1000 hrs on Wednesday 28th July 2004**, when tenders will be opened in the presence of interested tendering companies.

Tenders must be in sealed envelopes and clearly marked **Tender No TB2/5/10 2004-2005 Supply of a Television Programme for the Government of Botswana.**

Telegraphic, telephonic, telex, and facsimile tenders will not be considered.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the forgoing, the government of the republic of Botswana is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender nor to give reasons for non acceptance of any tender thereof..



Botswana television  
Department of Broadcasting Services  
Private Bag 0060 Gaborone Botswana  
Telephone (+267) 3658000  
Facsimile (267) 300051

APPENDIX 23

**SCHEDULE FOR 31 JULY TO 06 AUGUST**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11.00						Mantlwaneng	Super Mario
11.30						Talk back	Nicholas
12.00	Sesame street	Talk back	Sesame street	Sesame street	Sesame street		Turning point
12.30						Sedibeng rpt	700 club
13.00	Little Bill	Moomin	Budgie	Mantlwaneng	George shrinks	The Eye	Melodi ya kgalaletso
13.30	Polka dot shot	Book mice	Cat dog	Pecola	Rugrats		
14.00	Felix the cat	Silver brumby	Dennis Gashner	Anthony ant	3 Friends & Jerry	Tshamekang	Tshamekang
14.30	Raccoons	Little bear	Monster by mistake	Wild thornberry's	Dragon tales		
15.00	Jamboree	Hey Arnold	Ned's newt	Hurricanes	Rocket power		
15.30	C speed racer	7 little monsters	Voltron 3 <sup>rd</sup> dimension	C bear & Jamal	Mighty Hercules		
16.00	Sesame street	Sesame street	Sesame street	Sesame street	Sesame street		
16.30							
17.00	Flintstones	Mantlwaneng	Fortune Quest	Gadget boy	Jackie chan adv.		
17.30	Little rascals	Real kids real adv.	USA high	Popular machanics			
18.00	Oprah	Documentary	Oprah Winfrey:	Documentary	Oprah Winfrey : a special experiment men turn into woman.	Hidden city	Td Jakes
18.30	Winfrey: Oprah & seven cheating husbands.		From White House to crack addict.			On tour	Wild life diary doc.
19.00							
19.30	Just Cause	Teen talk show	Sedibeng	Business Africa	Friends	Moesha	Matlhoaphage
20.00		The Eye	Jamie Fox	The District (Drama)	Flava dome	Mokaragana	
20.15							
2030	Agriculture		Sports Hive				Steve Harvey
21.00							
21.30	The Bold and the Beautiful	The Bold and the Beautiful	The Bold and the Beautiful	The Bold and the Beautiful	The Bold and the Beautiful	18 wheels of justice (drama)	Dr Phil: Afraid to age.
21.50	Dr Phil:	Dr Phil: My spouse	Dr Phil: can this	Dr Phil: Larry king	Twins (movie)		

**APPENDIX 24**

	Wrongly accused.	let themselves go.	marriage be saved?				
22.10						The sixth day (movie)	
22.35	This is wonderland (drama)	Slings (drama)	For the love of game (movie)	West wing (drama)			Korean drama
23.20					MERIBO		
23.40						MERIBO	
00.20							
00.40							

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21.20	Passions	Passions	Passions	Passions	Passions	Brotherhood of murder (Movie)	Danielle steel: The ring part 2 (movie)
22.00	The Bold	The bold	The bold	The bold	The bold		
22.20	FBI files	Strong medicine	Chocolat	The District	Don't look down	MERIBO	BBC WORLD
23.00	Stingers	The Simpsons		Ocean Ave			
00.00	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	