

SPACES OF ASPIRATION, LIBERATION AND EXCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF URBAN
SPACE IN AN AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

BY

STEPHEN D. MARR

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2008

© 2008 Stephen D. Marr

To My Parents and Grandparents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It seems strange that all the labor of the past 9 years is to be distilled into these last few concluding lines. More to the point: I've long fantasized about this day and all the people I'd thank for the lessons they've imparted, perhaps even going so far as to narrate a few mildly hilarious anecdotes about some of the individuals I've encountered over the course of this project. It was to be a great moment. And it still is. Although at this final stage of looming deadlines I feel these final paragraphs resemble more a feeble monument to my own exhaustion—more a whimper than a bang. To make a fanboy analogy sure to cause no small amount of cringing, I've carried this burden all the way up to the fires of Mount Doom, and now that I can be rid of it, I'm not sure how to draw things to a close. Hopefully I'll manage to find my verbal footing—"here at the end of all [dissertation] things"—while doing a serviceable job thanking everybody who made the journey possible, in ways big or small, whether they know it or not.

The writing has been occasionally exhilarating, frequently tedious, more than slightly terrifying; how I managed to cobble together a couple hundred pages from a mess of fieldnote scribbles acquired through a mixture of street corner conversations, barroom blustering and a host of other improvisations, I'm not quite certain. I do, however, know two things: first, I'm glad this is over and that I can begin to comport myself as a real live human person, again engaged with long-term friends and family who have been recently reduced to digitized apparitions, unreturned emails and "missed calls" on my cell phone. Second, and in spite of my own inattentiveness over these past months and years, these same people have been unceasingly supportive throughout the writing process, even if they didn't quite understand what I was doing or why I was doing it or why I wasn't finished already. I owe them all some debt of gratitude I will likely never be able to repay.

For starters, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank my friends from Notre Dame, St. Ed's and Lafayette 12 and 13. The regular 4am conversations, often over beer at the end of a late night of avoiding work, occasionally interrupted by exploding fireworks or flying pumpkins, went a long way in shaping my own thinking about the world and the people in it. If you read this, and perhaps one or two of you will, you'll no doubt make fun of me for saying so, but it's true.

At the University of Florida too, I don't think I would've made it through without the camaraderie and friendship of the many folks I know in the Political Science Department and the Center for African Studies. In what no way amounts to an exhaustive list, special mention is reserved for: Ryan Bakker, Melinda Negron, Wadley, Liz "the Beav" Beaver, Noelle Mecoli, Parakh Hoon, The Doodle, Matt DeSantis, Laura Dehmlow, Greg Markowski, Todd Leedy, Andy Lepp, Andrew Woods, Kenly Fenio, Joe Kraus, Kevin Fridy, Jason Gainous, and Matt Caverly. I remember fondly all the time spent at the Copper Monkey, the Top (despite the sometimes insufferable presence of Gainesville's scenesters), the Salty Dog; not too mention the weekly "Chinese Food Saturday's," an afternoon rite often sponsored by Bakker, in which everyone ate while watching me scream myself hoarse at a usually dismal performance of Notre Dame's football team. You've all both corrupted and enhanced my time at UF—no small feat, that.

I'd also like to give a special mention to the staffs of the Department of Political Science and the Center for African Studies. Debbie Wallen and Sue Lawless-Yanchisin have been amazing helps over the past 9 years(!) I've been at UF, and, I think it is pretty safe to say that without them, I'd still be trying to figure out how to register for my first semester's classes. And at the CAS, Professor Leo Villalon, Corinna Greene and (now) Dr. Todd Leedy have been especially supportive of not just me, but of all the graduate students in their domain. Keep up the

ASA trips—and the next time we're all at Bukowski's, the drinks are on me. Professor Villalon deserves further thanks for taking me on as a member of my committee a few years back, despite his approximately one million other responsibilities. He is a charismatic and warm person for which we are all better for knowing.

I would also be neglectful if I didn't single out the help and guidance of two former members of the UF Political Science faculty who were great mentors to me early in my grad student career. Professor Dennis Galvan would patiently listen to all of my crazy research ideas, complaints, and threats to leave the program before calmly settling me down and putting things in perspective. I always left his office feeling better than when I entered it. Dr. Michael Chege was my advisor in the year prior to my leaving for Botswana for the first time in 2002. In the weeks preceding my trip, I was more than a bit apprehensive and nervous about what to do when I got to Botswana. I went to his office one afternoon in the hopes that he would give me a schematic on how I was to "do" fieldwork or for what I should be looking. Instead of detailed instructions however, he merely told me to "keep my eyes open and something would appear." At the time, I thought that was fairly terrible advice teetering on the verge of "new age-y" inanity, but in retrospect, after my time in the field, his suggestion seems incredibly wise—I was just too immature and inexperienced at the time to know it.

These days, my current committee of dissertation advisors has been equally awesome: providing advice when asked, prodding when needed, and otherwise leaving me to myself to seek out my own voice and approach. I can't begin to express my appreciation to them for granting me the freedom to pursue my own admittedly odd research project. I didn't meet with much resistance, even after they heard what I intended to do, or that I wanted to make shopping malls (in Botswana) an integral component of the research. And in fact, the only time they told

me “no” was when they rejected my idea to add a survey to the research so as to make it more “political science-y”. Apart from the mentoring help, I’ve learned much from all of you: Professor Luise White taught me to pay attention to the whispered stories and backroom gossip I would have no doubt otherwise dismissed, while Professor Aida Hozic taught me about both the importance of (pop) culture and politics, as well as its performance. Without Professor Peggy Kohn’s seminar on “Cities and Citizenship” it’s likely that I would never have undertaken this project. So it is with much gratitude that I thank her for not just opening my eyes to another side of political science, but being one of the project’s biggest supporters. It is probably safe to say that she knew what this project was about long before I did.

Professor Goran Hyden, along with his wife Melania, has been a tremendous help to me through these dissertation years. A student couldn’t ask for a better mentor and advisor. Dr. Hyden, more than anyone, was willing to let me follow my own path—in research, thinking, writing, pretty well everything—while also reining me back in when he felt I was going a bit too far afield. Beyond the realm of academics, Dr. Hyden is kind and generous, always willing to make time for his students. I won’t soon forget the regular end-of-semester parties that the Hydens would throw for students and the larger African studies community—nor Mama Hyden’s famous *chapati*. For whatever virtues are to be found in the upcoming pages, much of the credit goes to the influence and guidance of Dr. Hyden and the rest of the committee.

I would also like to thank Dr. JoAnn Moody, the Northeast Consortium for Faculty Diversity and Monmouth University for providing me with the space, time, and resources to do much of the writing for this project. It’s not much of a stretch to think that without this year to write uninterrupted I’d be years away from finishing. My colleagues and friends at Monmouth University were welcoming and made the writing experience far less lonely than it otherwise

might have been. I'd like to single out Dean Stanton Green and Judy Ramos from the School of the Humanities and Social Societies; and Joy Crane, Rekha Datta, Joe Patten, Ken Mitchell, and Kevin Dooley from the department of political science.

And, of course, my year and a half in Botswana would not have been possible without the help of people too numerous to mention. Funding for the project was obtained from a Fulbright Dissertation Research Grant provided by the IIE. Jermaine Jones, the liaison for Fulbrighters in Africa did an especially commendable job in making sure we got all the support we needed. At the U.S. Embassy in Gaborone, I'd also like to thank the Public Affairs Officer Karen Morrissey, Dr. Judy Buttermann and Doug Blackburn.

For swiftly granting me my research permit, I'd like to thank President Festus Mogae and the Office of the President in Gaborone.

As for all the many anonymous people in Gabz who gave generously of their time in the shebeens, taxis, street corners, coffee shops, park benches and all the rest, I am eternally grateful for your help in making this project possible. Even the constant marriage proposals from strangers played a significant role, though they seemed a nuisance at the time. For those whose names I do know, the list is long, and by no means exhaustive. Deserving special mention are: Gabriel Malebang, Osi Lesole, Tshepo Makgasa, for your friendship, advice, help and endless supply of patience in answering all my boring and incessant questions. To my "Rasta" friends at the Main Mall: Aaron, Days, Sean, Richard, Slick, George. To my friends and colleagues at the University of Botswana and the Department of Politics and Administrative Studies who supplied a seemingly boundless supply of support and feedback. I'd like to single out in particular, Professors Ian Taylor, Roger Tangri, Ken Good, Gladys Mokhawa, Gervase Maipose (Chair of the Politics and Administrative Studies Department), and Neil Parsons—who seemed to always

have at hand some arcane bit of historical information or insight that was pertinent to whatever I was focusing on at the time. Many thanks to the Botswana National Archives and the amazing (now retired) Gilbert Mpolokeng. Gilbert had this uncanny ability to know exactly what I needed, and when; he'd come from behind and softly drop on the desk a file long-forgotten by everybody but him.

Sandy Grant was a great friend and sounding board for much of the thinking and research while I was in Botswana. And equally so, over the years via email. His comments on all the chapters have been invaluable—he's saved me from mistakes too numerous to mention. Other friends, apart from the ones already mentioned, that warrant special acknowledgement: Elise Carpenter, Adrian and Liz Wisnicki, Aziz Haidari, Natalie Doyle, Paul Rushton, Lisa Brooks, Andrea Sepinwall, Mona Drage, the Honorable Dumelang Saleshando, Miss Botswana 2004 Juby Peacock, Puseletso Mompei, Natalie Do, Roy Mafunga, the anonymous person who slaughtered the farewell party goat in Old Naledi so I didn't have to, Rory Sheldon, Charlie Sheldon, Quill Hermans, Taylor Ahlgren, Mma Ketlogetswe, Dr. James MacQuillan, Zach and Jackie, Ruth and Ruth, the good people at A to B Cabs, Primi Piatti, the Okavango Café, Caravellas, and the President's Hotel. Not too mention the night-owls at the Gaborone Sun. I could write pages and pages about all of you. And, of course, last but not least, the two people most responsible for my ascension into the ranks of local Gaborone celebrity—you don't become the 5th most famous person in Botswana on your own!—Naledi Ketlogetswe and Warona Setshwaelo.

Finally, my parents and grandparents. I don't thank you nearly as much as I probably should. And though you weren't always pleased by my choice to study in Africa—why not Europe? Or the area within a 15-mile radius of home?—and continued to float the possibility of

law school well into my graduate student career, I just wanted to say, however inadequate the word, “Thanks!” No telling where I’d be without your constant encouragement and support.

With much love and gratitude.

The last word: I claim ownership over the mistakes, misinterpretations or outright inaccuracies there are in the following manuscript. Credit for whatever insights and redeeming observations there might be in this study of urban space in Gaborone is owed entirely to the contributions of those both named and unnamed. There. I’m rid of it. Let’s end the story here.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	13
LIST OF FIGURES.....	14
ABSTRACT.....	16
 CHAPTER	
1 AFRICA’S BLEMISHED “MIRACLE”: THE IRONIES OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN BOTSWANA.....	18
A Statement of the Problem.....	18
From a “Dorp” in the Bush to a City of Tomorrow.....	20
The African Exception.....	28
2 A CITY FROM SCRATCH: THE BIRTH OF GABORONE INTO THE 1960S.....	48
Chiefs, Subjects and Traditional Settlements in Bechuanaland.....	50
Dreaming a City, Thinking a Plan.....	70
“Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss”: Or, a Colonial City fit for Independence.....	85
Sand Castles at High Tide: Zoning, Housing and Who Goes Where?.....	102
Conclusion.....	130
3 RECLAIMING THE CITY: GABORONE’S TRANSFORMATION FROM COLONIAL HEADQUARTERS TO POST-COLONIAL CAPITAL DURING THE 1970S AND AFTER.....	135
Principles with which to Build a Nation.....	140
Fish out of Water: An Apartheid City in a non-Apartheid State.....	147
Designing a Mixed Density, Non-Racial Town.....	161
Conclusion.....	169
4 BUY, BUY, BUY: CONSUMPTION AND THE MAKING OF MODERN CITIZENS IN AND AROUND THE SHOPPING MALLS OF GABORONE, BOTSWANA.....	174
Introduction.....	174
Modern Houses for Modern Living (Maybe Next Door to the Former President or in Close Proximity to Other Celebrities).....	179
“You’re Not Your Fucking Khakis” vs. “No One Can See if Your Belly is Empty”.....	186
Thank You for Visiting the Shopping Capital of Gaborone.....	198

5	DOWN ON THE CORNER: ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SPACE ON THE STREETS OF GABORONE, BOTSWANA.....	210
	This Land is Our Land. As for the Rest of You.....	216
	“Zim Women Admit Stealing Underpants”: the Making of Perfect Strangers	231
	Citizen v. Stranger Struggles, White City and Beyond	252
6	FROM FILTH TO FEAR: SEQUESTERING POVERTY IN BOTSWANA’S CAPITAL CITY	258
	Bugs and Dirt and Crud: Accounting for the Ick! Factor in Colonial Bechuanaland.....	268
	The Establishment of Unauthorized Settlements in Gaborone.....	282
	A Village Becomes a Town?	318
	Wandering Where the Streets Have No Name: Talking about, Living in, Old Naledi	331
	Conclusion: The Village Talks Back?	367
	Photographs	376
7	BORDERS, BOUNDARIES AND PUTTING PEOPLE IN THEIR (RIGHT) PLACE: SHAPING URBAN FRONTIERS IN BOTSWANA’S CAPITAL CITY.....	385
	The Civilized and the Savage? Navigating American and African Frontiers	395
	Spaces of Aspiration, Liberation and Exclusion: Making Sense of Gaborone’s Urban Frontiers	412
	REFERENCE LIST OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES.....	422
	REFERENCE LIST OF NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES	437
	REFERENCE LIST OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL PUBLICATIONS AND ARCHIVAL MATERIALS	444
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	458

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>page</u>
6-1 Chart of labor statistics entered into Legislative Assembly public record.	291

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>page</u>
4-1 Riverwalk Shopping Mall from across the Tlokweng Road. Notice the metal fence and hawkers' stalls hovering on the edge of the mall's property (Photograph: Elise Carpenter).	206
4-2 Christmas Display at Riverwalk (Photograph: Adrian Wisnicki).....	206
4-3 Riverwalk Parking Lot and Food Court (Photograph: Adrian Wisnicki).	207
4-4 Riverwalk's rear lot with the garbage dump in the background. In the distance, you can make out the smoke from a garbage fire and a bulldozer (Photograph: Steve Marr).	207
4-5 Shopping at Riverwalk (Photograph: Steve Marr).....	208
4-6 Banner at the Entrance of Riverwalk (Photograph: Steve Marr).	208
4-7 Botswana's own Elvis impersonator performing at a \$50 a ticket show at the Gaborone Sun Hotel and Casino (Photograph: Steve Marr).....	209
5-1 The Orapa House looms over White City (Photograph: Steve Marr).....	255
5-2 The Orapa House street corner (Photograph: Steve Marr).	255
5-3 Three police officers on patrol. The traffic cones stake out an informal driving school (Photograph: Steve Marr).	256
5-4 Two gumbakumba parked at a Gaborone immigration office (Photograph: Steve Marr).	256
5-5 Sharing breakfast while waiting for work (Photograph: Steve Marr).....	257
5-6 Hustling for a job on the Orapa House corner. The parked automobile is owned by a government agency. The government both hires and chases away Zimbabweans from the White City (Photograph: Steve Marr).	257
6-1 Early design for the new capital by the Department of Public Works.....	376
6-2 A close-up shot of the plan shown in 6-1. Of particular interest here is the African housing separated from the rest of the town.	377
6-3 Old Naledi Gathering and Informal Market, 1971 (Photo courtesy of Sandy Grant).....	378
6-4 Old Naledi Street, 1971 (Photo Courtesy of Sandy Grant).....	378
6-5 Old Naledi Street, 2005 (Photo: Steve Marr).....	379

6-6	Old Naledi Market, 2005 (Photo: Steve Marr).....	379
6-7	Old Naledi Market. The billboard promoting condom usage in the distance reads, “Even the best ballers take a safe dunk with it” (Photo: Steve Marr).....	380
6-8	Old Naledi Market (Photo: Steve Marr).....	380
6-9	One of two signs posted at the north and south edges of Old Naledi along the Old Lobatse Road (Photo: Steve Marr).....	381
6-10	A shot of Old Naledi taken from the overpass that separates the northern edge of the area from the businesses and offices across the road (Photo: Steve Marr).....	381
6-11	Overlooking Old Naledi (Photo: Steve Marr).....	382
6-12	An early morning at an Old Naledi shabeen (Photo: Tshepo Makgasa).....	382
6-13	An original White City house built to house low-income workers in the last phase of Gaborone’s initial construction (Photo: Steve Marr).....	383
6-14	The still empty Central Business District in the center of Gaborone, with newly constructed government offices in the distance (Photo: Steve Marr).....	383
6-15	An Old Naledi contractor’s advertisement articulating the dreams of the residents of Botswana’s new capital, 1971 (Photo Courtesy of Sandy Grant).....	384

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

SPACES OF ASPIRATION, LIBERATION AND EXCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF URBAN
SPACE IN AN AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

Stephen D. Marr

May 2008

Chair: Goran Hyden
Major: Political Science

The dissertation, entitled *Spaces of Aspiration, Liberation and Exclusion: The Politics of Urban Space in an African Democracy*, situates Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, in a wider theoretical perspective related to the study of comparative urban politics. Questions posed in the dissertation include: how is the pervasive social and economic inequality maintained in Gaborone? What formal and informal methods are employed by the State to organize and marginalize the population of urban poor in the city? What role does informal cultural politics have in creating contemporary notions of citizenship and identity amongst the residents of Gaborone? How are class, race and social conflicts enacted in the urban geographies of space, discourse and imagination?

To interrogate these theoretical issues, I combine the qualitative methodologies required for in-depth ethnography with an interdisciplinary body of social and political theory. This approach allows me to move beyond the focused case study of Gaborone and make broader comparative linkages both in the Southern Africa region, as well as elsewhere in the globe. In the first half of the dissertation I trace the forty-year history of the planned capital of Gaborone in terms of the formal policies and regulations guiding the colonial and post-colonial planning and development of the city. One of the primary assertions made here is that in spite of the efforts made by the independent government of Botswana to alter the divided socio-economic

landscape of Gaborone, there is little difference between the colonial and the post-colonial city, as economic inequality and the social and political marginalization of the urban poor remains largely unchanged in both contexts.

The latter half of the study builds on the themes and conclusions covered in the preceding chapters by considering three locations throughout the city. These sites are: a popular Western style shopping mall, the oldest urban slum in Gaborone, and a well-traveled street corner frequented by illegal immigrants looking for work. Taken together, these three locales capture a mosaic depicting the organization of power in the discursive and physical spaces of Gaborone. A narrative of these sites illuminates the contemporary prevalence of inequality and poverty existing adjacent to lifestyles of extreme affluence and prosperity, which characterize the conflicts and possibilities of urban citizenship in Gaborone. More significantly, the questions asked of Gaborone related to consumption, citizenship and inequality suggest broader cultural, political and policy implications for emergent urban centers across the world.

CHAPTER 1
AFRICA'S BLEMISHED "MIRACLE": THE IRONIES OF DEVELOPMENT AND
DEMOCRACY IN BOTSWANA

A Statement of the Problem

A central theme of the dissertation might well be summed up in a deceptively simple question: how come some people have money to buy things while others do not? Framing the issue this way, I recall a brief scene I witnessed while doing fieldwork in Gaborone in the spring of 2004. I was newly arrived in Botswana at the time and didn't really know what to judge as important or irrelevant, so as it happened, I didn't give what I was seeing much extra thought. I was riding in a taxi around 8 or 9pm heading toward Game City, one of the new South African/Western style shopping centers that were being built all over Gaborone at the time. Reminding me of an elongated airport terminal, Game City was notable as the first enclosed, environment controlled shopping mall in the country. Built at the southernmost tip of the city in view of the city's only large geographic feature, *Kgale Hill*, Game City was home to shops, boutiques, a miniature golf course, a multiplex cinema, and the occasional baboon adventurous enough to make its way down from its home on the nearby Hill. Across the street from the shopping complex sit some luxury automobile dealerships, and not much further beyond is the main industrial area of town and Old Naledi, the large urban slum adjacent to it; the distance to the slum from the shopping center being not much more than one mile. Although the dealership was closed at the time, the indoor lights illuminated the showroom, making the sedans and sports cars visible from the parking lot and street outside. Taking advantage of the lights, a group of 4 or 5 young boys stood with their heads pressed against the showroom's window looking and pointing at one particularly snazzy sports car. Just as I noticed them, they disappeared behind me as my taxi turned out of the intersection's roundabout, sped up and headed off in a different direction. Little did I know then, that this ephemeral moment one random evening, years ago

and a continent away, rather than dissipating to some seldom-accessed part of my brain, would retain a permanence that I've never quite been able to shake, let alone ignore.

And while I obviously didn't hear what was being said, or where these boys' homes were located, the darkened silhouettes of these boys, standing as close to their dream car as the window would allow, encapsulates the circumstances of urban life in contemporary Gaborone. Wealth, power, luxury consumables—the usual symbols of prosperity—are everywhere visible in this city where the rich live geographically close to the poor, yet are worlds apart in terms of status, opportunity and money. Simultaneously these same symbols, the trappings of affluence, remain almost completely unattainable for a substantial portion of people, rarely existing outside the realm of fantasy or consumer desire. The principle of “look, but don't touch,” or more formally put, the themes of inclusion and exclusion, or inequality of status and resources, which so dominates the politics of urban space and citizenship in Gaborone, is neatly wrapped in this memory of some scrawny kids admiring a car they'll likely never be able to afford. It is not though, enough to simply point out the inability of many to obtain a fast car, use the newest multimedia cell phone, or be seen drinking imported beer, but rather, to direct this observation to develop a broader theme about the meaning of urban citizenship and identity for people who can't participate in these activities while at the same time living in a society that for upwards of forty years has preached the singular importance and value of development and growth, of turning away from the past in order to create something different. What happens to those who have failed to “develop?” What is the source of these inequities? And perhaps most important for the discussion to follow, how are these dynamics maintained in the urban geographies of space, imagination and discourse in 21st century Gaborone?

Over the course of the upcoming chapters we will attempt to answer these questions. For now however, we start more modestly by examining the transformation of Gaborone since its founding forty years ago and placing the city in the context of Botswana's broader democratic and economic development.

From a “Dorp” in the Bush to a City of Tomorrow

The middle decades of the 20th century following the atomic conclusion of World War II and the often-painful dissolution of colonial rule across the globe were seen in their time as marking the beginning of a new epoch in history. Technology, culture, politics, the rise of a global economic and communications network: all these realms experienced changes as quick as they were momentous. Elvis, the jet engine and vacuum tube computers the size of single-family houses all signaled the birth of new ways of living that were no longer compatible with the old ways of living (however it was that you wanted to define “old”—the lines demarcating the past from the present from the future have never been readily identifiable). For a world seen through the prism of stages of growth, which culminated in the pinnacle society-wide mass consumption¹, “tradition” became an indefensible word, valuable only as a means of describing what people around the world needed to escape from. And quickly.²

For peoples and countries that didn't, or couldn't, transform quickly enough on their own, various means were devised in order to prod them forward. One of the more dramatic, and certainly traumatic for at least some of a nation's most vulnerable, methods employed was state-sponsored town planning. The motivation behind such sweeping exercises being that the creation of new, modern urban spaces would have a transformative effect on a “backwards”

¹ W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-communist manifesto* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967).

² Rostow suggests that the move traditional society to one based on high consumption will take about 60 years. See page 10.

population sorely needing an example in the habits, thinking and practices required by modern living. Cities such as Chandigarh, New York City and Brasilia, as well as their conjurers Le Corbusier, Robert Moses, and Oscar Niemayer, constitute some of the most famous examples of supposedly orderly, rational and ideologically driven town planning. And in the specific cases of Brasilia and Chandigarh, the enormous building projects conducted on these wild, “vacant” and unspoiled sites represented a fresh start and a break with the past; the attempt to redirect their populations, institutions and governments onto a new path more suitable for the speed, commerce and technology of the new age. Their symbolic function, as an exemplar of a rational, organized, easily administered future, is arguably the most important of the New City. To state the issue in the colorful terms of Le Corbusier in his famous planning manifesto *The City of Tomorrow*, are we to follow the way of the pack-donkey and the past, or the way of Man and freedom, an accomplishment facilitated by the rigorous application of linear geometry and orderly planning?³ For urban planners of the period, there could be only one answer to that question.

Not only did this urban planning philosophy call for the alteration of people—both at the level of the collective and the individual—its visionary advocates described these practices as the fundamental technique of politics and governance. From the same treatise, Le Corbusier writes:

[Town planning] is the concrete expression of human needs, of human means, and of human intentions? These needs, these means, these intentions, are to-day clearly apparent to those who are capable of discernment and vision. And so town planning really becomes as it were, the mirror of authority and, it may be, the decisive act of governing.⁴

The architect as politician, the politician as architect, if we are to understand the above, there is seemingly no difference. The politicians/architects of today are not merely to represent

³ Le Corbusier, translated by Frederick Etchells, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning* (The Architectural Press, London, 1971). Although this is a recurrent theme in the book, see Chapter 1 for its initial statement.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

the interests of the people, rather they are to formulate them. Urban planning under this conception therefore, becomes much more than being simply about making a space for comfortable living. Instead, underlying—not terribly subtly—these planning principles are, among others, issues of authority, power, government, economics and the good life. The road to the future, as foreseen by Le Corbusier and his modernist brethren, is going to be paved, preferably with 8 lanes of traffic.

The themes discussed above will be explored in greater detail in the coming pages. I only mention them now to provide a signpost as to where we are headed and because the themes and consequences wrought by the large-scale planning projects conducted in a place like, for example, Brasilia, are also in evidence in other planning projects that haven't been the subject of intense academic scrutiny. The lesser-known, lesser-told stories of places like Abuja, Lusaka, Rabat, and Gaborone are no less dramatic, no less interesting and no less reflective of a time, ideology and way of thinking that continues to affect the lives of urban dwellers on a political, social and economic level into the present.

Cities such as Canberra and Abuja were built to function as centers of administration and government whose establishment was as much an expression of power and monumentality as it was about providing a space for governance. And while this is also true of places like Rabat and Gaborone, the complicating layer of colonialism was added to the planning and building of these sites. Although built, or reshaped as in the case of Rabat, as colonial administrative hubs, following the conclusion of colonial rule, the cities were recast into new roles as capitals of independent states. Untangling however, the legacy of colonial planning is a task not easily accomplished. As Abu-Lughod points out in her examination of the development of Rabat, the

city divided along colonial lines before independence is often divided along class lines following independence, as local elites fill the vacuum left by departing colonialists.⁵

Botswana's capital of Gaborone has experienced similar problems following its independence in 1966. As a city built out of the bush over the course of a few frantic years in the mid-1960s, designed first to serve as a replacement for the existing colonial capital located in Mafikeng⁶, South Africa and then as the capital for an independent Botswana, the relatively unexplored case of Gaborone has something to offer with regards to the processes and consequences of Western planning models attempted in Africa. The confluence of colonialism's lingering effects, Botswana's economic and political stability and successes following independence, the country's long-standing experiences with urban living in the pre-colonial period and encirclement by much larger and more influential racist states, particularly South Africa (for a large portion of its independence history), have all played—and possibly continue to play—important roles in development of the city.

The story of Gaborone is not about domineering figures and architectural giants⁷, majestic monuments or revolutionary ideologies; there was neither time nor money for such sweeping gestures. Instead the early planning of the city was conducted by a largely anonymous group of colonial architects and planners, aided occasionally by housing and planning officials from their London headquarters, who derived their vision for the city from town planning techniques taken from models used in the industrialized West, other British colonies, and the surrounding region.

⁵ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Rabat: Urban apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1980). See especially chapter 13, "Rabat from Caste to Class," pp. 258-274.

⁶ Under colonial rule the name of the town was spelled "Mafeking" and was changed following independence. As was, for example, Gaborone and the nearby town of Lobatse, which were formerly Gaborones and Lobatsi. I use the current spellings unless otherwise noted.

⁷ Although one could persuasively argue that the figure of Seretse Khama, Botswana's founding father and first president, casts quite a long shadow over the history of the city.

The variety of disparate forces that have shaped the making of Gaborone makes the study of urban planning, as well as a more broadly focused “politics of space,” into the contemporary period, a particularly useful and illuminating exercise. But beyond the story of its origins, Gaborone is compelling due to the vastness of changes that has occurred over the past 40 years. From a dusty backwater to a cosmopolitan location and regional economic hub, the city would be virtually unrecognizable to those who built it four decades previous.

To show just how dramatic Gaborone’s transformation has been since the urban core of the city was built over forty years ago, it is instructive to consider some descriptions of Gaborone in its infancy. Around the time of the construction of the future capital, the population in the non-tribal area around what was then called Gaborone consisted of a small number of permanent residents. There were a few government buildings, including a jail and a public works department camp, some general traders, government officials, farmers and not much else. Even at the time of the first census following independence in 1971, the population in Gaborone represented only 3% (17,700) of the nation’s total population.⁸ Sandy Grant, a long-time expatriate observer and historian of the politics and culture of Botswana, writes,

... For several years, Gaborone was a pretty odd place anyway consisting mainly of bush with the occasional building in between and with no obvious connection between one and the next. So true was this that one visitor, having driven through Gaborone, stopped to ask another motorist on the Lobatse road⁹ where Gaborone was to be found.¹⁰

Another author, acidly characterizes the Gaborone of her childhood as possessing “nothing in the way of beauty; it was just an ugly little dorp squatting on the main road and railway line,

⁸ Republic of Botswana, Central Statistics Office, *2001 Population and Housing Census*, ‘Table 1.6 ‘Distribution of Population in Urban Settlements: 1971-2001 Censuses’ <<http://www.cso.gov.bw>> (1 August 2006).

⁹ At that time there was one main North/South road parallel to the railway connecting the few urban centers in the Eastern section of the country.

¹⁰ Sandy Grant, ‘Gaborone: symbol of independence’, *Botswana Magazine*, **1**, 2 (no date), p. 8. Although the article has no date, based on other information contained in the article, it seems likely to have been written early in the 1970s.

close to the border of the Republic [South Africa].”¹¹ Aesthetic evaluations aside, the above two descriptions capture the flavor of characterizations written about Gaborone before it was redesigned and more or less constructed from scratch in the years leading up to independence.

And indeed as the plans for the city and the future of Bechuanaland were debated in colonial government circles, there was the general expectation that Gaborone would look much the same decades into the future. Due to the low population, poverty, and bleak economic prospects beyond a cattle industry struggling to survive amidst the severe droughts of the early 1960s and periodic outbreaks of foot and mouth disease—this, being shortly before the enormous diamond fields were discovered—the government foresaw little hope for prosperity in the country. Accordingly, even the most optimistic planning estimates only predicted a future maximum population of around 20,000 Gaborone residents by 1990. This expected maximum was surpassed very early in the city’s development; the reasons behind the wildly inaccurate predictions and their consequences into the present will be explored in greater detail below.

Fast forward forty years, of a city and a country, on the edge of subsistence, present-day Gaborone is home, according to the most recent census in 2001, to about 186,000 people.¹² A five year old figure that was probably underreported at the time and which is surely substantially higher now. If for example, the rates of growth continue on the trajectory from 1991-2001 in which the population of Gaborone increased by over 50,000 people, then the current official population for the city is well over 200,000.¹³ And it is probably higher when you factor in the circulatory migration of both foreign and rural workers, as well as the fact that households in

¹¹ Carolyn Slaughter, *Before the Knife: Memoirs of an African childhood* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 2002), p. 84.

¹² Republic of Botswana, Central Statistics Office, *2001 Population and Housing Census*, ‘Table 1.6 ‘Distribution of Population in Urban Settlements: 1971-2001 Censuses’ <<http://www.cso.gov.bw>> (1 August 2006).

¹³ *Ibid.*

high-density areas tend to under-represent the number of people living on the property for fear of government sanctions.

Even today however, some popular outlets still consider Gaborone as “little more than a sprawling village” suffering from the “drabness and lack of definition that accompany an abrupt transition from a rural settlement in the 1960s to a modern city”¹⁴ that is “so obscure it’s not even recognized by MS Word’s own spellchecker.”¹⁵ But to gloss over the dramatic changes that have revolutionized life and politics in the city does a disservice to the complexity of Gaborone by ignoring pervasive regional and global cultural and economic forces at play in the city. The pace of change has especially quickened in the past ten years or so. When I first visited Gaborone in the summer of 2002 on my inaugural trip into the field I didn’t know quite what to make of things, did the city so confound my expectations about what I would find in an African city. Upon driving into the core of the city on my first day in Gabs,¹⁶ I saw just how affluent the city’s business and political elite and burgeoning middle class were. The roads were seemingly clogged with imported luxury European sedans and SUVs. A new shopping mall, with the scenic name Riverwalk—sited on a floodplain rather a consistently flowing body of water—that wouldn’t have been out of place in a well-to-do American suburb had recently opened and immediately became an important venue for the young, hip or rich to “see and be seen.” The city was in the middle of a construction boom, birthing a nascent skyline in the central located government hub. I was even able to catch a special late night screening of the second *Star Wars* prequel only one day after its release back in the States. Being in Gaborone

¹⁴ Paul Greenway, *Lonely Planet: Guide to Botswana* (Lonely Planet Publications, Oakland, CA, 2001), p. 114.

¹⁵ ‘Wish you were here?’, *BBC News Online*, 26 April 2005
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4464293.stm> (27 July 2006).

¹⁶ “Gabs” or “Gabz,” is the shortened nickname for the city adopted by many residents.

made it easy to forget that I was in another hemisphere and a four-leg thirty-five hour plane trip home.

And when I returned again in February of 2004 I was not surprised to discover that the city had continued to grow at an accelerated pace. There were, depending on how you counted, at least four new modern shopping centers, indicating the vibrancy and importance of Gaborone's newly developed "mall-culture." Construction expanded the bounds of the city outwards, as well as upwards as newer, taller buildings were erected and the roads appeared even more congested and overflowing. Fashionable western consumables, such as Ipods, Red Bull and Miller Genuine Draft beer, continued to make their entrance into the shops and restaurants of urban Gaborone, often accompanied by invitation only "launch parties" to trumpet their arrival. A "glamorous"¹⁷ hotel-casino complex resided on the outskirts of town, playing host to beauty pageants, film festivals and US presidents.¹⁸ Other recent visitors to Gaborone have had their expectations similarly defied. One researcher describes his surprise at finding elite Batswana "shopping for designer jeans and the latest Harry Potter book."¹⁹ It is no longer accurate to conclude as one British volunteer did in a 1966 letter home that "Gaborone is even less of a shopping centre than Serowe²⁰; it has shops but nothing in them."²¹

¹⁷ Barnaby Philips, 'I'm beautiful and HIV-positive', *BBC News Online*, 3 March 2005 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4311807.stm>> (27 July 2006).

¹⁸ George Bush's Presidential entourage stayed there during his short visit to Botswana in 2003, as did one of the first daughters during her covert volunteer trip to Gaborone in 2005.

¹⁹ Scott A. Beaulier, 'Lessons from Botswana: Africa's economic dynamo', (The Independent Institute, Washington DC, 2005) <<http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=1628>> (27 July 2006).

²⁰ Serowe was, and still remains, a major and populous Tswana village located a few hours north of Gaborone that serves as the capital of the BaNgwato tribe.

²¹ Sandy Grant (ed), *Sheila Bagnall's Letters from Botswana, 1966-1974* (Leitlho Publications, Odi, Botswana, 2001), p. 28.

The changes experienced by Gaborone and the people who live there go beyond the most obvious visible cues of prosperity and affluence signified by malls, cars and imported beer. For some long-term residents of Gaborone, even notions of citizenship and home have been transformed. Generally Batswana identify a village of their parent in answer to a question about where they are from even if they have not lived there for a long time, if they have even lived there at all. The home village is not just a place where one might say they come from, in practice, it is also where most people return on holidays and important family occasions. But as Gaborone becomes a more established and permanent home for a more urbanized population it is transforming peoples' relationships to their familial village and lands.²² Where in the past it would have been a futile task to locate a person "from" Gaborone, this effort is no longer impossible. Indeed, the development of Gaborone has included not only economic growth and new lifestyle options for those with the means to participate in them, but it has also begun to permeate peoples' identities as it alters, for example, rural-urban linkages and the very definition of place and home for its residents.

The African Exception

The tales of a glittering city full of increasingly urbanized residents, luxury cars and shopping malls meshes with the dominant political assessment of the politics and economics of post-Independence Botswana. Most of the popular Western press and the scholarly literature²³

²² Tshireletso Motlogelwa, 'Old Naledi spawns first kraal of city breed', *Mmegi*, 6 January 2006 <<http://mmegi.bw/2006/January/Friday6/819492207632.html>> (30 July 2006).

²³ A sampling of the literature along these lines includes: Louis A. Picard (ed), *The Evolution of Modern Botswana* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 1985); Stephen John Stedman (ed), *Botswana: The political economy of democratic development* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 1993); Richard Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The public anthropology of Kalanga elites* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2004); Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, 'An African success story: Botswana' (CEPR Discussion Papers 3219, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London, 2002); Abdi Ismail Samatar, 'Leadership and ethnicity in the making of African state models: Botswana versus Somalia', *Third World Quarterly*, **14**, 4 (1997), pp. 687-707.

dealing with Africa in general, or Botswana specifically, tells the story of an African exception in opposition to the chaos, violence and poverty typically portrayed in media discussions of Africa. *An African Miracle*, the title of a 1999 volume about Botswana's political and economic successes, encapsulates much of the optimistic feelings the academics have long held towards Botswana.²⁴ Even in the early days of post-independence government, there was the recognition amongst both external observers and domestic politicians that something different was transpiring in Botswana despite the country's tremendously weak economic position, near lack of any sort of infrastructure and its unfortunate encirclement by Southern Africa's racist white regimes. By 1970, for example, the *New York Times* was able to announce in a page 2 headline "Botswana Offers a Promising Contrast in Africa."²⁵

The first president, Sir Seretse Khama, had also adopted this optimistic rhetoric about Botswana being exceptional in the developing world as a country of racial and social harmony. In a 1972 speech to the attendees of the Botswana Democratic Party's (BDP) annual conference, Khama states, ". . . Botswana is widely regarded as a beacon of hope in a troubled region, a force for constructive change."²⁶ Because of Botswana's political and economic weakness in the region, Khama outlined the national guiding principle *Kagisano*—a synthesis of traditional and modern values that had been, and would in theory continue to be, the underlying motivation in the development of Botswana. Further into the speech, Khama goes on to define the normative implications of a society founded on *Kagisano*:

²⁴ Abdi Ismail Samatar, *An African Miracle: State and class leadership and colonial legacies in Botswana Development* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1999).

²⁵ Charles Mohr, 'Botswana offers a promising contrast in Africa', *New York Times*, 7 June 1970, p. 2.

²⁶ Gwendolen M. Carter and Philip E. Morgan (eds), *From the Frontline: Speeches of Sir Seretse Khama* (Rex Collings, London, 1980), p. 144.

... Our principal contribution [to progress in Africa] must be the defence and development of our independence by the only means available to us—the defence and development of non-racialism and social justice for all. We must build a society in which all our citizens, irrespective of race, tribe or occupation, can fulfill themselves to the greatest possible extent, where they can live in peace and uphold the ideals enshrined in the Setswana concept *Kagisano*—unity, peace, harmony and a sense of community.²⁷

From the earliest then, *Kagisano* has been a primary force guiding the development plans and policies of the government. Even today, in Botswana’s twenty-year all encompassing blueprint to a better society, *Vision 2016*, *Kagisano* continues to be the symbol of Botswana’s utopian aspirations. Further elaboration of this principle, as well as how successfully it has been implemented across society will be explored elsewhere. For now though, brief mention of it will suffice to demonstrate Botswana’s positioning as a developing democracy unlike any other.

It is worth noting that Botswana’s glowing reputation both globally and regionally is an important public relations tool for attracting investment and foreign development aid. And that the rhetoric of success is in some ways a self-fulfilling prophesy; Botswana’s untarnished reputation attracts capital, thereby enabling more potential successes and more investment in the future. The importance of good publicity might explain, for example, why the first two things you see on the official government website is a link proclaiming Botswana to be the “gem of Africa” adjacent to a link debunking charges that it is violating the human rights of the so-called Bushmen by relocating them from their ancestral homelands in the pursuit of diamond exploration.²⁸ Accusations made by some international human rights organizations, most notably the UK-based Survival International, have suggested that Botswana’s diamonds are not, in fact, untainted by the human rights violations and abuse that characterize mineral exploration

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

²⁸ This juxtaposition was present on the Government of Botswana’s official website—available at www.gov.bw—through August 2006. As of January 2008 however, Botswana’s defense of what it terms the “Relocation of the Basarwa” is buried deeper in the website, under the still telling headline, “Social and Economic Development.”

elsewhere in Africa.²⁹ And while my point isn't to comment on the validity or accuracy of either side's claims, the lengths to which the Botswana government goes to protect its reputation, democratic credentials and resources accounting for a substantial amount of the country's foreign exports³⁰ is noteworthy.³¹

This is not to say however, that Botswana's designation as an African miracle is not at least partially deserved, since aspects of its development since independence are indeed staggering. Even for those familiar with Botswana's situation towards the end of its status as a British Protectorate and the early days of independence, the statistics bear repeating. At independence in 1966 Botswana was one of the ten poorest countries on earth.³² Largely neglected and ill-funded by the colonial government for reasons ranging from the constant threat of the territory's incorporation into South Africa and Rhodesia to the colonial government's reluctance to invest in a country thought to have bleak economic prospects for the future due to its desolation, small population and apparent lack of natural resources. Accordingly, Bechuanaland's administrative headquarters resided outside its territory in adjacent South Africa,

²⁹ Two pieces that provide overviews of the government's policies and activities with regards to diamonds and San relocation from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve are: Kenneth Good, 'Bushmen and diamonds: (un)civil society in Botswana' (Discussion Paper 23, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2003); Ian Taylor and Gladys Mokhawa, "Not forever: Botswana conflict diamonds and the Bushmen", *African Affairs*, **102** (2003), pp. 261-283.

³⁰ Taylor and Mokhawa, "Not forever", p. 263. According to Taylor and Mokhawa diamond mining accounted for 87% of the foreign exports in Botswana in the first quarter of 2001.

³¹ Even as I write, the current President of Botswana, Festus Mogae, conducted a meeting with leaders from all the primary opposition parties to strategize about the allegations made by Survival International about abuse against the Bushmen. This meeting is unusual since the ruling BDP is dominant in the government and rarely consults with opposition on policy matters. But in the case of the CKGR relocation issue, the government considers the presentation of a united front against its critics necessary. See: Gideon Nkala and Tuduetsso Setsiba, 'Mogae summons opposition leaders', *Mmegi*, 4 August 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/August/Friday4/1005123522994.html>> (4 August 2006); Tuduetsso Setsiba, 'Opposition parties claim ignorance on CKGR', *Mmegi*, 10 August 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/August/Thursday10/4232063021144.html>> (10 August 2006).

³² United Nations Development Program, *Botswana Human Development Report 2005: Harnessing science and technology for human development* (UNDP, Gaborone, 2005), p. 14.

less than 7 km of tarred road existed in the country and there were only 3 secondary schools serving a country roughly the size of Texas.³³ Seretse Khama in a 1970 speech in Sweden describes the circumstances in which the people of Botswana found themselves:

. . . Not one single secondary school was completed by the colonial Government during the whole seventy years of British rule. Nor did we inherit any properly equipped institutions for vocational training even at the lowest level of artisan skills. The administration had at its disposal only the most rudimentary information on our national resources. The country was largely unmapped. On the threshold of independence, as I told Botswana's first National Assembly in my dissolution speech, 'We were in the humiliating, but essentially challenging position, of not knowing the basic facts on which to found our plans for the future.'³⁴

The future of the newly independent and democratic Botswana, it is safe to say, did not look terribly promising.

With the discovery of significant diamond deposits in 1967 however, everything changed. Today, the mine operating out of Jwaneng is the most profitable diamond mining operation on the planet and as a consequence, the few kilometers of tarmac roads found at independence has ballooned to over 18000 km³⁵ and there are now over 300 secondary schools across the country.³⁶ Responsible for this dramatic increase in infrastructure is a GDP that grew 2000 percent from 1965-1980³⁷ and experienced the fastest growth of GDP per capita of any nation on earth over a three-decade period from 1966-1996.³⁸ Although the growth of Botswana's

³³ Jenny Clover, 'Botswana: future prospects and the need for broad-based development' (Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2003), p. 2 <<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/current/botswanaasep03.pdf>> (1 August 2006).

³⁴ Carter and Morgan, *From the Frontline*, p. 100.

³⁵ *The Economist*, 'Diamond country', **346**, 4 April 1998, p. 53.

³⁶ Clover, 'Botswana: future prospects and the need for broad-based development', p. 2.

³⁷ Jack Parson, 'The trajectory of class and state in dependent development: the consequences of new wealth for Botswana', in Nelson Kasfir (ed), *State and Class in Africa* (Frank Cass and Company, London, 1984), p. 40.

³⁸ J. Clark Leith, 'Why Botswana prospered' (Canadian Economics Association Thirty-Fourth Annual Meetings, University of British Columbia, 2000), p. 3 <<http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/economics/faculty/Leith/Botswana.pdf>> (26 January 2008).

economy has slowed its meteoric increase in recent years, due to the variability of the international diamond trading market, it continues to demonstrate steady progress. For example, in the fiscal year of 2003/2004 the economy grew at 3.4 percent while in 2004/2005 the economy increased by 8.3 percent as a result of an 18.2 percent increase in the mining sector from the previous year.³⁹ Complementing these rosy growth figures is the fact that Botswana possesses foreign reserves of \$6.2 billion, which translates into 27 months of imports if the economy were to cease operation.⁴⁰

As Leith points out in his article on the reasons for Botswana's development, observers ought not to focus solely on the numbers demonstrating economic prosperity. But rather, emphasis must also be placed on the policies and leadership that has allowed Botswana to evade the paths taken by other "resource-cursed" African nations such as the Congo, Sierra Leone or Angola. The existence of diamonds, in other words, is only part of the story. Equally important, is what happened after they were dug up out of the ground.⁴¹ Apart from the singularly focused perspectives of trade, money and minerals it is also important to consider Botswana's politics when discussing their exceptionality. Indeed, Good and Taylor criticize the mostly economy-centric positions taken by most academics in praise of Botswana, arguing instead that to fully appreciate the circumstances in Botswana it is necessary to consider the country's social and political aspects.⁴²

³⁹ Republic of Botswana, 'Annual Budget Speech 2006' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2006), p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴¹ Leith, 'Why Botswana prospered', p. 9. Leith focuses largely on the economic aspect of policy-making, such as monetary and mining policies, or policies and regulations tied to international trade.

⁴² Kenneth Good and Ian Taylor, "Unpacking the 'model': presidential succession in Botswana", in Roger Southall and Henning Melber (eds), *Legacies of Power: Leadership change and former presidents in African politics* (HSRC Press, Johannesburg, 2006), p. 51 <<http://www.hsrepress.ac.za/index.asp>> (15 August 2006). I should note that I further discuss this extremely critical paper on the practice of politics in Botswana in a bit more detail below.

The story of Botswana's democratic trajectory and good governance credentials since independence are nearly as well known as its economic statistics. Along with Mauritius, Botswana is the only other African nation to have experienced uninterrupted democratic rule, punctuated in the case of Botswana, by presidential and parliamentary elections every fifth year. Eschewing the path taken by most other African nations, Botswana has avoided internal and external violence, military interventions in domestic politics, or corrupt and contested election procedures. Political stability in Botswana has no doubt been aided by the economic prosperity described above. As Parson notes, because of the dynamism and growth of Botswana's economy, the government could pay its way out of direct conflict with potentially troublesome groups such as poor rural village dwellers through large-scale infrastructure development programs.⁴³

But beyond economics and the potentials of development, stability has also been achieved because the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), formed in the waning moments of colonial rule with the tacit encouragement and support of the British, has never lost a national election—nor for that matter, has it even come close. Each election period therefore, has been marked by a peaceful continuation of governance by the BDP. And because of the close ties between the colonial government and the early BDP elites, due to their concern over the then Bechuanaland Protectorate becoming embroiled in the Marxist leaning Pan-African political movement that was sweeping the continent and gaining a small, but vocal, following led by P. G. Matante and the Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) in urban areas, such as the northern city of Francistown, even the transition to independent rule proceeded smoothly and without trauma.

However, Taylor and Good's advice about the need to more fully consider the political arena holds true in spite of their criticisms.

⁴³ Parson, 'The trajectory of class and state in dependent development', p. 57.

The easy move from Protectorate status to Independence was also made possible due to the intersecting economic interests between the colonial white population and the Tswana elites who replaced them. The desire to engage in sound policy-making to further the development of Botswana rather than devolve into more parochial cleavages involving tribalism or race has continued into the present. From the beginning, as J. Stephen Morrison outlines in his case study of cattle-owning institutions in the late colonial period, elites have been able to overcome differences for the sake of growing the economy. In this instance, what little wealth there was in the Protectorate and later, in early Botswana, depended heavily on the cattle industry. For this reason, prominent white ranchers and the Tswana cattle ranching elite, who constituted the core of the BDP's governing body, were able to coalesce around issues of economic importance.⁴⁴ While politics was important to the leaders of time, a former officer of both the colonial and independence government recalls that these men were often businessmen first and politicians second, writing of Seretse Khama during his first years back in Botswana following his exile due to the chieftainship controversies surrounding his marriage to a white British woman,

For several years [Khama] adopted a low profile and after his return from exile he had much work to do in attending to his private affairs. He had many cattle and although his trusty servants had looked after his interests in his absence he still had much to do to consolidate his holdings.⁴⁵

Cooperation in the pursuit of elite interests and stability, was and still remains, the most sensible policy option for the BDP today, even in the face of extreme income inequality and poverty in

⁴⁴ J. Stephen Morrison, 'Botswana's formative late colonial experiences', in Stedman, *Botswana: The political economy of democratic development*, pp. 27-49.

⁴⁵ George Winstanley, *Under Two Flags in Africa: Recollections of a British administrator in Bechuanaland and Botswana, 1954-1972* (Blackwater Books, Colchester, UK, 2000), p. 204.

substantial segments of the population (to be discussed below).⁴⁶ The elite mentality of “sticking together” is important not just for understanding the relative political and economic stability in Botswana, but also for untangling the politics of planning in the capital, Gaborone to be examined in the upcoming pages.

Achieving less notoriety in discussions of Botswana’s “miracle” mythology are the problems besetting democracy in Botswana. The more you examine the democratic situation in Botswana, the more the country’s reputation as a model for political and economic development in Africa becomes a bit more suspect. While stability, non-interference by the military, and the occurrence of elections indicate the presence of democratic politics, at least on the surface, other practices and mentalities question both the depth and quality of democracy in Botswana. Politics in Botswana can be criticized for its lack of transparency, one-party dominance, a hierarchical top-down approach to politics, weak civil society, corruption at the top of government⁴⁷, and a lack of popular representation in policy-making. To expand on a few examples, the central role played by the bureaucratic machinery in Botswana has been explored elsewhere in the literature. Molutsi asserts that the expertise of bureaucrats have enabled the bureaucracy to dominate policy-making at all levels of government due to a political class that was weak and

⁴⁶ For a more recent look at the development policies pursued by the BDP government in Botswana, see: Zibani Maundeni, “The politics of poverty in Botswana”, *Botswana Notes and Records*, **23** (2003), pp. 99-109. Referring specifically to pp. 105-107.

⁴⁷ Government corruption with regards to land allocation and housing has been especially problematic in Botswana, particularly in Gaborone. Most recently, a government inquiry in 2004 under a commission appointed by the President uncovered examples of possible corruption at worst, and bureaucratic incompetence at best. The investigation centered on shady allocations of land around Gaborone that failed to conform to standardized land allocation policies set by the government. The most suspicious case being a shopping mall built on land set aside as an environmentally sensitive bird sanctuary and flood plane. Off the record, people involved in this case spoke of intimidation, threats and bribery. The official record of the Molapo Crossing investigation, along with the other cases and recommendations of presidential commission can be found in the official report: Republic of Botswana, ‘Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Land Allocations in Gaborone’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2004).

unknowledgeable in comparison.⁴⁸ As one government minister noted with regards to bureaucratic control of the making of the National Development Plans and warning of political interference of these plans, “we could have politicians disrupting projects as they pleased.”⁴⁹ In recent years however, the fear of disturbances has been ameliorated because the BDP and the bureaucracy have developed a much cozier relationship, as the BDP has recruited senior level bureaucrats into political positions in the government, thereby allowing BDP ideologies and objectives to permeate the civil service and putting the bureaucracy more in the service of the interests of the ruling party.⁵⁰ The insularity provided by the close relationship of politicians and civil service technocrats causes policy to be implemented in a top-down way with few opportunities for popular input or consultations.

Positioned as a modern day *kgosi*/chief, the BDP government led by an institutionally powerful president proclaims and dictates with the expected consequence being that the people are to respond accordingly. Typical of these assumptions of governance is a current example of the government’s efforts to incorporate, Ledumadumane, a section of neighboring village Mogoditshane into Gaborone while relocating its 1700 residents elsewhere in the country to provide some much needed land and space for the rapidly expanding city.⁵¹ In a recent *kgotla* meeting in the village, the Minister of Lands and Housing, Ramadeluka Seretse, announced that the entire village would be annexed into Gaborone instead of only a portion of the area as the villagers had been previously told. The minister suggested that the village residents ought not

⁴⁸ P. P. Molutsi, ‘The ruling class and democracy in Botswana’, in John Holm and Patrick Molutsi (eds), *Democracy in Botswana: The proceedings of a symposium held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988* (The Botswana Society, The University of Botswana and Ohio University Press, Gaborone and Athens, OH, 1989), pp. 108-109.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁵⁰ Maundeni, “The politics of poverty in Botswana”, p. 107.

⁵¹ *Daily News*, ‘Gaborone to expand into Kweneng’, 15 August 2006 <<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20060815>> (15 August 2006).

oppose the relocation efforts because it is a necessary sacrifice for “the benefit of the whole nation”⁵² as other villages have had to do in instances of the discovery of natural resources. Residents complained however as to why they had to move rather than experience the developments that would accompany incorporation into urban Gaborone, since in this case, the discovery of mineral deposits was not the cause of the resettlement scheme. “Are the developments that you want to bring here not suitable for us?” one asks.⁵³ Another observes, “the government has a tendency of taking decisions and consulting later.”⁵⁴ In response to these remarks opposing the need to relocate, the Minister explains the real reason why it is necessary for the villagers to move once their village is designated a town, “Once we put in water drainages, electricity and roads, this would be no longer a village which would be expensive for most of you.”⁵⁵ Even if we accept the seemingly dubious proposition that it is a better economic proposition to relocate and rebuild an entire village than it would be to provide some sort of subsidies to allow these people to continue living where they currently reside, the Minister’s comment, I think, encapsulates something important about the government’s paternalism and attitudes toward the poor. One unstated implication here is that the government knows what is best for the people and therefore, its advice and guidance should be followed.

More important than that though, by characterizing the need to move in terms of expense, the Minister acknowledges the marginal status of the poor in Gaborone, as well as their unimportance in the urban area’s future development. In a 2005 *Mmegi* editorial speaking

⁵² Tduetso Setsida, ‘Consult us on land—Ledumadumane residents’, *Mmegi*, 14 August 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/August/Monday14/62510827634.html>> (14 August 2006).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

directly to the specific case of Ledumadumane village, the paper notes that the rules governing land allocation seem to differ for the rich and the poor. The editorial board pointedly writes of the government “brutality” directed towards squatters living in Mogoditshane, the peri-urban village adjacent to Gaborone,

Government has been quick to unleash its might on the poor and ensure that it whips them into compliance whenever they depart from the expected decorum. But nay, the rich have never been made to feel the might of the state even when there is evidence of wrongdoing!⁵⁶

As land speculation in Gaborone becomes more lucrative, not to mention, increasingly privatized and consolidated in the hands of a few large real estate developers, it becomes an acceptable solution to shuffle around large numbers of people who potentially might add to the ranks of the urban poor in Gaborone, rather than sacrifice the payday deriving from the sale of land to private developers. Although the above might seem just one minor example, the tension between elite interests and the urban poor are recurrent themes in the story Botswana’s democracy, and more specifically, in the 40-year history of Gaborone.

Also worth mentioning with regards to some of the limitations of Botswana’s democracy, the unrestrained power of the President and the BDP’s general intolerance of dissent can be found in the 2005 deportation of the political science professor and government critic, Professor Kenneth Good. On Monday February 21, 2005 the President of Botswana Festus Mogae gave a speech to his alma mater, the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. In the middle of his talk he detailed the democratic environment found in contemporary Botswana proclaiming that first and foremost, “In Botswana everyone is free to air their opinions, no matter how different, [which is] something deeply embedded in our cultural heritage. Post-independence leaders built

⁵⁶ Mmegi, ‘Government must ensure equality in land question,’ 27 September 2005 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/September/Tuesday27/122392864409.html>> (27 September 2005).

on this heritage. . . . The opposition conducts its business freely and without hindrance.”⁵⁷ On Friday, three days earlier, Professor Kenneth Good was handed documentation at his home declaring him a prohibited immigrant along with orders to leave the country within 48 hours.⁵⁸ Suspiciously, the orders came at 5pm, just after the government offices had closed for business for the weekend, making any appeal or protest impossible until Monday morning, after the time Good was to be out of the country.

The reasons for the deportation weren't entirely clear then or now because the law in Botswana doesn't require the government to explain or justify why a person has been declared a prohibited immigrant. Two possibilities however, have distinguished themselves. The first reason, which has become the official version of late, is that Good was a threat to the Botswana economy because he was working with and exchanging information with the NGO Survival International in their defense of the San in their fight against relocation from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, with the government going so far as to declare Good a “threat to national security.”⁵⁹ In a public meeting in June 2006 President Mogae vocalized these concerns when he dramatically, if not a bit defensively stated, “[Good] appealed to the international community to reject our diamonds and tourism yet he stayed with us here. He even lied with his compatriots,

⁵⁷ Festus Mogae, ‘Botswana’s Developmental Experience’ (Address given by President Festus Mogae, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, 21 February 2005) <<http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001114/index.php>> (11 August 2006).

⁵⁸ Neil Parsons, of The Department of History at the University of Botswana, has compiled a detailed timeline of events surrounding Good’s deportation, which I have found invaluable in keeping the dates in order. It is available at <<http://www.thuto.org/ubh/news/kengood1/htm>> (11 August 2006).

⁵⁹ Scott Pegg, “Presidential succession and academic freedom: Botswana deports leading political scientist Kenneth Good”, *PS Online*, (October 2005), p. 829. For a fuller account of this story from one of the co-authors of the paper that ignited the controversy, see: Ian Taylor, “The limits of the ‘African Miracle’: academic freedom in Botswana and the deportation of Kenneth Good”, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, **24**, 1 (January 2006), pp. 101-122.

Survivor International that we were killing Basarwa like animals.”⁶⁰ How the communications of an elderly academic or the scholarly critiques of the government policy he discusses in his writing constitute a national security threat is unclear. What is certain however, is the government’s combative attitude toward dissenters, as well as the insinuation in Mogae’s comment that because Good lived in Botswana he was somehow prevented from speaking out against it. The implication here is that to be a well-behaved citizen, or perhaps more aptly, a well-behaved child to the BDP government’s father, you ought not criticize the state.⁶¹

The above point would not seem entirely convincing if it weren’t for the timing of the deportation notice. Good had been critical of the government in his writing since the early 1990s.⁶² What was different this time around? Early the next week, Good was to present a paper, entitled “Presidential Succession in Botswana: No Model for Africa,” at the University of Botswana’s Department of Political and Administrative Studies’ Politics Seminar. In the paper, Good and Taylor argue that the transfers of power in Botswana from one president to another are more autocratic than they are democratic. And that rather than lauding politics in Botswana we should be scrutinizing its “march towards authoritarianism and irrationality,” as one section heading reads.⁶³ Add to these critiques in the paper a few swipes at the publicly irreproachable Seretse Khama and his son, Ian, the current vice-president and expected successor to current

⁶⁰ Tduetso Setsiba, ‘Good was terrible—Mogae’, *Mmegi*, 26 June 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/June/Monday26/10650409261.html>> (26 June 2006).

⁶¹ And indeed, the case of Good’s deportation is not the first time the government has tried to silence its critics or control the content of the media. See: Good, ‘Bushmen and diamonds’, pp. 9-13.

⁶² For example: Kenneth Good, “At the ends of the ladder: radical inequalities in Botswana”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **31**, 2 (June 1993), pp. 203-230; Kenneth Good, “The state and extreme poverty: the San and destitutes”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **37**, 2 (June 1999), pp. 185-205.

⁶³ Kenneth Good and Ian Taylor, “Presidential succession in Botswana: no model for Africa’, (University of Botswana’s Department of Political and Administrative Studies’ Politics Seminar, 2005), p. 18. The revised and published version of this paper is Good and Taylor’s “Unpacking the ‘Model’” cited above.

Mogae, and the paper became a rather explosive document. Good maneuvered to delay his deportation long enough to give the paper to an overflowing auditorium of students, professors, local and international journalists, NGO observers and members of the international diplomatic community instead of the few academics in the usual small conference room who would have attended if the government had done nothing at all.

The government's handling of the affair had become a national scandal as Botswana wrestled with the implications of their government's apparent suppression of free speech and the contradiction that posed for the country's sterling international reputation. Most Botswana take for granted that the country is special in Africa, if not the world, and were shocked to discover that their country could now possibly be uttered in the same breath as their authoritarian and collapsing neighbor Zimbabwe. Indeed, in the chaos and excitement surrounding the presentation—this was the most vibrant political moment I had ever experienced living in the almost boring stability that characterize Botswana's politics—I recall standing around outside the lecture hall, being too claustrophobic to cram inside with everybody else, with a friend of mine from the US Embassy wondering if the police were going to allow the paper to be presented at all, such was the air of uncertainty and anger on that February afternoon.

While intolerance of dissent and a correlated top-down approach to politics centered on elite interests puts a damper on the unbridled enthusiasm heaped on the government of Botswana, it is also necessary to include in this reexamination of contemporary Botswana a discussion of the bleak socio-economic tendencies existent in the country that are inextricably linked to the political arena. Although the more broadly focused economic indicators about a growing GDP or a booming mineral sector seems to describe a healthy economy, closer scrutiny reveals serious problems in the economy with regards to unemployment, the concentration of

wealth in a small minority of the population, and the closing off of opportunities for most of the population outside the urban elite of local and foreign businessmen and politicians and the large-scale cattle ranchers and farmers in the rural areas. The two questions that need to be asked are: first, who has benefited from Botswana's traditionally strong economy? And secondly, how do you account for those who have retained a marginal position in the economy? These kinds of pointed questions continue to be asked of Botswana's leadership in public forums such as newspapers and on radio talk shows, as well as privately on the street and in the bars. In a recent newspaper editorial, Dumelang Saleshando, an MP from one of the opposition parties, the Botswana Congress Party (BCP), suggests that the make-up of the national economy is little changed from independence. He writes,

Forty years after independence, the structure of our economy has not changed much. The indigenous Batswana, previously referred to as natives, provide a pool of labour to the white entrepreneurs who own the means of production. . . . The citizens have become spectators . . . [and] their hope to corporate success does not transcend an ailing small general dealer, bar and bottle store, or more miserably, a roadside mobile phone service.⁶⁴

Saleshando concludes, "What is the worth of our independence, when the wealth of our country eludes a majority of us?"⁶⁵ Saleshando articulates the feelings of powerlessness and economic isolation held by many Batswana citizens. The policies of development rather than redistribution or reform, pursued by the BDP since 1966⁶⁶ have excluded most Batswana from the national economy at worst, or allowed them to have only supporting or bit parts at best.

A cursory glance at the numbers lends credibility to Saleshando's accusations. For example, the United Nations Development Program based in Botswana, states that 47% of the

⁶⁴ Dumelang Saleshando, 'What is the worth of our independence?', *Mmegi*, 8 May 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/May/Monday8/274371337117.html>> (8 May 2006).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Maundeni, "The politics of poverty in Botswana", p. 107.

population in Botswana lives below the poverty line and that while the richest 20% of the population possesses about 60% of the nation's wealth, the poorest 20% control only 4%.⁶⁷ These income distribution statistics translate into a GINI Coefficient of .6, which is one of the most unequal distributions of wealth on the planet.⁶⁸ In their 2006 report on World Development Indicators, the World Bank paints an even bleaker picture of income distribution in Botswana, suggesting that while the poorest 10% have a .7% share of the national income, the richest 10% control 56.6%.⁶⁹ The World Bank also puts unemployment in Botswana around 19% of the total population, while unemployment for people between the ages 15-24 hovers around 34% for men and 46% for women.⁷⁰ A quality of life indicator, such as access to improved sanitation facilities also speaks to the inequity in Botswana society, as the percentage of urban dwellers who had these facilities fell in 2003 from the 1990 level of 61% to 57%.⁷¹ And while I don't want to belabor the point, it is worth noting that inequality exists not just in the modern money economy, but has long persisted even in the traditional segments of the economy related to cattle ownership—cattle being the traditional currency as well as the primary symbol of wealth and social status. Today in Botswana, in households relying on farming and agricultural, 2.5% of the population owns 40% of the total number of cattle in Botswana.⁷² Both in the modern and

⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme Botswana, Summary of Anti-Poverty Projects in Botswana <<http://www.unbotswana.org/bw/undp/poverty.html>> (11 August 2006).

⁶⁸ Where 0 represents perfect income equality, while 100 represents perfect income inequality.

⁶⁹ The World Bank Group, *World Development Indicators*, 'Table 2.8 Distribution of Income or Consumption' <<http://devdata.worldbank.org/wdi2006/contents/cover.htm>> (11 August 2006).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 'Table 2.5 Unemployment' and 'Table 2.9 Assessing Vulnerability and Security'.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 'Table 3.10 Urbanization'.

⁷² United Nations Development Program, 'Botswana Human Development Report 2005', p. 17.

traditional sectors therefore, socio-economic inequality has been a long established cultural and structural fact of life.

While the BDP government is not unaware of these large inequities in the country, it has been largely unwilling or unable to adequately deal with them. Even allowing for the fact that there have been substantial impediments to combating these problems, such as the inability to diversify the economy away from its over-reliance on diamond mining or the country's fairly small and widely dispersed population, the government has failed miserably in this regard.⁷³ Instead the government has been reduced to declaring platitudes that don't really seem to, frankly, have much basis in reality or demonstrate much grasp of the full scope of the socio-economic problems facing their country. A few lofty statements from Botswana's guiding *Vision 2016*, the championed "long term vision for Botswana," should suffice. For example, under the heading "A Compassionate and Caring Nation" the document states that come 2016, "Botswana will have a more equitable income distribution that ensures the participation of as many people as possible in economic success. There will be policies and measures that increase the participation of poorer households in productive and income earning activities."⁷⁴ Two paragraphs down the pamphlet predicts, "by the year 2016, Botswana will have eradicated absolute poverty, so that no part of the country will have people living with incomes below the appropriate poverty datum line."⁷⁵ No doubt these goals are admirable, but nearly a decade after

⁷³ One enormous complication facing Botswana today that deserves mention is, of course, the AIDS epidemic. There is really no way to quantify or account for the damage wrought by a disease infecting so many people, likely altering the social, economic and political landscape for generations. Despite the government's successful efforts at education and drug dispensation, merely considering the unprecedented drop in life expectancy from 1990 to 2004 is enough to bring the ramifications into focus: life expectancy in Botswana in 1990 was 64 years, while by 2004 the number had dropped to 35.

⁷⁴ Republic of Botswana, 'Vision 2016: A Framework for a Long-Term Vision for Botswana' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1997), p. 9 <http://www.vision2016.co.bw/html/publications_publications.shtml> (10 April 2006).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

they were written, the situation remains much the same as when the words were written about one decade ago. Whatever “policies and measures” have been enacted seem to have had little impact in achieving these stated social justice objectives. And indeed, in a sadly telling example that visually summarizes this lack of progress, clicking the heading “Achievements So Far” on the Internet homepage of the *Vision 2016* Council brings you to an empty white screen.⁷⁶

I’m not sure I would take the cynic’s route and suggest that *Vision 2016* is little more than a public relations tool with not much substance beyond its good intentions. Still, the fact remains that in today’s Botswana, half the population lives in poverty and many of the country’s youngest residents have little hope for employment or advancement beyond the life of the roadside cell phone airtime sellers Saleshando decries. Meanwhile, money and resources remain largely consolidated in the hands of a powerful political and economic elite.

And so we return to the story of the boys and a car that few in Gaborone will ever likely be able to call their own. This set of circumstances manifest in contemporary Gaborone should not surprise us. In fact, it was anticipated decades ago. Sandy Grant, the long-time observer of the politics and culture of Botswana, summed up the problems, prospects and contradictions of the new town in a “State of the City” piece published a few years after independence. Grant presciently describes Gaborone as

a place on the move, a place on the make; uncertain as yet whether it is being over-accommodating or over-assertive, striving both to absorb foreign influences and reject them, a place whose wealth is shown in its surprising land values and its poverty in its shanty towns. A place which will carry many to a better future and perhaps leave many behind.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See the *Vision 2016* homepage <http://www.vision2016.co.bw/html/acheivements_so_far.shtm> (11 August 2007).

⁷⁷ Grant, ‘Gaborone: symbol of independence’, p. 13.

Though written years ago, the above statement is especially applicable in the present. The question then becomes where have the lucky few been carried to, and where have the great many remaining, been left? While we have laid out the relevant circumstances of development and democracy in Botswana, we have not yet explored the hows, whys and mechanisms at work in the continuance of the persistent socio-economic inequality in the largest and most important city of the “African miracle.” It is to this task we must now turn. Working under the assumption that to arrive at the present, we must revisit past, we will necessarily begin with an exploration of the vision and birth of Gaborone over four decades ago.

CHAPTER 2 A CITY FROM SCRATCH: THE BIRTH OF GABORONE INTO THE 1960S

Writing the story of Gaborone requires that we begin our narrative in the decades and years preceding the planning and eventual founding of Botswana's new capital. One of the primary reasons for selecting an earlier date follows from the fact that although Gaborone was largely a new city, envisioned and built for the coming of Independence, Gaborone did not represent Bechuanaland/Botswana's sole experience with urban life within the territory. In fact, it is reasonable to state that it was a relatively late arrival in the urban history of Botswana. Long before the days of Gaborone, whites had constructed the mining and farming town of Francistown located in the northeastern region of Botswana, along with Lobatse, present day home of the High Court and the Botswana Meat Commission, close to the southern border with South Africa. Apart from the European style towns built along "modern" lines, the various Tswana polities within the territory, both before colonialism and afterwards, had a long history of living in densely populated village settlements that constituted some of the largest accumulations of populations in sub-Saharan Africa. It is with some bit of unintended irony then, that colonial officials in charge of planning the new town of Gaborone sought to make the Batswana fit for urban life—their field of vision of limited to urban existence akin to what might ordinarily be found in Manchester or London. Functioning under a narrow focus of what was a city and what was not, it would have been preposterous for these expatriate bureaucrats to consider, as does Coquery-Vidrovitch in a recent volume on the history of African cities, that the familiar towns and cities of industrial England represented only one possibility amongst many forms and variations of urban settings and processes.¹ At the same time however, from the

¹ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *The History of African Cities South of the Sahara: From the origins to colonization* (Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, NJ, 2005), p. 17.

perspective of the Batswana, the historical experiences of living in large villages, combined with traditional notions of status, spatial organization, and socio-economic hierarchy made the divided urban landscape of Gaborone conjured up by colonial bureaucrats and planners seem familiar, if not an inevitable outcome of city planning.

Of course, it would be foolish to suggest that Gaborone and the long-established Tswana settlement norms were exact replicas of one another in terms of design, purpose, governance or economic practice. That disclaimer aside, there are subtle points of contact and similarity in the two systems of organization and hierarchy that deserve attention. Bridging colonial British and Tswana spatial and planning cosmologies makes the divided history of Gaborone comprehensible. Assuming that Tswana elites had substantial influence in the decision-making process in the years immediately preceding independence—and the historical record suggests they did—the question to answer is why they assented to a city largely divided along class and racial lines. To put the matter crudely, one might state that the Tswana elites didn't want to live any closer to the poor than did the white colonial bureaucratic and trading elite. Putting an academic gloss on this assertion, we might say that already existing Tswana conceptions of chiefly power and authority, a stratified (though potentially fluid) socio-economic hierarchy, and established patterns of spatial organization made the final plan of Gaborone both acceptable and intelligible to the Tswana authorities who might have had an influence on both its conception and implementation. These indigenous elite expectations directly complemented attitudes about race, economics, urban citizenship and planning evidenced by the colonial bureaucracy who provided the funds for the project and conducted the formal designing and building of Gaborone.

What we find is that rather than a strict dichotomy between the objectives and motivations of the Protectorate government and the Tswana elite, led largely by individuals who would take

power in the BDP led government, the two sides possessed largely similar understandings about the look and construction of the city, but also, more broadly, about the look, the aesthetics, of the population to reside there. For what kinds of people, in other words, was the new capital being reserved? Before arriving at this judgment, I will first explore some of the key points regarding Tswana notions of authority, power and settlement.

Chiefs, Subjects and Traditional Settlements in Bechuanaland

Patterns of village organization and housing have undergone dramatic changes since the Tswana first encountered Europeans around the turn of the 19th century. Even so, it is worth mentioning some accounts of Tswana settlements published by various white missionaries, travelers and adventurers to provide some perspective to later transformations and adaptations as Tswana interaction with Europeans intensified in the coming decades. Many of the earliest visitors to the region came away impressed with the order, size and beauty of Tswana villages. One individual traveling to the capital of the Tlhaping in 1801 writes,

In a country, whose general features are so rude and barren, so great an assemblage of huts, constructed on a regular plan, was in sight as novel as unexpected; and a society of men so numerous collected together on the same spot, implied a superior degree of civilization to what any part of this continent to the southward line is supposed to afford.²

Describing the village of Dithakong a few years later, John Barrow wrote in the second volume of his well know work *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, “passing through several large tracts of ground, that were laid out and cultivated like so many gardens, we arrived about noon . . . not a little astonished to find, in this part of the world, a large and populous city.”³

Dithakong, Barrow estimates, was at the time home to between two and three thousand houses

² Samuel Daniell, quoted in Jan Wareus, ‘The traditional Tswana village: a neglected planning prototype’ (Gaborone, no date), p. 4.

³ Quoted in Anthony Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1952), p. 3.

and a population of ten to fifteen thousand individuals.⁴ Providing a proper guess was impossible “on account of the irregularity of the streets and the lowness of the buildings. . . .”⁵

One final example, from an October 20, 1890 edition of the *Cape Argus* newspaper should suffice, as the author gushes:

We often speak, of Kimberly and Johannesburg, as the Americans used to speak of Chicago, as wonderful cities for their age. In my opinion, King Khama’s Bechuana city of Palapye . . . is a city not one whit less wonderful than either.

Palapye is a native town covering some twenty square miles of ground, holding some thirty thousand inhabitants; yet less than fifteen months ago there was no such place as Palapye in existence.⁶

Indeed, the village of Shoshong, the former capital of the BaNgwato replaced by Palapye, is thought to have been home to around thirty thousand people, thus making it second in the region, behind Cape Town, in terms of size.⁷ And although most Tswana tribes lived in concentrated settlements, most did not come close to reaching the scale or population levels of these rather exceptional cases. Even the larger villages described above rarely maintained the maximum carrying capacity due to agricultural seasonal migration patterns.⁸ So while I don’t want to give the impression that these large settlements were typical of those generally found in the region, it remains important to point out that nucleated, densely populated villages were not completely foreign to people inhabiting the area eventually encapsulated into the Protectorate.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶ Anita Larsson, *Modern Houses for Modern Life: The transformation of housing in Botswana* (Department of Building Functions Analysis, School of Architecture, University of Lund, Sweden, 1990), p. 64.

⁷ Wareus, ‘The traditional Tswana village’, p. 5.

⁸ Neil Parsons, ‘Settlement in east-central Botswana circa 1800-1920’, in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape* (The Botswana Society, Gaborone, 1982), p. 120. Parsons goes on to state that people might claim residence in a village, even though they might not live there permanently, in order to have citizen status in the tribal state.

What are we to take away from these descriptions? They present an unexpected view of the spaces of living inhabited by substantial numbers of people in the days preceding the imposition of colonialism. Mere mention of Palapye with the globally-renowned city of Chicago, itself only a few years away from hosting the World's Fair in 1893, suggests a complexity of social organization and politics not generally attributed to the more idyllic, simpler romanticized perceptions about life in a pre-colonial Africa village. Within the borders of these larger villages, along with their smaller counterparts, life centered mostly on agricultural production and cattle herding.

Reflecting these interests, Batswana, before Independence in 1966, while keeping their primary residence in their village, would also migrate seasonally to their cattle posts and their agricultural lands, which were typically located some distance away from the village.⁹ In the colonial period and before, people were not permitted to head towards the lands or the cattle posts until permitted by the chief.¹⁰ But as the colonial and post-independence governments modified, and ultimately minimized, the influence and authority of the chiefs over the allocation of land, the movement of populations, and the organization of villages waned. Accordingly, there is some evidence to suggest that following Independence, people have increasingly migrated permanently from the village to settle at the lands or the cattle post, not to mention the migration to urban areas and the new towns in such of better employment prospects.¹¹

⁹ Anita Larrson and Viera Larrson, *Traditional Tswana Housing: A study in four villages in eastern Botswana* (Swedish Council for Building Research, Lund, Sweden, 1984), p. 33.

¹⁰ R. M. K. Silitshena, "Chiefly authority and the organization of space in Botswana: towards an exploration of nucleated settlements among the Tswana", *Botswana Notes and Records*, **11** (1979), p.62.

¹¹ See R. M. K. Silitshena, 'Population movements and settlement patterns in contemporary Botswana', in Hitchcock and Smith, *Settlement in Botswana*, pp. 31-43.

And while traditional chiefly authority has since been supplanted by the post-independence ruling BDP party—which has adopted some of the symbolic trappings of traditional authority by presenting itself as the chief, the father of a now secularized, non-tribalized nation¹²--certain characteristics of the past such as elite-driven politics, paternal attitude toward subordinates and dislike of dissent have bled into the present. Specifically, two trends have been particularly durable. In a 1995 article, Gulbrandsen points out that because Seretse Khama represented the “new men”—educated, non-tribal leaders who would come to dominate the independence government—along with his position as the rightful royal heir of the largest Tswana tribe, he was uniquely positioned to easily “bridge [the] patrimonial and republican systems” of government.¹³ From the beginning of Botswana’s independent existence therefore, the ruling BDP has demonstrated significant “ideological continuity” with practices and ideologies previously identified with elite dominated chiefly politics.¹⁴ Beyond more abstract ideological considerations and practices however, inequality and an extremely polarized socio-economic hierarchy have continued to be replicated into the present despite the government’s recurrent calls for a society founded on social justice and *Kagisano* (social harmony). As Kenneth Good bluntly states, “poverty has deep roots in Botswana,” arguing further that there is little difference in the material circumstances of the poor before, during or following the colonial period.¹⁵

¹² One controversy that periodically comes to the surface however, is the treatment of the minority tribes (relative to the dominant Setswana speaking Tswana tribes), such as the Basarwa, Kalanga, BaKgalakgadi, who are not represented in the largely ceremonial institution, the Ntlo ya Dikgosi (House of Chiefs). So whether Botswana has succeeded in its quest to exist as a non-tribal nation likely depends on whom you ask. See Chapter Five for further clarification.

¹³ Ornulf Gulbrandsen, “The king is king by the grace of the people: the exercise and control of power in subject-ruler relations”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **37**, 3 (July 1995), p. 437.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

¹⁵ Kenneth Good, “The state and extreme poverty in Botswana: the San and destitutes”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **32**, 2 (1999), pp. 185-186.

There are, in other words, severe structural, cultural and political impediments, originating in the past and echoing into the present, obstructing the poor's attainment of a quality of life that would barely approach a level you could comfortably characterize as sub-standard.¹⁶

But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, we must first say a few things regarding the practice of chiefly authority before independence and the emphasis placed on the spatial organization of Tswana villages. Discussing these political spatial and symbolic practices will provide avenues to further examination of the reasons behind present day inequality in Botswana, and more specifically, Gaborone. Outlining the relationship between space and politics in Botswana is critical due to the fact that statements of status and hierarchy were inscribed into the organization of the village landscape. That is, the location of your home compound in the village provided a clear, albeit potentially flexible, marker as to your social and political position in the life of the tribe. I will begin first with some relevant facets of Tswana chieftaincy.

The position of the chief in the political, productive, cultural and religious realms was paramount. The chief of a Tswana tribe was, among other duties, simultaneously judge, philanthropic benefactor, general, diplomat, and lawmaker of the tribe.¹⁷ As the head of the tribal royal lineage, the man who was chief, stood at the apex of tribal life—serving as the intermediary between the people and the royal ancestry, and later, as go-between for the colonial government and the masses. In return for carrying out these responsibilities, and by sheer fact that an individual was granted the title of *kgosi*, he was entitled to all types of tributes from his subjects in the form of skins, cattle, or, in years of good harvests, baskets of produce. And as the

¹⁶ As Good points out on page 186, for many of the rural poor, it is not uncommon for the poorest households to survive (in 1997) on roughly \$0.25 a day.

¹⁷ Isaac Schapera, *The Tswana* (International African Institute, London, 1953), p. 51.

colonial government phased out the payment of tribute, the chief instead collected a percentage of the taxes he collected in the name of the colonial government.¹⁸ In addition to these material accoutrements, the chief retained unique symbolic powers that reflected his special position in the tribe. Beyond the accordance of extra respect and deference—in the form of specially prepared praise-poems and festivals in his honor, for example—the *kgosi* was recognized as the personification of the tribe; he was not, in other words, a member of the tribe, he *was* the tribe, the living part of the royal lineage.¹⁹

And although the chiefs' powers and duties were transformed following the establishment of colonial rule under the British, the Tswana *dikgosi* retained much of their symbolic authority and traditional responsibilities up until the precipice marking the conclusion of colonial rule.²⁰ As many scholars of Botswana state formation and politics have noted, rather than supplanting the chiefs, the already established norms of obedience to authority and the emphasis on social harmony rather than conflict and dissent were well suited to British colonial policies. The chiefs and colonial officials thus became easy and willing collaborators.²¹ Others go further and suggest that the imposition of colonial rule actually increased the power of the Tswana chiefs, as they became less beholden to the opinions and feelings of their subjects. Instead their legitimacy now flowed from the approval and support of the colonial authorities.²² As the High Commissioner in 1909 explained, "If a tribe has never been conquered . . . and they voluntarily

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁰ Silitshena, "Chiefly authority and the organization of space in Botswana", p. 55.

²¹ See for example: Silitshena, "Chiefly Authority and the organization of space in Botswana", p. 60; Good, "The state and extreme poverty in Botswana", p. 188.

²² For further information please see: Gulbrandsen, "The king is king by the grace of the people", p. 436; Louis Truschel, "Political survival in colonial Botswana: the preservation of Khama's state and growth of the Ngwato monarchy", *Transafrican Journal of History*, **IV**, 1 and 2 (1974), p. 73.

surrendered themselves into our hands, the wisest policy . . . is to rule that tribe through their paramount chief.”²³

One of the primary ways that a Tswana chief was able to successfully manage his subjects was his control over the economic life of the tribe. As has already been noted, the population could not disperse to the village to begin farming until the chief had given his consent, in addition to that however, the chief retained absolute control over all the tribe’s land, as well as possession of the national herd. The chief determined everything from who would have access to land and who would not, to having the power to expropriate the cattle of individuals who decided to leave the state and settle somewhere else.²⁴ Succinctly put, “from his general powers over land, the king controlled everything in his state, from crops to cattle to people.”²⁵ To justify this structural inequity, proverbs articulating the chief’s paternal benevolence (“The King feeds the nation”) and the chief’s important position as role model to the nation (“When the King limps his followers limp as well”) were widely disseminated.^{26,27}

This is not to suggest however, that the chief could behave as an unchecked dictator or autocrat. The general history of Tswana tribes speaks of numerous instances of state fragmentation and separation due to conflicts between competing royals over ascension to the throne and to the dispersal of tribal populations during times of leadership by unpopular or unjust

²³ Quoted in Truschel, “Political Survival in colonial Botswana”, p. 73.

²⁴ Thomas Tlou, “The nature of Batswana states: towards a theory of Batswana traditional government—the Batawana case”, *Botswana Notes and Records*, **6** (1974), p. 70.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁷ Beyond the economic realm however, the chief’s behavior and attitudes went a long way in influencing a broad range of behaviors in his subjects’ lives, touching on everything from learning to read to adopting European agricultural techniques. See: Isaac Schapera, *Tribal Innovators: Tswana chiefs and social change 1795-1940* (University of London, The Athlone Press, London, 1970), p. 44.

rulers. Apart from these more dramatic instances, over the course of the everyday, the decisions taken by the chief, although final, must be taken in consultation with his close advisors, as well as discussed in a meeting held in the public assembly, known as the *kgotla*.²⁸

And while this emphasis on consultation might exist in the abstract, there is some debate as to how actively it was implemented in practice. In Schapera's descriptions of the procedural rules defining the conduct of *kgotla* meetings, he writes that while the chief and his advisors might be scolded or their wishes occasionally obstructed, more often than not, the decisions reached in the *kgotla* "are generally those already formulated privately by the chief and his personal advisors."²⁹ Writing more recently, Kokorwe goes further, suggesting that although a consensus might be sought, ultimately, "the opinion of wealthy royals and chief's uncles carries more weight than that of ordinary tribesmen."³⁰ The consultative nature of the *kgotla* remains under dispute (especially in the years following Independence) as well. Decisions by Government tend to be taken in advance of the actual meeting; people are therefore consulted only about matters of implementation, as the case of Ledumadumane discussed in Chapter 1 indicates.³¹ Even if we are to go ahead and concede that the *kgotla* acted as a significant check on the exercise of chiefly power in Tswana tribes, this in no way diminishes the fact that the economic and political structures existing in the tribe were slanted entirely in the favor of the chief and his cadre of advisors, and that outside the confines of the *kgotla*, other mechanisms

²⁸ Gulbrandsen, "The king is king by the grace of the people", p. 419.

²⁹ Schapera, *The Tswana*, p. 53.

³⁰ Mogopodi H. Kokorwe, 'The *kgotla* and the freedom square: one-way or two-way communication?', in John Holm and Patrick Molutsi (eds), *Democracy in Botswana: The proceedings of a symposium held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988* (The Botswana Society, The University of Botswana and Ohio University Press, Gaborone and Athens, OH, 1989), p. 219.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

were in place to ensure that potential dissent was dampened and that the norms governing the chief's authority and the tribe's socio-economic hierarchy largely went unchallenged.

For instance, it was generally accepted that the chief stood in relation to the subjects of the tribe as a father would to a child. This paternal relationship was evident in the way that the common Tswana addressed the chief. As Tlou notes, the chief could varyingly be called, for example, "father of orphans" and "man of the people."³² The chief's position as father of the tribe was enhanced by his religious and supernatural association with the royal ancestry who had an important bearing on the day-to-day life of the tribe. And while the chief wasn't viewed as divine by his followers, he was perceived to be in "command [of] superhuman powers" over areas such as agricultural production and the weather.³³ Accordingly, the important religion functions exhibited by the chief afforded him some protection in the non-spiritual political realm by suggesting the importance of obedience to his followers, as demonstrated in the saying, "the king is a little god, no evil must be spoken of him."³⁴

Even into the post-colonial present, the presidents of Botswana have adopted some of the symbolic rhetoric of the politics of the past, thereby linking them both to the moral order and to the largely unopposed authority previously represented by the chiefs. The president of Botswana, for example, carries the informal title of *Tau e tona* ("the Great Lion"), which functions as a not so subtle nod to an important symbol of traditional power: the skin of the lion that adorned a newly crowned chief.³⁵ Over the past few years, President Mogae's press secretary has even pushed this moniker into the realm of official business, publishing a weekly

³² Tlou, "The nature of Batswana states", p. 66.

³³ Gulbrandsen, "The king is king by the grace of his people", p. 426.

³⁴ Tlou, "The nature of Batswana states", p. 67.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

newsletter, *The Tautona Times*, detailing the President's doings, speeches and activities.

Although the office of the chief has been greatly diminished into the present, the residual symbols, proverbs and expectations of behavior that used to informally constitute the backbone of the chieftaincy retain their political and cultural uses into the present. This remains especially true, I would argue, of the political and socio-economic hierarchy that has continued from the pre-colonial into the independence years after 1966.

In the past, the various Tswana polities exhibited a contradiction. On the one hand, there were possibilities for assimilation into a particular tribe, if for example, foreign individuals attempted to settle within a tribe's territory. In this way, the external boundaries of a tribe were porous. Internally however, the story is quite a bit different. Within the bounds of the tribe, positions of status—particularly in terms of wealth and social mobility—were clearly demarcated and largely inflexible, except in the occasional exceptional circumstance.³⁶

Before the imposition of colonialism the boundaries defining the specific territory of particular Tswana tribes were imprecise. Accordingly, Sillery suggests that the best way to conceive of a tribe's territory is in terms of "spheres of influence," in which the boundaries of one state might overlap with those of a neighboring state.³⁷ Only in the period after the British gave Bechuanaland the status of Protectorate, did boundaries between the tribes began to harden, as the period between 1886-1894 saw the establishment of clearly delineated tribal reserves in the southern regions of the Protectorate.³⁸ The relative ambiguity of where one tribe's sovereignty began and another's ended, along with other factors such as common language and

³⁶ For example, a chief might elevate loyal commoners to positions of headman as a way to counterbalance the influence of other members of the royal family of whom the chief might be suspicious. But even in the hypothetical suggested here however, opportunities for advancement depended largely on the chief's patronage or consent.

³⁷ Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*, p. 56.

³⁸ Parsons, 'Settlement in east-central Botswana circa 1800-1920', p. 121.

historical linkages between the Tswana tribes, facilitated the assimilation of foreigners into a state. The porous nature of territorial boundaries was thus reflected in the possibilities for a fluid tribal membership. As long as a foreigner had the chief's approval to settle in the region, they could subsequently be adopted into the state. Schapera, therefore, writes that the best way to characterize the typical Tswana tribe is as an "association into which people may be born, absorbed by conquest, or enter of their own accord, and from which, again, they may depart voluntarily or be expelled."³⁹ While there was the potential for mobility into and out of a particular state, this flexibility was not present with regards to other aspects of the Tswana polity. Of particular relevance here, is the persistence of a fairly static socio-economic hierarchy and the standardization of planning principles governing the layout of villages.

We have previously mentioned such terms as "hierarchy" and "status" in somewhat imprecise terms. Now, however, having discussed power and position of the chief, we can move to a fuller explication of the form and manner of hierarchy in the dominant Tswana society. Implicit in our discussion of the *kgosi* stands the fact that the chief, in concert with his close advisors and the royal ancestral lineage, resides at the pinnacle of power—both political and moral—and governance of the tribe. If the chief exists at the top, it is only reasonable to ask who lies at the bottom. Hierarchy in Botswana is a multi-faceted construction. Along the lines of, for example, gender, as in traditional Tswana society women were largely shut out of the public and political life of the tribe. Another important marker of status is that of age. Relationships based on seniority, which permeate most social interactions in the tribe, are guided

³⁹ Schapera, *The Tswana*, p. 35.

primarily by the “Tswana term *tshisimogo*, social respect, which includes elements of reverence and even fear.”⁴⁰ Here again the chief represents the “ultimate political sanction of this order.”⁴¹

A further component of this moral-politico order consists of issues related to citizenship derived from an individual’s social and economic position in the tribe. Broadly conceived, Tswana society was segmented into three divisions⁴²: 1) Nobles; 2) Commoners; 3) Immigrants (who could eventually be incorporated into the commoner grouping).⁴³ Although Schapera writes that these distinctions are operational primarily in the realm of politics, it is worthwhile to point out that these social markers provide a fairly good guide as to one’s economic position within the society as well. As has been suggested above, and will be again reiterated below, the correlation between political power and economic power is well established in the literature on Botswana. In certain instances, there was a limited amount of fluidity in this social hierarchy, if, for example, a commoner accumulated enough cattle to make him wealthy or demonstrated extreme loyalty to the chief.⁴⁴ These circumstances however, were atypical. Writing of the reified nature of hierarchy in traditional Tswana polities, David Massey notes that status depended “ultimately on increasing control over access to land and cattle—with the defeated aboriginal people and alien immigrants at the bottom and a powerful royalty at the top.”⁴⁵ And as the Comaroffs write, in their case study of the numerous meanings and uses of cattle among

⁴⁰ Gulbrandsen, “The king is king by the grace of his people”, p. 429.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

⁴² Elsewhere, the groupings have been further subdivided. I replicate one example here (in descending order): Chiefs→Chief’s Uncles→Councillors→Headmen→Sub-Headmen→Commoners→Lower Commoners→Immigrants→Slaves, “Semi-Serfs,” Serfs. See: K. K. Prah, ‘Notes and comments on aspects of Tswana feudalism in the precolonial period’ (Working Paper No. 15, National Institute for Research in Development and African Studies Documentation Unit, Gaborone, 1977), p. 13.

⁴³ Schapera, *The Tswana*, p. 36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Larsson, *Modern Houses for Modern Life*, p. 74.

the Tshidi Barolong, a southern Tswana people, the distribution of wealth or political capital was structurally oriented toward actively preventing the poor from achieving any improvement in their economic or social position. On the one hand, “while an accumulation of a large herd . . . gave [the chief, other royals and office-holders] the opportunity to initiate ties of alliance and patronage,” for most people, it was simply “impossible to build up a sizeable estate in one generation.”⁴⁶ For the wealthy, as we will see below, there is a direct relationship in the size of their herd and their subsequent control over people.

Because of the direct relationship between economic and political power, Prah, for example, argues that pre-colonial Tswana society was fundamentally based on class divisions.⁴⁷ Writing of the Bakwena, a tribe located in the southeastern region of Kweneng, one observer says, “the long-term development in Kweneng from about 1840 was the evolution of a class-divided society.”⁴⁸ These stark distinctions were especially true for the group of serfs, hereditary servants and even slaves that constituted the bottom margins of a State’s population. Typically the labels of slave and serf were affixed to the conquered so-called lesser indigenous peoples (e.g. the Bakgalagadi or the Basarwa—today’s “Bushmen”⁴⁹).⁵⁰ The predicament of the serfs

⁴⁶ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods: cattle and other commodities in a South African context”, *American Ethnologist*, **17**, 2 (May 1990), p. 205.

⁴⁷ Prah, ‘Notes and comments on aspects of Tswana feudalism’, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁸ Fanuel Nangati, ‘Early capitalist penetration: the impact of precolonial trade in Kweneng (1840-1876)’, in Hitchcock and Smith, *Settlement in Botswana*, p. 146.

⁴⁹ There is a quite large body of literature detailing the history and plight of the Basarwa/Bushmen, ranging from the romanticized writings of Laurens van der Post to more contemporary discussions about the origins of their current political and economic marginalization and dispossession of their ancestral homelands. See, for example: Edwin Wilmsen, *Land Filled with Flies: A political economy of the Kalahari* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1989); Sidsel Saugestad, *The Inconvenient Indigenous: Remote area development in Botswana, donor assistance and the First People of the Kalahari* (Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden, 2001); Laurens van der Post, *The Lost World of the Kalahari* (William Morrow and Company, New York, NY, 1958).

⁵⁰ There are instances however, of non-indigenous populations being labeled as serfs similar to the Basarwa. One brief account of this construction of a caste-like position is to be found in: Pnina Motzafi-Haller, “The duiker and

meant that they were prevented from having their own land to farm or cattle to own. And in fact, the extent to which the serfs could have any possessions was left solely to the discretion of the chief. Simply put, they were at the mercy of the chiefs or other elites, obligated to serve as manual labor at the lands or as “herd-boys” in charge of looking after the herds of the wealthy. The landlessness of the serfs directly reflected their marginal status in Tswana society.⁵¹ Echoing the position of slaves in the American South, the serfs, “if they ran away,” Schapera rather dispassionately states, “as they sometimes did, they were usually pursued and brought back by force.”⁵² Not only were they expected to work as compulsory laborers, the chief also used them as commodities, rewarding preferred and loyal subjects with gifts of serfs as a form of patronage and social control.⁵³

To be sure, the serfs bore the worst of the inequitable distribution of wealth and power⁵⁴ in Tswana states, but in broader terms, inequality of wealth and power characterized the position of most people. In the rural economy where accumulation of cattle was a significant indicator of wealth and status, the majority of cattle in Bechuanaland were concentrated in the hands of a minority of large-scale herd owners. The polarization of wealth caused by unbalanced herd ownership was an established fact of life in the past, as the number of cattle in the region continued to increase at greater rates than the population of people, meaning that those with

the hare: Tswapong subjects and Ngwato rulers in pre-colonial Botswana”, *Botswana Notes and Records*, **25** (1993), pp. 59-71.

⁵¹ Edwin N. Wilmsen, ‘Exchange, interaction, and settlement in north-western Botswana: past and present perspectives’, in Hitchcock and Smith, *Settlement in Botswana*, p. 103.

⁵² Schapera, *The Tswana*, p. 28.

⁵³ Nangati, ‘Early capitalist penetration’, p. 144.

⁵⁴ They were also, for example, prevented from speaking at *kgotla* meetings, meaning they had little to no voice in creating the policies enacted by the tribal government.

cattle were able to accumulate and increasing number of cattle.⁵⁵ To put a figure to this statement, Good suggests that Tshekedi Khama, the long-serving regent of the BaNgwato, possessed in the 1920s a herd totaling around 50,000 cattle, along with the land in which they ranged; and by 1938 he owned the largest herd in the territory.⁵⁶ And in the years immediately following Independence in 1966, the Government of Botswana published a report in the mid-1970s suggesting that 40% of the national herd of Botswana was owned by only 5% of the population.⁵⁷ Not only did a minority have a stranglehold over the cattle-herding industry, but because of their dominant economic position, cattle owners exerted a substantial influence in the political decision making process.⁵⁸ The linkage between large cattle-herders and politics was therefore, a symbiotic one.

As the independence year of 1966 receded into the rearview mirror, the cultural legitimacy of socio-economic inequity retained its potency. The statistics related to the pervasiveness of rural poverty cast a long shadow over Botswana's vaunted rosy economic prognostications: 20% of the rural population has control over 70% of the rural wealth while 60% of the rural population hovered at, or just above, the government's narrowly conceived poverty line defining extremely basic requirements for food, clothing and housing.⁵⁹ To demonstrate the austerity of the government's poverty programs, an official report unflinchingly states that the only furniture permitted in the house (by way of a government purchase) was a bench, for the sole purpose of

⁵⁵ James R. Denbow, 'The Toutswe tradition: a study in socio-economic change', in Hitchcock and Smith, *Settlement in Botswana*, p. 79.

⁵⁶ Good, "The state and extreme poverty in Botswana", p. 187.

⁵⁷ David Cooper, 'An overview of the Botswana urban class struggle and its articulation with the rural structure: insights from Selebi-Phikwe', in Hitchcock and Smith, *Settlement in Botswana*, p. 251.

⁵⁸ Larrison, *Modern Houses for Modern Life*, pp. 83; 85.

⁵⁹ Good, "The state and extreme poverty in Botswana", pp. 190-191; 196.

the man of the house being able to “discharge [his] social obligation . . . towards an important visitor.”⁶⁰

While much of this discussion about poverty and inequality relates specifically to the rural cattle, rangeland, and agricultural economy, the general trajectory of polarized social hierarchies and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few existent in the rural areas, is readily transferred to the realm of urban poverty that we described in the previous chapter. The relationships dictating the norms and practices of the cattle economy are adaptable to the new circumstances required by the cash and capital-intensive economy present in contemporary urban areas. No doubt facilitating this adaptation is the prominence in government and business of the so-called “new men” who emerged from cattle backgrounds and came to dominate the post-independence government and who, as elder statesmen today, continue to wield much influence in both the public and private sector of present-day Botswana.

What has become clear over the past few pages is that contemporary inequality in Botswana has a long historical precedent. Establishing this fact is, I think, crucial to understanding the permanence of these power dynamics and socio-economic circumstances, particularly in the context of urban Gaborone. One other historical pattern having a direct bearing on the present study of urban spaces in Gaborone is the pattern of village organization existing in the colonial and pre-colonial period. Of particular interest is the fact that traditional notions of authority and hierarchy were built into the space of the village. The built environment, in other words, constituted an expression, a statement, of status and position in the village. Unpacking these “statements” might grant us insight into the present day layout of

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Gaborone, allowing us to better read the narrative of the city presented by its design and organization.

Until the imposition of colonialism in the region inhabited by Batswana tribes when the colonial government attempted to fix the locations of Tswana settlements, villages moved frequently, even the larger ones could be relocated on occasion.⁶¹ Despite the frequency with which the villages might move, there were strict rules of organization and design that governed the construction of newly established villages. So much so, in fact, that new villages would have essentially the same layout and design as the one just abandoned.⁶² Spatial orientation as expressed in the settlement was “conceived as a natural order” that reflected detailed cosmological principles.⁶³ MacKenzie, an early missionary into the region, described the procedures dictating the layout of the village:

... in the case of the Bechuana town[,] as soon as the chief’s position is ascertained, one says, ‘My place is always next [to] the chief on this side;’ another adds, ‘And mine is always on that side,’ and so on till the whole town is laid out. The chief is umpire in all such matters, and settles all disputes about ground, etc.⁶⁴

The central role played by the *kgosi* in arbitrating the organization of the village is also evidenced by the core location his primary residence held in the village. Everything in the village existed spatially in relation to his home (and the royal kraal and *kgotla*). The schematic of the village as laid out by Tlou shows the chief’s dwelling at the center of a series of concentric circles radiating out from the center; closest to the chief would be his advisors and other royals,

⁶¹ Christopher Morton, “Fixity and fluidity: chiefly authority and settlement movement in colonial Botswana”, *History and Anthropology*, **15**, 4 (December 2004), p. 364.

⁶² Wareus, ‘The traditional Tswana village’, p. 5.

⁶³ Adam Kuper, ‘Social aspects of Kgalagari settlement’, in Hitchcock and Smith, *Settlement in Botswana*, p. 262.

⁶⁴ John MacKenzie, quoted in Andrew Reid et al., “Tswana architecture and responses to colonialism”, *World Archaeology*, **28**, 3 (February 1997), p. 375.

while located further away sat the homes of the commoners, immigrant and serf populations.⁶⁵ This “structured ward settlement centered upon the *kgosi*’s ward meant a consolidation of power through a hierarchical set of spatial relationships.”⁶⁶ The centralized settlements of the Tswana revolving around the chief, and administered by his delegates on the periphery, thus enabled the chief to keep close watch and supervision over the movements of people and the activities ongoing in his territory.⁶⁷

The influence exerted by the chief in selecting the site for the new village and the care in which the chief decided on a location for his home carried important consequences for the village. The placement of the chief’s home at the nexus of the village, symbolically etched the social and political hierarchy into the landscape of the village. This was accomplished in two ways: by the chief’s placement at the village center and by locating the subject and serf populations of the tribe at the furthest reaches from the core. In the village, the chief’s compound occupied sacred space. After setting a location for the new village, the chief cut the first branch before any other trees and brush could be cleared, further cementing the relationship between the chief and the site of the village.⁶⁸ Additionally, the chief was also the only person who could magically consecrate the land of the new village through charms and the ignition of a “sacred fire” in the chief’s compound, thereby protecting the village from the potentially damaging use of other tribes’ magic meant to harm the settlement.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Tlou, “The nature of Batswana states”, p. 73.

⁶⁶ Morton, “Fixity and Fluidity”, p. 347.

⁶⁷ For detailed treatment of the ward structure of Tswana villages see: Isaac Schapera, “The social structure of the Tswana ward”, *Bantu Studies: A Journal Devoted to the Scientific Study of Bantu, Hottentot and Bushmen*, **9** (1935), pp. 203-224.

⁶⁸ Tlou, “The nature of Batswana states”, p. 67.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Aside from the magical and mystical practices associated with the center of the village, the royal kraal and *kgotla* were also located adjacent to the chief's compound. From the earliest observations of Tswana culture and settlements, scholars noted the central location of the royal kraal in the construction of the village.⁷⁰ Situating the kraal in such a strategic location accomplished two things. First, it tied the political authority of the chieftaincy to the control of cattle,⁷¹ which, as we have demonstrated, was critical to the chief's ability to distribute patronage, as well as command the labor power of his subjects. Secondly, the triangular linkage of the public forum of the *kgotla*, the kraal and the chief's compound, all placed at the center of the village, served as a visible marker of the chief's dominant position in social, political and economic life; power was thus "built into the very materiality of place."⁷²

If placement at the center of the village represented power and authority, the call for the serfs and subjects to reside at the margins conversely indicated a corresponding powerlessness. Typical of Tswana settlement patterns is the placement of the immigrant⁷³, marginalized, conquered or laboring classes at the edge of the village.⁷⁴ And although located on the periphery, the chief was able to maintain control of these populations through the establishment of an official administrative system using a ward system as the basic unit of governance. Each ward was governed in the name of the chief by a headman loyal to his authority. Supervision of these peripheral regions inhabited by those considered to be at the bottom of society was deemed

⁷⁰ W. C. Willoughby, "Notes on the totemism of the Becwana", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, **35** (July-December 1905), pp. 301-302.

⁷¹ Denbow, 'The Toutswe tradition', p. 74.

⁷² Morton, "Fixity and Fluidity", p. 349.

⁷³ I should note that the position of the immigrant was a bit different from that of the serf, for example. A foreigner, particularly someone from a neighboring Tswana tribe, would eventually be assimilated into the tribe completely, thus losing their "immigrant" status and adopting the full array of privileges afforded by citizenship.

⁷⁴ Schapera, *The Tswana*, p. 35.

necessary in order to ensure that the obligations of their servitude—caring for the herds of the wealthy, for example—were fulfilled. Writing of a completely different time and context, but with relevance here, Appadurai states of contemporary Mumbai, “As in all societies based on financial apartheid—[the wealthy elite] wants the poor near at hand as servants but far away as people.”⁷⁵ Similarly, in the context of the traditional settlements under discussion here, both the Tswana subjects along with the “Bushman”—who were perceived as being wholly incapable of living in the more civilized village environment—the chiefs preferred to have these populations kept at arms length.⁷⁶ Kept apart, in other words, from the sites, symbols and locations denoting political and economic power.

The maintenance of these stark distinctions determining who lives where, serves to reify one’s position in Tswana society. If a commoner or a serf is told to live in the space housing other serfs and commoners, it becomes exceedingly difficult to contest the boundaries drawn by authority. Like a scarlet letter permanently inscribed into the earth, a person was made aware of their station and status every time they walked into the front yard of their home or past the main *kgotla* adjacent to the chief’s compound, the smells of the nearby royal kraal wafting in the air.

We asked earlier in this chapter how Gaborone came to be home to pervasive social and economic inequality and why these tendencies were built into the very fabric of the new city. As the above has demonstrated, stratified settlements in which the boundaries between subjects and elites defined by their association to a royal ancestry or large-scale cattle herding were distinctly laid out, were common across the majority Tswana tribes. A city founded along these lines, in other words, would have seemed an acceptable, if not inevitable, outcome for the elite Tswana

⁷⁵ Arjun Appadurai, “Spectral housing and urban cleansing: notes on millennial Mumbai”, *Public Culture*, **12**, 3 (2000), p. 637.

⁷⁶ Comaroff and Comaroff, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, p. 206; Kuper, ‘Social Aspects of Kgalagari Settlement’, p. 259.

leadership during the Independence period. Similarly, a city founded on principles of racial equality and tolerance, as Gaborone was, would have seemed equally inevitable to the Batswana, considering their long-established practices of assimilation, incorporation and acceptance of foreigners. In the coming pages we will trace the development of the planning of Gaborone, to see more precisely how these planning ideologies and objectives played out during the critical planning period of the early 1960s when most of the important decisions were taken, and the first wave of construction initiated. Although operating from different perspectives on questions of planning or the symbolic importance of the city, quite apart from the broader discourses about modernity and traditional, democracy and independence, both colonial and elite Tswana attitudes about “city life,” most significantly related to questions of the placement of people and making space for the poor, intersected in a variety of complementary ways. We will begin first with a brief look at some of the guiding motivations and intentions held by Batswana elites and colonial officials as the plans for Gaborone were first being formulated.

Dreaming a City, Thinking a Plan

Characterized by the Chief Secretary A. J. A. Douglas as a friendly “invasion” into “our own country,” the initial transfer from Mafikeng to Gaborone of British civil servants, their families, documents, and the other extraneous equipment a functioning colonial bureaucracy requires, occurred early in 1965.⁷⁷ Placing the capital within the boundaries of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was the first in a series of important events culminating in the establishment of Batswana self-governance following Independence in September 1966. The oft-repeated refrain of the era, covering the last few years before the handover of power to the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) into the early post-Independence period, were phrases exhorting the citizens of the

⁷⁷ *Kutlwano*, ‘From Mafeking to Gaborone’, 4, 3 (March 1965), p. 2.

territory to develop socially, economically and politically. As the Protectorate's government magazine *Kutlwano* proclaimed in a headline on page 1 of the first issue following the election that installed the BDP into power: "The Word to Remember is—Progress."⁷⁸

Botswana, as an independent, but extremely poor nation, was envisioned as an experiment in African democracy and non-racial cooperation, situated not only in a continent fraught with turmoil and political instability, but in a Southern African region fragmented by racist policies and regimes. For the Botswana experiment to not end in catastrophe, let alone succeed, both colonial and a few influential Tswana elites felt the country must be pushed forward, rather than remain wedded to traditional norms and practices. As advocated by the government, the citizens were propelled toward an uncertain destination marked by ambiguously defined notions of progress and development. Over time, these objectives came to be typified by the adoption of globalized capitalism, consumptive practices and the Western discourse of modernity.

Before these wholesale changes could occur however, a location was needed to facilitate their attainment. The construction of the new capital, therefore, served as a prerequisite step taken toward achieving these cultural, economic and political goals. The plan for Gaborone represented a spatial realization of the governing elites' political and economic aspirations. And once finished, the new urban space of Gaborone was expected to also exert a transformative influence on the behaviors and attitudes of the territory's rural dwellers who constituted the vast majority of the population. As a representation of an ideal future, Gaborone sat as the singularity around which a new type of citizenry, indeed a new type of nation, was to be formed.

Encapsulating the feelings of the period, Seretse Khama, in a 1969 address to the Council on Foreign Relations stated, "Although we are a small country in numbers, if not in area, we are

⁷⁸ *Kutlwano*, 'The word to remember is progress', 4, 3 (March 1965), p. 1.

immodest enough to believe that our commitment to certain values—to democracy, self-reliance, and non-racialism, has a wider significance.”⁷⁹ Stating these watchwords is one thing. Actually giving them teeth by enacting them in policy and practice is quite another. Determining the extent to which this has happened constitutes a primary theme of the following chapters and pages.

Although lacking the money or infrastructure to mobilize the government resources necessary for sweeping programs or transformations in the State-dominated manners described by James Scott⁸⁰ or, with specific reference to Brasilia, James Holston⁸¹, the makers of Gaborone nonetheless possessed their own visionary set of aspirations and intentions guiding the planning of the city. Motivations that provided answers to two foundational questions, “what should the city be?” and “whom should the city be for?” Even so, within the vision of a city plan already limited by a lack of available resources, there remained a level of dissonance between the designs for the Gaborone laid out on paper and discussed in the corridors of the civil service and the built space of the city. The discrepancy between words and plans on one hand, and the implementation of them on the other, has afflicted the development of the city from its earliest construction, continuing, as we will see in the next chapter, into the post-colonial period, exemplified by the BDP government’s emphasis on an urban planning founded on the idea of mixed density housing. For the moment however, briefly reviewing Legislative Council debates from the early 1960s, on topics related to the creation of the plan for Gaborone, race relations

⁷⁹ Gwendolen Carter and Philip E. Morgan (eds), *From the Frontline: Speeches of Sir Seretse Khama* (Rex Collings, London, 1980), p. 57.

⁸⁰ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1998).

⁸¹ James Holston, *The Modernist City: An anthropological critique of Brasilia* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1989).

and the necessity of standardized planning techniques in the villages, provides a suitable entry point into the thinking of the dominant elites and bureaucratic officials charged with governing the Protectorate, along with the specific task of creating the new city.

Underlying the discussion surrounding the construction of Gaborone was the now well-worn binary of tradition v. modernity. As Ferguson writes in his powerful look at the rise and fall of modernity narratives along the Zambian Copperbelt, during the era of independence in the 1960s, “an urbanizing Africa was a modernizing” Africa.⁸² It shouldn’t be surprising therefore, to find that the attitudes in Botswana echoed these widely held cheerleading development mantras. The future of Botswana too, was rhetorically framed as being located in the place occupied by so-called Western values. And even for those who took a more traditionalist position, the debate centered mostly on the speed with which European norms and attitudes should be adopted and what specific adaptations Tswana society would require.⁸³

I submit two examples illuminating these intentions. The first of these, a particularly contentious parliamentary debate in November 1963 about whether Botswana should have the ability to make wills in the Protectorate, provides insight into the thinking of the time. The debate in the Legislative Council turned on two particular points: whether the bill was discriminatory and whether the regular Motswana was “ready” to move from customary will-making arbitrated by the chief to those will-making practices favored by the Western legal system. Botswana members on either side of the issue articulated their concerns in terms of

⁸² James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian copperbelt* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1999), p. 5.

⁸³ In a 1970 speech entitled “A Developing Society,” given to the participants of the BDP’s annual meeting, Vice President Masire explicitly employs the idea of “adaptation” as a means to development: “We value our traditional way of life, but to survive and progress, we must adapt. We must adapt our customs to enable development to proceed without undue hindrance. . . . In brief, ours is an extremely pragmatic and realistic approach.” For the full text of the speech, please see: Sir Seretse Khama, Dr. Q.K.J. Masire, and A. M. Dambe, ‘Development in Botswana: Speeches by Sir Seretse Khama, Dr. Q.K.J. Masire and Minister of Agriculture Mr. A.M. Dambe’ (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 2121, Gaborone, no date), p. 3.

“tradition” and seemed in general agreement on the trajectory of Botswana’s culture and economic practices. For a staunch traditionalist like Kgosi Batheon, the people were anchored to tradition—and would be for quite some time—making the attainment of modern living a far off event. Kgosi Batheon remarks,

The time has not come for Wills to be in the hands of Africans, not in the way the BaTswana live, and it will be some time Mr. Speaker before our way of life is changed to be in line with the modern way of living . . . I think it will be after all of us here are six foot under this earth. . . . We have got to rise to these changes, but tradition has got hold of us, tradition is not easily changed, it is a habit, it is something inherent in the people.⁸⁴

Another Motswana speaker agrees with Batheon. Because Batswana are still bound to tradition and haven’t fully ascended to European ways of living, they should tread carefully when deciding what traditions to keep, and which ought to be excised. Mr. Gugushe advises that Batswana not “prematurely dispense with some of the good things in our life” because “we are at a stage of preparation, we are soaking the ground properly so that when we accept European customs we shall do it on grounds that have been prepared.”⁸⁵ While wishing to tread slowly in moving away from tradition, both speakers accept that a transformation is occurring; that the people of the Protectorate are something akin to “Europeans in training.” In the same debate, Quett Masire, the first Vice-President and eventual President of Botswana following the death of Seretse Khama, explicitly adopts the discourse of modernization as he discusses the need for flexibility and accommodation for “that element of society which is evolving from the lower type, from the semi-primitive type where people are mechanistic and are merely clay in the hands of tradition.”⁸⁶ And later, in the years following Botswana’s independence, the need to

⁸⁴ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 9): Third Session, First Meeting: Sittings from 18th to 26th November 1963* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 819, Gaborone, 1963), p. 26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

modernize was written into official state policy. The *National Development Plan, 1968-1973* recognizes that the rate of development “depends on the extent to which the majority of the population are prepared to change their traditional attitudes for a more modern and scientific mode of life.”⁸⁷ Furthermore, the *NDP* continues, “in a country such as Botswana, where the life of most of the people is determined by tradition, all development means change—change not only in the way of life but also in the attitudes and values which underlie this way of life.”⁸⁸

From these comments we can see that Botswana’s Tswana leadership, from the earliest, had begun to participate in the global discourses on modernity, social evolution and progress. And while not directly related to the planning of Gaborone, these statements serve as evidence of a broader pattern of thinking prevalent at the time that was also built into similar debates and discussions about urban planning and living conditions in the Protectorate. If society was/is in the midst of a linear transformation, it becomes a fair question to ask about the end-point, who determined the destination, and about the means utilized in arriving there. As Her Majesty’s Commissioner advised in his opening address to this particular meeting of the Legislative Council, a main concern of government, in the years leading up to independence, is to work with the rural inhabitants of the Territory, “assisting the people living [in the Tribal Reserves] to become adjusted to modern conditions.”⁸⁹ The tasks of cleaning up the villages and the construction of Gaborone were perceived as significant facilitators of fulfilling the government’s desire to improve the population from Masire’s nebulously defined “semi-primitive type,” as it

⁸⁷ Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan, 1968-1973’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1968), p. 61.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁸⁹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 9)*, p. 4.

was assumed that by changing the spaces in which people lived, they could themselves be altered.

In a short debate held during November 1964 on the need to formally survey larger villages in the Protectorate, the relationship between the improvement of the population, modernity and built space is clearly demonstrated. Superficially, the discussion revolves around the need to better plan Batswana villages due to their increasing size and the subsequent difficulties keeping them clean and providing modern amenities such as sewers and electricity amongst the winding streets and cul-de-sacs characterizing the layout of villages laid out along customary patterns. And while these issues might have been important considerations, the implicit assumptions underlying them are illuminating. As one speaker announces, “everybody in this House and outside” is completely aware of the impending need for villages to be “laid out on modern lines.”⁹⁰ Kgosi Bathoen doesn’t provide details as to what precisely is incorporated into a design along “modern lines,” but two other speakers provide some insight here. On the one hand, Quett Masire suggests that economic efficiency and infrastructure considerations now outweigh the traditional administrative system represented by the ward structure of Batswana villages.⁹¹

On the other hand however, comments by both Masire and Khama suggest that symbolic and aesthetic functions are of greater importance. Contrasting the largely glowing reviews of customary settlement patterns by European scholars described earlier, Masire suggests there is a “situation” needing immediate attention regarding “huts having been thrown all over the place in

⁹⁰ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 12): Fourth Session, Second Meeting: Sittings from 16th to 19th November, 1964*, (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 822, Gaborone, 1964), p. 81.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

an unorderedly manner.”⁹² This perceived shabby state of affairs in the villages ignores a fact that Masire says all Batswana must now recognize: “times have changed and we with them, not only that, modern life, modern standards of living have placed greater demands on us to improve ourselves. . . .”⁹³ The road to self-improvement—whether to be tread by Batswana elites or by all citizens is unclear—is inextricably tied up in the adoption of Western spatial forms, as a permanent visual display denoting one’s linkage to broader globalized patterns of living and dwelling. A resident of Mochudi, a village a short drive to the north of Gaborone, says of his European style zinc-roofed square house, “when you have a house like this you need never fear the white man because you are equal to him.”⁹⁴ Beyond this singular informal expression of aspiration, Khama, using language echoing Le Corbusier’s revolutionary call to choose geometry and order rather than the unplanned streets and cities fit for the pack-donkey,⁹⁵ argues that for Batswana to

go on in the same old way for fear that somebody else would like or prefer a winding road to a straight one, or would rather go on in the same old-fashioned way, when we know that properly surveyed and laid out villages are more attractive than the present type of villages that we have, is entirely erroneous.⁹⁶

For Batswana elites at the time, particularly the most powerful and influential individuals, policies that pushed the inhabitants of the Protectorate to change were at the forefront of the government agenda. This vision of modernity, best exemplified by the new capital of Gaborone, was shared by the members of the colonial government at the time, although as we will see

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁹⁴ Quoted in: Graeme John Hardie, *Tswana Design of House and Settlement: Continuity and change in expressive space*. (Boston University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1981), p. 102.

⁹⁵ See Chapter 1 for fuller explanation.

⁹⁶ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 12)*, p. 81.

below, not always for the same reasons or intentions. Furthermore, as we delve deeper into the early days of the city, the implications of this elite “vision” for the everyday citizen of Gaborone, and for the Protectorate more generally, will become clearer.

One of the primary considerations factored into the decision to place the new capital at Gaborone was because it was perceived as a clean slate. As we’ve already noted in the first chapter, Gaborone, into the early 1960s, was home to a small number of basic businesses, a government public works camp, a hotel and not much else. To the individuals in charge of selecting a site for the capital then, Gaborone offered an opportunity to custom build a city to fit the vision of the planners, rather than reconfigure, or be constrained by, the already built spaces of Francistown, Lobatsi, Mahalapye or any of the other locations considered.⁹⁷ One primary drawback to these towns to the decision-makers was that they could not provide the visual pomp and “dignity” expected of a properly laid out capital city.⁹⁸ Beyond the pragmatic considerations of layout, infrastructure and planning enabled by building on a relatively pristine site, the emptiness of the Gaborone site was thought to encourage harmonious race relations. Both influential Africans and Europeans advised that the unity of the country, exemplified by the capital, was of paramount importance as the territory moved towards independence.⁹⁹

In the debate to decide on the new headquarters’ location, Seretse Khama, in the first substantial speech supporting the recommendation of Gaborone, argued that the success of

⁹⁷ It should be mentioned that towns such as Lobatsi and Francistown had other problems precluding them from being serious contenders for the site of the new capital. Divided explicitly along racial lines, Lobatsi and Francistown were seen by Batswana elites as not suitable in light of the non-racial, symbolic intentions to be manifested in the nation’s capital city. For more information on the problems of urban segregation in Francistown in the years following independence, please see Chapter 3.

⁹⁸ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 2): Debates of the Second Meeting of the First Session of the First Legislative Council: Sittings from 26th and 27th September, 1961* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number 328.6883 NAT, Gaborone, 1961), pp. 45-46.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26; 28.

Botswana's non-racial experiment depended on the selection of a "neutral territory" where "we can put into operation the policy which we all wish to see associated with this country" because of the absence of "set ideas" amongst the residents of the town.¹⁰⁰ It was assumed therefore, that the government would have a far easier time cultivating a non-racial culture in a spot where racist attitudes had not had time to take root. I should note that the publicity efforts to convey the non-racial rhetoric of the governing elite extended outside the formal discourse of the Legislative Council. Issues of the territory's magazine, *Kutlwano*, for example, carried short essays by figures such as Seretse Khama and A. J. A. Douglas (the Government Secretary) about the importance of good race relations¹⁰¹ or supplied a front cover photograph of Khama and Jimmy Haskins, depicting the white businessman (later a Minister and Speaker of the National Assembly in the independence government) and the future President, dining together on the Rhodesian Railways service through the Protectorate.¹⁰²

Of course though, race relations in the territory weren't always as harmonious as the official rhetoric might have suggested, as discrimination popped up, for instance, with regards to the serving of liquor in the African beerhalls¹⁰³ or in the closed membership of social clubs across the Protectorate.¹⁰⁴ And even according to a former colonial official stationed for a time

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰¹ Seretse Khama and Arthur Douglas, 'Two views on race relations', *Kutlwano*, 1, 9 (September 1962), pp. 16-17.

¹⁰² *Kutlwano*, 2, 2 (February 1963).

¹⁰³ For insight into this particular controversy see the debate transcribed in: Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 1): Debates of the First Meeting of the First Session of the First Legislative Council: Sittings from 20th and 21st June, and 26th June-3rd July 1961* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 811, Gaborone, 1961), pp. 72-76.

¹⁰⁴ Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Racial Discrimination Select Committee, 19 February 1963-23 December 1964' (Collected Files, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.591/1, Gaborone).

in Gaborone early in the development of the capital project, problems related to discrimination were prevalent. Winstanley writes:

This racial state of affairs seemed to me to pervade the whole Gaborones [sp] camp. The PWD [Public Works Department Camp] was a hotbed of racial attitudes as many of the mechanics, fitters etc hailed from South Africa or Rhodesia where such attitudes prevailed amongst artisan types. Not that many of the people who hailed from the UK were much different.¹⁰⁵

It seems then, that even a “pristine” Gaborone was home to discriminatory practices and attitudes long entrenched among white populations living elsewhere in the Protectorate.

Presently, I think it is wise to insert a crucial, yet probably unpopular, caveat regarding the practice of discrimination in the Gaborone area. As Winstanley also says, during the construction phase of the capital and in the years immediately following the city’s completion, the old colonial establishment was replaced by a younger set of officers who while “not woolly liberals” did “think differently.”¹⁰⁶ These new attitudes were exhibited in the formation of discussion groups and a new social club in Gaborone whose membership was open to both elite whites and blacks. I would suggest however, that discrimination was more easily overcome amongst people of relatively equal social and political positions. The racial harmony strived for in the planning of Gaborone, as will become especially apparent as we examine the particulars of the urban plan for the capital, seemed to depend on a person’s class position. Racial harmony for either the Batswana elites or the whites didn’t encompass consorting with the laborers, the urban poor—the “help.”

What the above implies then, is that the quest for harmonious race relations either in Gaborone, or in the broader Protectorate, wasn’t simply a matter of strict altruism (although of

¹⁰⁵ Personal email communication, George Winstanley, 30 August 2006.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

course, there was certainly a large measure of that), but instead, this policy must also be understood as a pragmatic economic and political compromise benefiting both the Europeans and the BDP elite with whom they cooperated. You might say that by advocating racial harmony, both sides got something out of the deal. For their part the Batswana who constituted the BDP leadership were able to get the support of the colonial government in their pursuit of power in the post-colonial period. While for the Europeans, the BDP represented a reasonable alternative to the nationalist, Pan-Africanist, and communist affiliated political parties who were popular in the urban areas of the Territory. If independence was coming, from the perspective of the Europeans, it was better to collaborate with individuals who wouldn't kick you out of the country, or possibly even worse, unsettle their dominant business position. Accordingly, one author estimates that the BDP carried almost unanimous support amongst the white population of the Protectorate.¹⁰⁷

As Parson notes, the independence “deal” between the BDP and the British marked the intersection of significant economic and political motivations.¹⁰⁸ Both sides possessed substantial trading, farming and cattle interests that were threatened by the nationalist politics advocated by an opposition—however ill-funded and fragmented—and a stark discontinuity between the colonial and independence periods. The protection of these interests resulted in an informal pact founded on an “exclusionary class bias” that preserved the political and economic status quo throughout Botswana’s independence period into the present.¹⁰⁹ Solidifying racial

¹⁰⁷ One publication estimates that white support of the BDP was around 95%. See: “Political Developments in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” *International Bulletin: A Monthly Publication of the Africa Institute*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1964), pp. 51-52.

¹⁰⁸ Jack Parson, ‘Inclusion/exclusion and the health of liberal democracy in Botswana’, (Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Washington DC, 2005), p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7; 9.

harmony amongst elites who needed each other under a post-colonial political and economic framework was a crucial step in this direction.

While not wanting to belabor the point, I would like to point out that the coziness of the arrangement between the BDP and the former colonial government was criticized by members of the political opposition from the beginning. P. G. Matante, an opposition leader argued in the Legislature following the first vote for self-government in 1965, “if, Mr. Speaker, you own a house, a nice building, and after four years you changed the furniture, it does not mean that you are not the owner of that house, you have merely changed the furniture.”¹¹⁰ What Matante is suggesting is that although the BDP had won the election, the structural organization of the government remained the same; there is, in Matante’s view, no difference between the colonial and post-colonial government. And while I wouldn’t go so far as to agree with Matante’s politicized rhetoric there exists some degree of truth in his statement. Into the present, scholars of Botswana's politics have largely applauded this continuity between the British and the BDP, viewing it as an important factor in Botswana’s successful management of its government and resources. The stability provided by this arrangement is a manifestation of the leadership’s pragmatism and good governance. This assertion is true to an extent. What is not usually discussed however, are the exclusionary attitudes and class bias this framework represents and legitimizes. When looking at the history of the planning of Gaborone, for example, this discrepancy between the rhetoric of equality and social harmony on the one hand, and the institutional practice of exclusion and bias on the other, into the spaces, politics and economics of Botswana becomes exceedingly glaring.

¹¹⁰ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly: Official Report (Hansard 14): First Session, Second Meeting: Sittings from 5th to 14th July 1965* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 824, Gaborone, 1965), p. 143.

Although the plan for Gaborone expresses the intentions of the government in more technical terms, descriptions of the vision for the city from the initial Legislative Council debates provide a colorful depiction of the future environment of Gaborone. Amongst the members of the Council there seemed to be a feeling that Gaborone should function solely as an administrative center, serving as a home only to government functionaries, their families and attendants.¹¹¹ These preferences were, from the beginning, built into the plan of the city, which no doubt largely account for the underestimation of the future population of the city, or the near complete lack of preparedness to deal with the influx of poor rural dwellers coming to Gaborone in search of better prospects. The failure of the government on these counts becomes a bit more understandable—not excusable—if you consider the Gaborone of the elite imagination. Says Mr. Sim,

The inhabitants of this territory desire that the new capital will be a town of beauty, with parks and gardens, with avenues lined with exotic trees, with wide streets, with traffic islands with either lawns or flowers in the centre, and an imposing Legislative Council Chamber.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Even at the late planning stages at the end of 1962/beginning of 1963 there was talk of Gaborone existing solely as an administrative capital. One of the clearest indications of the “government only” conception of the plan for Gaborone is evidenced by a formula used to predict the initial population of the new city. Articulated by an expert technical officer from the main colonial office in London who briefly visited the Protectorate in the early planning period, the formula was deemed capable of fixing “the minimum size of Gaborone with fair accuracy.” Out of an expected initial population of 5,000 residents, 2,000 of were government officials and their dependents, while the remaining 3,000 would likely be “mainly Africans, who serve and support the government employees.” After a period of 20 years, with an anticipated 2% increase in population, there would be approximately 7,500 people in Gaborone. See: Kenneth Watts, ‘The Planning of Gaborone, the New Capital for Bechuanaland: Report of an Advisory Visit: January 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborone Headquarters: Town Plan’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963). To provide some perspective, I should also note that according to demographic data in the mid 1970s, the population of Gaborone was already over 34,000 people by the end of 1975. See: Betsy Stephens, “Urban migration in Botswana: Gaborone, December 1975”, *Botswana Notes and Records*, 9 (1977), p. 92.

¹¹² Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 2)*, p. 17.

He concludes by stating that the site for Gaborone allows for the possibility of “making this new capital a modern garden town.”¹¹³ In a similar vein, I quote at length from Dr. Merriweather’s dream for Gaborone:

I do not think that the administrative capital should be mixed up with the noise, bustle and squalor of an industrial area. When we think of an administrative capital, we think of peace and quietness, we think of the gentle rustle of papers, and gentle clink of cups of tea, we think of the tip-toeing of messengers taking portfolios from one office, one department to another in an everlasting circle and this would hardly fit in with a busy industrial area! Think of Scotland! There, over on the west, we have a great dense population of the Clyde-side, we have the great industries and the noise and the turmoil and the slums, and the smoke. We come over to the capital in the east, Edinburgh, where we find the dignity and the quiet of a capital city and I think we can take a lesson from that. Let us have our administrative capital where it can be developed into a beautiful and dignified place and I think Gaborone is most suited for that.¹¹⁴

The Gaborone, the capital of an independent Botswana, as envisioned by the British civil servant, takes the form of a colonial fantasy where industry, noise, and the feared seething cauldron of African urban poor presumably responsible for both, are noticeably absent. Some Botswana officials however, seemed to harbor a comparable vision. Batheon says of his ideal capital,

We would not like to be pestered with [the] noise of railway engines, with smoke and all industrial activities when we want to have our minds collected, when we need to be at peace discussing [the] major problems of the Territory.¹¹⁵

The plan for Gaborone, as eventually drawn up, reflected these concerns, these shared desires for an administrative Eden characterized by quiet, cleanliness, and a town free of unseemly riff-raff. Instituting harmonious race relations in the “pristine” location represented by Gaborone was a task much more easily accomplished when the folks who might present problems for this objective were left out of the idealized elite vision of the city. As the

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

development and construction of the city progressed however, this version of utopian Gaborone became increasingly untenable. Because, apparently, somebody neglected to tell the rural, soon to be urban, poor they weren't particularly welcome in their own capital, the product of a grand social experiment.

“Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss”: Or, a Colonial City fit for Independence

Sounding like an evocation of a billboard a family might have seen driving along a Midwestern highway in the 1950s advertising the latest innovations found in a new suburban development, the planners commissioned with the task of founding Gaborone declared their intention to design a city both “new and modern in conception.”¹¹⁶ Rather than referencing the dreamy tomorrowland of idyllic middle class domestic bliss—the toasters, plastics and other paraphernalia representing the Machine Age’s arrival into the kitchen—the makers of Gaborone instead directed their sights far beyond the mundane concerns of the domestic household. This collection of bureaucrats and civil servants saw their charge as directed towards transforming entire ways of living, doing and thinking. For this objective, they recognized the benefits of the Territory’s African population living according to customary patterns. A people ostensibly unspoiled by civilization would no doubt prove easier to mold: “the advantage is on our side in so far as we can endeavour to guide the African into an urban way of life should the necessity arise. . . .”¹¹⁷ This transition, it was assumed, would be long and difficult, as the Public Works Department notes, the citizens of the “Protectorate live under tribal conditions [,] have done so

¹¹⁶ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Africa, Proposed New Capital City: A Town Planning Architectural and Sociological Study of the Proposal for the Guidance of the Professional Development Team and the Architectural Association School of Tropical Architecture, Bedford Square, London’ (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1100, Mafikeng, South Africa, 1962), p. 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

for centuries, and it is considered likely that they will do so for many years to come.”¹¹⁸ It is also worth noting that the perception of Botswana as a stagnant and backward locale was not strictly limited to colonial officers. Even after independence this characterization of Botswana persisted, as one observer noted, “the BaTswana are not a politically conscious people,” whose lack of “aware[ness] of national objectives and international affairs” can be partially countered by the country’s exemplar of progress, Gaborone.¹¹⁹ The accepted, if unstated, wisdom exhibited in the planning manual (and afterwards) is the belief that while a capital city would be built, most of the Africans in an independent Botswana wouldn’t be prepared to live—or, at least, live properly—within its borders. The image of Gaborone offered here is one of a city ahead of its time and without citizens, a nostalgic monument built with a view to a modern future.

Upon receiving final approval from the higher ups in London for the plan to move the Territory’s Headquarters out of South Africa, the individuals directing the project were ordered to complete the move “as soon as possible.”¹²⁰ In keeping with the mandate for urgency, the time between the project’s inception and the completion of the first phase of construction was about 5 years. Many decisions needed to be taken, and quickly. One of the first was the need to locate a suitable site on which to build. Without dwelling for too long on the technical considerations of landscape, topography and other site characteristics, I will draw attention to probably the two most important assets possessed by the land currently occupied by Gaborone.

¹¹⁸ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Capital Project: Draft Town Plan Report’ (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1098, Mafikeng, 1962), p. 13.

¹¹⁹ Alan C. G. Best, “Gaborone: problems and prospects of a new capital”, *The Geographical Review*, **LX**, 1 (1970), p. 11.

¹²⁰ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Report of a meeting held at Lobatsi on Tuesday 10th April 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

The first of these, the importance of selecting a neutral, undeveloped site with regards to fostering harmonious race relations, was mentioned earlier in this chapter. The desire to prevent discrimination between whites and Africans was not the only consideration factored into the decision to select the Gaborone site. Because the land for the city was located on Crown Lands, already owned by the colonial government, the future development of the city could be zoned, and land allocated, in any manner the planners or city officials wished. Construction of buildings and the buying and selling of land would not be bound to following customary land tenure practices or the practice of chiefly authority. From the beginning therefore, the establishment of Gaborone could be conducted solely at the discretion of the colonial planners, rather than being forced to contend with the difficulties arising from placing the city within the boundaries of a tribal reserve governed by customary Tswana law.

Gaborone was also an attractive site to Batswana precisely because of its location on Crown Lands. In addition to the desire to create a conflict-free racial environment, the Batswana similarly wanted to avoid any tensions amongst the main Tswana tribes. Charges of favoritism and bias, not to mention the power and prestige the capital would bring to the tribe whose territory in which the new town sat, would upset the tribal balance that Tswana elites across the Protectorate were attempting to cement. Of the eight major tribes in the Territory, six were nearby the Gaborone site, while two of the largest—including Khama's BaMangwato—were furthest away.¹²¹ Throughout the discussion about where to place the new Headquarters, to the credit of those involved, repeated calls were made by both Africans and Europeans to ignore the temptations of personal interests or prestige when determining the location for the capital. Most of the people involved in the decision were able to do so—the only individuals who exercised

¹²¹ The debate transcribed in *Hansard 2* provides the best summary available regarding the motivations, intentions, and tensions of the people involved in the earliest stages of the Capital Project.

any opposition at all were some of the white businessmen in the Legislative Council hailing from other already established cities who stood to have their influence reduced by placing the capital on new ground. One trader from Francistown went so far as to warn that Gaborone's proximity to South Africa would result in the Republic's apartheid practices creeping over the border: "one morning," he predicts, "you might be rudely awakened and see on your Railway Station 'Europeans Only.'"¹²² Ominous warnings aside, these points of view were soundly rebuked in the Legislative Council because beyond the site's "neutrality," it possessed an important logistical asset that a thriving new city couldn't do without: water.

Of chief importance in the selection of a viable location was the availability of an adequate water supply to provide not only for the early years of the city, but well into the future. Botswana, as home to the Kalahari Desert and an otherwise dry climate with a short and unpredictable rainy season, the provision of a permanent and reliable source of water was obviously of high practical concern. Worry over the supply of water played a large role in determining the admittedly fuzzy population predictions for the eventual size of the city. Early estimations, for instance, postulated that the maximum size of a Gaborone constrained by an expected limited water supply would optimistically be around 15,000 people.¹²³

Undoubtedly the concern over the availability of water was legitimate, and the problem was eventually solved by damming the seasonally flowing Notwane River. However, an internal report summarizing the conduct of a meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee¹²⁴

¹²² Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 2)*, p. 44.

¹²³ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaborones Capital Project', p. 3.

¹²⁴ The HQ Development Committee was chaired by A. J. A. Douglas and was constituted almost entirely of government officials. There was one Motswana on the committee, M. A. Maribe.

provides a telling glimpse at some of the other motivations underlying these water worries. The document advises that in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,

with its hot, arid, and at times trying climate, larger quantities of water are necessarily used by householders than . . . in the United Kingdom. To attempt any severe restriction of water used e.g. for gardens would gravely handicap our efforts to attract the right type of resident, and in particular to recruit of the public service.¹²⁵

Apprehension over water is rooted, at least partially, in a concern over whether Gaborone will support the comfort level of the expected population of British and other elites comprising the “right type of resident” that would predominate within the city limits. In light of this, a stated carrying capacity of 15,000 residents seems a bit suspect, even in a country with the poor, relatively small, and widely dispersed population residing in the Protectorate in the early 1960s. The concern with landscaping, gardening and indirectly, ventilation and the need for a city to possess good “lungs,” reflected ordinary British colonial apprehensions about “surviving” the climates in which they were living. These attitudes, furthermore, tend to discredit the official colonial line that they were planning Gaborone specifically as a town for the Batswana.

For both the British colonial town specifically, and the modernist city generally, vegetation, ventilation and healthful living go hand in hand. In his theoretical depiction of the City of To-morrow, Le Corbusier for example, suggested that to remove the potential oppressiveness of his urban environment characterized by vast open spaces and sixty story apartment blocks, the city must be filled with objects closer to a human scale. He writes,

the vast buildings which the town planning of the future will bring about would crush us if there were no common measure between them and ourselves. . . . The tree modifies a scene that is too vast . . . [and] it would seem that the tree is an element essential to our comfort,

¹²⁵ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Report of a meeting held at Lobatsi on Tuesday 10th April 1962’.

and its presence in the city is a sort of caress, a kindly thing in the midst of our severe creations.¹²⁶

As a salve for the soul-as-cog in Le Corbusier's urbanized "Machine for Living," plants and trees helped to counter the repetitive monumentality characterizing his revolutionary urban space. Lefebvre perhaps ironically adopts Le Corbusier's "machine" label for cities, but goes beyond Le Corbusier by pushing the metaphor further. If the city is a machine, it is thus a tool to be used, wielded and manipulated by dominant social groups.¹²⁷ Foreshadowing the point made here, early designs for Gaborone, which placed an emphasis on gardens and landscaping familiar to other colonial settings, not to mention the suburbs of London, demonstrated the Protectorate Government's intention to imprint its own specific needs, desires and fantasies onto the landscape of the new capital. The details of the plan indicates the general expectation among the governing and planning elite that the final form of Gaborone would reflect its existence as a relatively closed administrative city home to a class of apparently gardening bureaucrats and government functionaries. The failure to adequately plan for the poor, a consequence arising largely (though not entirely) from planning biases, continued up to and after the completion of Gaborone. But, for the present discussion, we get ahead of ourselves.

While on one level, the planning of Gaborone proceeded in a manner that seemed largely free of conflict, the design for Gaborone suggests something different. The pursuit of the "right type of resident" necessarily required efforts at (meta-) domination, first on a map, then in actuality. For if you controlled the layout on paper, in a city where much emphasis and worry was placed on proper zoning, you ideally controlled the city itself. Of course though, total

¹²⁶ Le Corbusier, translated by Frederick Etchells, *The City of To-morrow and its Planning* (The Architectural Press, London, 1971), p. 137.

¹²⁷ Henri Lefebvre, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1991), p. 345.

control was elusive, even impossible. As Cooper rightfully notes, due to the appearance of slums—the unplanned development and people—the colonial city was never “fully colonial” as envisioned by the colonial government.¹²⁸ However, in the realm of expert abstraction, in the form of the physical plan for the capital, the full realization of the colonial fantasy could be played out. And while not achieved in reality, the schematic put down on paper that was both symbolic and pragmatic, set the tone in ways subtle and explicit, ultimately influencing the city eventually built.

Writing of the British bungalow in India, King argues that the arrangement of gardens and landscaping served both a hygienic and a symbolic function for colonial officials. On the one hand, as a former colonial official observed, “we brought with us in our home lives almost exact replicas of the sort of life that upper middle class people lived in England at that time.”¹²⁹ The English landscape was, in other words, remade—although perhaps “re-imagined” is a better word—in the colonial cities of India. Additionally, not only did gardens give the wives of bureaucrats something with which to occupy their time, gardens and trees provided shade and “fresh air” for the residence’s occupants. The requirements of ample green space created a buffer between the colonial elite and the rest of the indigenous population—an increase in physical distance was also believed to lessen the diffusion of germs and bacteria from the Indian settlements into the homes of the British.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Frederick Cooper, ‘Urban space, industrial time, and wage labor in Africa’, in Frederick Cooper (ed), *Struggle for the City: Migrant labor, capital, and the state in urban Africa* (Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA, 1983), p. 18.

¹²⁹ C. Allen, quoted in Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, social power and environment* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976), p. 134.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-143.

This “medical” approach to segregated spatial arrangements and home design was also carried out in Africa, as Curtin details in his article on the relationship between specialized medical knowledge and town planning.¹³¹ In West Africa too, the implementation of what might be termed medico-segregation was often more the product of economic and political concerns than anything to do with sound medical advice.¹³² One example given in support of this contention is that while Europeans demanded segregation from local populations, their servants were allowed to move in and out of their neighborhoods, reflecting “a desire to be segregated but not inconvenienced.”¹³³

And closer to home in Lusaka, for the administrative of capital for Northern Rhodesia and later Zambia, planners relied on the “garden city” model popular in the UK at the turn of the 20th century. However, rather than create a town designed to enhance the quality of life of the poorest workers, as Ebenezer Howard’s original vision dictated, the colonial planners in Lusaka attempted to establish a city with wide streets, open spaces, and low density housing that would be most suitable for colonial, and later, for post-independence elites.¹³⁴ In the 1952 plan for Lusaka for example, approximately 22,000 Europeans were allotted 7,000 residential acres, while about 53,000 were to be accommodated on 1,709 acres—which doesn’t even come close to accounting for the “optimum” African population of 133,000.¹³⁵ The long-term consequences of these colonial planning maneuvers, whether talking of Abu-Lughod’s Rabat or Lusaka, is that the minority’s need for space and low density housing in the colonial period becomes a problem

¹³¹ Philip D. Curtin, “Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa”, *The American Historical Review*, **90**, 3 (June 1985), pp. 594-613.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 605.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 605.

¹³⁴ John Collins, “Lusaka: the myth of the Garden City”, *Zambian Urban Studies*, **2** (1969), pp. 4-6.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

following independence. After independence, segregation is continued and reproduced in terms of economic stratification, as low-density housing is seen as equivalent to high income and high status.¹³⁶

Roughly ten years following the completion of the Rhodesian plan for Lusaka, the final preparations were being completed for Gaborone. These same colonial concerns and desires were reproduced in the plan for Gaborone, despite claims and protestations to the contrary by both whites and Africans that Gaborone was going to be different. Language used to describe the plan for the new city however, seems merely to re-circulate discourse evident elsewhere in the British colonial enterprise. As in the Indian case, large tracts of open space were preferred in the city in order to create a “lung” for the city through the maintenance of open areas providing for the “free flow of breezes.”¹³⁷ In keeping with the thinking of the Public Works Department’s planning team, who bound their design to the assertion that “a city consists of more than roads, services and buildings,”¹³⁸ the civil service bureaucrats in charge of the project assumed the role of landscapers and gardeners seeking to not only remake the environment, but the people who inhabited the new space of Gaborone.

The area occupied by Gaborone was considered “typical Southern African bush country,”¹³⁹ meaning that filtered through the eyes of the colonial establishment it was barren, dry and uninspiring. To modify this apparently dreary set of circumstances, “the development of

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³⁷ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Africa, Proposed New Capital City’, p. 29.

¹³⁸ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Landscaping’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

¹³⁹ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Capital Project’, p. 14.

Gaberones as an oasis of greenery and flowering trees [was] most necessary”¹⁴⁰ in order for the town to fully realize the “ideals which Gaberones symbolizes as the capital of Bechuanaland.”¹⁴¹ In theory, accomplishing these goals required the need for the authorities to compel—ultimately an impossible task in a place already lacking funds and manpower—both whites and Africans to maintain their property. To the British, the cooperation of the African, seemed particularly doubtful considering their “sheer sloth and lack of home pride and tidiness.”¹⁴² At any rate, only after gardens flourished in the community could an enhanced quality of life for the (presumably British) inhabitants be assured.

Modeling Gaborone after a hamlet in an English countryside isn’t simply just about the making the civil service and their families feel at home. There is, I think, a dual meaning to the use of the term “oasis” in the planning documentation of the city. Gaborone as “oasis” is not just referring to flowers and leafy herbage as an aesthetic device to beautify the city. Gaborone as “oasis” also suggests Gaborone as “citadel,” a defensive space in which proper civilization and modern living is protected, is insulated from a wild, uncontrolled exterior. In a colonial world where the veneer between civilization and not-civilization is thin and unstable, even the plant-life and the dry dusty hills surrounding Gaborone wield a certain amount of menace. They need to be tamed in ways not accomplished solely through the construction of “roads, services and buildings.” Green space buffers and healthy breezes constitute part of the defensive maneuvering segregating the town from whatever lurks outside. The planners ensure that an

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴¹ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Landscaping’.

¹⁴² R.A.R. Bent, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘A Minute from R.A.R. Bent, Member of Natural Resources and Industries Department to the Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, 16 April 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaberones New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

important goal in the landscaping of Gaborone is to bring “a touch of civilization to the present ‘wild’ scene.”¹⁴³ This kind of informal moat building to protect the sanctity of the urban core from an ambiguous external threat is evident not just in terms of the physical environment but, as we will see shortly, also in the internally directed efforts to maintain separation between the low and high cost housing and the fears over the influences of the nearby tribal villages spilling over into the neatly packaged and zoned “model town”¹⁴⁴ Gaborone represents.

The partitioning of Gaborone appeared elsewhere in the urban plan beyond the meaning ascribed to variations of shrubbery strategically planted across the city. Similar to other administrative cities across the globe, the plans imbued Gaborone with other expressions of symbolic importance related to its political and moral position as a nation’s capital. In the post-colonial capital of Chandigarh for example, both Nehru and Le Corbusier felt that this new city represented a progression in the evolution of urban development. For Le Corbusier, the plan of Chandigarh represented the fullest expression of the “Open Hand”: a new era of harmony emerging from the integration of man, authority, and environment.¹⁴⁵ And for Nehru’s part, he saw the new capital as marking not only a spatial, but also a temporal destination, for the people of post-colonial India to head towards.

The new city as future-oriented space also was an important factor in the motivating the construction of another new capital in South America, Brasilia. As Holston notes, the city of Brasilia, built according to modernist architectural principles set down by the CIAM architectural movement a few decades earlier, functioned as a dramatic and visible “break with

¹⁴³ Public Works Department, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Africa, Proposed New Capital City’, p. 11.

¹⁴⁴ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Landscaping’.

¹⁴⁵ Ravi Kalia, *Chandigarh: The making of an Indian city* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999), p. 117.

the colonial past and a leap into the future.”¹⁴⁶ Superficially, these sorts of utopian aspirations suggest a sharp, clean and easy break between a stagnant and backwards past and a progressive entry into a global modernity. Not surprisingly, this distinction is far less stark—if it even exists at all—in practice. Speaking generally of designed capitals and capitols in the post-colonial world, Vale argues that the “design of these buildings remains closely tied to political forces that reinforce existing patterns of dominance and submission.”¹⁴⁷ The capital project that produced Gaborone exhibited these continuities and tensions between past and future and colonial authority and post-colonial democracy.

The colonial government made repeated claims in public reports and internal dialogue between officials declaring the plan’s ideological neutrality. In one of the early planning reports, for example, in a passage describing the government’s efforts to avoid a racially divided city, it is noted that “every attempt has been made to provide a town plan which postulates no particular social or political or economic ideology, but is based at all times upon hard economic and sociological facts.”¹⁴⁸ Even if we concede this point for the present, the emphasis placed on Gaborone’s existence as a center of government and authority seems to cast doubt over the above statement. The ideology of power, order and authority was very much imprinted onto the built space of Gaborone. Consider the reports detailing the approach to be taken in the construction of the city. Three separate documents suggest that close attention was paid to the city’s government and administration function. Due to the government’s prominence in the city—indeed, it is the

¹⁴⁶ Holston, *The Modernist City*, p. 96. See Chapter Three of Holston’s study for a full discussion.

¹⁴⁷ Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1992), p. 10.

¹⁴⁸ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Township Report’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962), p. 3.

reason the construction project was even undertaken—government buildings were expected to set the architectural standards for the rest of the town to follow.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, because “the primary function of the town is to provide the Territory with an imposing Legislative and Administrative Capital, it is appropriate that the seat of government should be the focal point of the town.”¹⁵⁰

A later elaboration of this point is found in a revised version of the town planning doctrine to be implemented in Gaborone. Expanding on the notion that the symbolism of administrative function in Gaborone should be accentuated, the planners write, “it may be assumed that the most imposing architecture in the town will be built in [the Government enclave] and it is therefore, appropriate that these buildings, which are the material and visible manifestation of the concept of ordered Government, Law and Justice should dominate and overlook the town.”¹⁵¹ And although there were no hilltops or other geographical features suitable as a site for a capitol compound to be built allowing the capitol to truly “overlook the town,” in the diagrams produced detailing the layout of the city, the capitol buildings were indeed granted a prominent location in the space of the city.

Bounded by the railway reserve to the west, privately owned farms to the north, and tribal territories to the east, Gaborone was designed to occupy the available space within these external barriers. Even with these spatial constraints, the planners of Gaborone were able to account for varying levels of residential housing, commercial space, areas for both light and heavy industrial,

¹⁴⁹ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Africa, Proposed New Capital City’, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Capital Project’, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Township Report’, p. 8.

an airstrip and a makeshift golf course.¹⁵² Positioned at the northernmost edge of the town, nearly abutting the boundary of the private farmland, resided the Government Enclave: a half-circle shaped site home to the offices of the bureaucracy, the courts and the legislative headquarters. Across the street to the south, sat the commercial and business sector, the upper class residential sector, parks and open space, as well as land specially set aside for the Anglican Church. Still further to the south were the areas set aside for the high-density housing, the stadium area and the industrial areas. The arterial roadways—going north/south and east/west to/from the airport—bisecting the town intersect in front of the government sector. As for the roads themselves, in the plan’s schematic, they are depicted as wide, tree lined boulevards; perfect for processional ceremonies, parades and to put the best foot forward for visiting dignitaries arriving by air or by car.

As I mentioned, the plan discussed above is a draft; the final form of the town looked substantially different in some respects by the time construction was finished. For example, in the final product, the high and low density housing were separated by an open air Mall (a central plaza) with the local and national government buildings located at either end, rather than dividing the residential areas by open spaces and a major road. Additionally, the town plan was rotated counterclockwise, thus placing the governmental “head” of the city at the western edge in closer proximity to the railway reserve and the major north/south road leading to Francistown. Despite these modifications enacted for the end product, the early draft map of Gaborone best exemplifies the planners’ intentions and desires for the plan in their purest form; before, that is,

¹⁵² This description of the diagram for Gaborone is based on a draft map of the city prepared by the Public Works Department sometime in 1962, under the heading “Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Draft Township Layout.”

they were forced to make revisions to it due to considerations of impracticality, lack of funds, or any of the innumerable other reasons that are part of the give and take of the planning process.¹⁵³

The early plan you might say, represents a sort of urban town planning “wish list,” asking for tree lined boulevards, neatly compartmentalized residential spaces, and a government sector that sits at the center of the ceremonial and symbolic space of the town. The roads’ convergence in the governmental space suggests the supreme position of the government in the plan for Gaborone, the individuals walking along the wide and imposing street to arrive at the government sector brings to mind the image of humble supplicants prostrating themselves at the gates of a religious temple. An image made more real by the fact that there *was* to be a gate at the complex’s entrance on the north/south road—the one passing through the residential areas of town—while the road traveling to the airport or the main northern thoroughfare lacked any sort of barrier. This not surprising planning decision probably resulted from the assumption that the “right” sorts of people would be traveling by car or aircraft, so there wasn’t much reason to erect a barrier obstructing their movement, but for the folks, the Africans, traveling by foot, well, you couldn’t be too careful.

An imposing capital city—not to mention the capitol buildings—would suitably communicate the message of authority and power. This seems particularly true in a country such as the Botswana, where there were few, if any, buildings of the substantial size and scale that might be possessed by the parliamentary chambers, for example. In the Protectorate therefore, the monumentality of government structures would carry a certain “Wow” factor. Multi-floor

¹⁵³ For example, the planners’ wish for a neatly landscaped garden town were scaled back, at best, or rejected outright at worst, due to what was seen as a prohibitively high cost when funds for the city’s completion were already being stretched. See: Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Headquarters Development Committee at Gaborones, 13 June 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters: Headquarters Development Committee Minutes, 1961-1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/9, Gaborone, 1961-1963).

government blocks sequestered away in their own special section of the city would also suggest a familiar political and cultural imagery for the Batswana elites who would be taking over the country at some point in the future. As discussed at length in an earlier portion of the chapter on traditional settlement and authority amongst the Tswana, the arrangement of villages and the position of the chief's compound carried significant symbolic weight. A town plan that emphasized the primacy, the triangulated importance of Government, Authority and Law, in its design would demonstrate a continuity between past, present and future practices and hierarchies of power and governance. So while the new leaders of an independent Botswana would no longer possess the same titles of traditional authority, by placing the capitol complex at a distinct location, separate from the rest of the town, they could lay claim to traditional spatial patterns and the forms of power and legitimacy they represented. Thereby perpetuating the familiar divide between rulers and ruled, long established in the customary politics, economics and culture of Tswana society. Both the modern capitol complex and the chief's compound in the village composed of his home, the royal kraal, and the *kgotla* served a similar function: to demonstrate who's in charge. The visual cues and placement of both constructs prevented any confusion from the subjects.

Just as important to the Batswana elites, the government buildings, along with the larger town plan, didn't simply represent the continuation, the amplification, of some traditions, they served as visible markers demonstrating the termination of others. For example, although the practice of periodically relocating settlements had faded into the 20th century, the establishment of a government complex built along modern lines, and with modern materials, seemed to announce the death of such practices. In the vision of the new and modern Botswana,

represented by a Gaborone permanently located in a fixed position, there was a more acceptable way of doing things.

And for Batswana modernizers, Gaborone wasn't simply to speak to the masses of rural dwellers proclaiming the onset of "Progress," it also was an announcement to the international community: possessing their own variations of "concrete-box parliaments [with] indistinguishably joined concrete-box offices and housing blocks" thereby proclaiming their entry into the discourse of universal modernity.¹⁵⁴ In this way, Gaborone exists not simply as built space, but also as a discursive space adopting the language of progress, directed both to internal and external audiences. The display, the dioramic space, exhibited by Gaborone told two distinct tales: for the subjects of the government, Gaborone was a site of power and authority, while for the international audience the new town was to suggest a transformative moment along the path to development.

Other aspects of the plan for Gaborone, specifically the emphasis on zoning and the controversy over low cost housing displayed in the colonial government's planning documents, also meshed with the expectations of the Tswana elite based on the pervasive patterns related to traditional authority and hierarchy and the organization of settlements. From the earliest days of the capital project however, controlling the movements of people in the city proved to be an exceptionally complicated exercise. Reasons for the difficulty are numerous, ranging from peoples' waning adherence to traditional authority structures and the allure of "big city" living to the government's inability to micromanage life in the city and the lack of resources to properly deal with a larger than expected influx of poor migrants into the city. In crucial ways, as we will

¹⁵⁴ Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, p. 52-53.

see in a later chapter with respect to the persistence of slums in Gaborone, the plans in support of the vision of the city often became obsolete in the making.

Sand Castles at High Tide: Zoning, Housing and Who Goes Where?

Because the eventual levels of urban development and population growth remained largely unpredictable into the early 1970s and beyond, the makers of Gaborone attempted to account for uncertainty by making the city's development whole and complete at each phase of construction and expansion. By keeping the focus on a specific area of the town, and only moving on to a new section once the first was filled out, it was hoped that scattershot development would be prevented and the urban core of the city would be completed much sooner. The emphasis on the plan's "wholeness," "compactness" and orderly organization is found in advice from external planning experts and the civil service officials on the ground in the Protectorate.¹⁵⁵ The desire for a more holistic, less piece-meal, approach to planning is reflected in the wish to "overcome the 'vacant lot' appearance of new towns."¹⁵⁶ The ideal vessel for the achievement of "wholeness" was a plan based on concentric circles radiating out from the center as the urban core is each completely filled in and developed.¹⁵⁷

There is a subtle, yet I think important difference in the meaning of "whole" as used by the local planning committee and the experts employed by London that is worth mentioning here, as it bears on our upcoming discussion of low cost housing in Gaborone. Otto Koenigsberger, a widely recognized expert on building in "tropical" colonial environments in the employ of the

¹⁵⁵ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaborones Capital Project', p. 9; Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from Acting Director of Public Works to the Government Secretary, 22 November 1962' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters Town Plan, November 1962-April 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, quoting Kenneth Watts of the Tropical Division, Building Research Station, London.

¹⁵⁷ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the Headquarters Development Committee Meeting at Gaborones, 13 June 1962'.

home offices in London, suggested to the Protectorate officials that each neighborhood within the town be conceived of as a whole, therefore resulting in a close intermingling of low, medium and high cost housing.¹⁵⁸ This recommendation was received as a “fundamental” difference to the plan created internally by the Protectorate officials and was viewed rather derisively. “Our [plan],” the Chairman of the Headquarters Development Committee explains at a meeting, “was based on the idea that the town as a whole would be a unit which would consist of different neighbourhoods, each with its own distinguishing density and catering for a particular class, irrespective of race.”¹⁵⁹ Another member present at the briefing “deplored” Koenigsberger’s suggestion due to the fact that “people of different income levels and different interests would not wish to live in a tight residential community.”¹⁶⁰ The distinction between “town as whole” and “neighborhood as whole” articulated in the debate over the plan, suggests the governing elite’s apprehensions about living too close the African population. And although a happy face might have been painted onto the plan as supportive of harmonious race relations, whereby the colonial officials could staunchly (and heroically?) advocate for a town divided by class, rather than race on one hand, while on the other, feel quite comfortable in the knowledge that a town segregated by class would also be divided by race, save for the acceptable, Westernized Batswana elite minority. The proposal put forth by Koenigsberger seems to have exposed the intentions of the class of elites in the Protectorate by demonstrating the perceived threat posed by the close proximity of the African masses to the “proper” urban resident. Just as the radial designed implemented in Johannesburg allowed for metropolitan growth while maintaining the need for racial segregation, the plan for Gaborone modeled on residential compartmentalization

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

conducive to urban development was directed towards similar ends.¹⁶¹ Elite fear of the “African Other,” therefore, became embedded into the planning of Gaborone through such mundane technical devices as urban zoning and building regulations.

One of the primary legal mechanisms employed to enforce the building and zoning code was the Town and Country Planning Proclamation of 1961.¹⁶² Key provisions in this decree included the prohibition of subdividing privately held land for residential or commercial purposes without the permission of the local town planning board, as well as granting the government the power to demolish unauthorized buildings for the “purpose of restoring the land to its condition before the new development took place.”¹⁶³ These regulations, buttressed by the State’s legal backing, demonstrate legitimate technical concerns related to urban planning. They also, however, suggest politically and socially motivated attempts to control both the population and their activities (say, for example, the potential for squatting on land illegally subdivided). In this way, zoning becomes an explicit pronouncement of dominant political, economic and aesthetic practices.

Accordingly, to protect the viability of the town plan for Gaborone, one planner suggests that there is a need to control all aspects of development of the town, extending outside the boundaries of the city to “all land bordering the site for the Capital,” in order to better enforce the minimum standards of the town.¹⁶⁴ Or, as an official planning blueprint for the city notes, “much of the character of the town, its efficiency, and particularly its aesthetic appeal, will

¹⁶¹ Andre P. Czegledy, ‘Villas of the highveld: a cultural perspective on Johannesburg and its ‘northern suburbs’’, in Richard Tomlinson et al. (eds), *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the postapartheid city* (Routledge, New York, NY, 2003), p. 24.

¹⁶² Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Bechuanaland Protectorate, Statute Law, Vol. XLVIII* (Mafeking Mail, Mafeking, 1964).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Watts, ‘The Planning of Gaborone, the New Capital for Bechuanaland’, p. 6.

depend on the conditions which are imposed in regard to the use and development of any land in the township.”¹⁶⁵ On the surface, composed in the bland, sterilized language of the technocratic planner, these expectations sound straightforward enough. If, however, you peel back the official discursive gloss, and solder to it, for example, official discussions of Tlokweng, the neighboring tribal village of the BaTlokwa, another interpretation presents itself. To foreshadow: zoning becomes another way to insulate the “proper,” elite residents of the city from those who might negatively influence the sensibilities of the residents and imperil the modern, “model” image the new town of Gaborone is to project to Batswana, the region, and the world.

As the plans for Gaborone were being formulated, and eventually finalized by the beginning of 1963, one of the recurrent issues the planners wrangled with was the potential problem that the already existing settlements in the area posed for the future capital city. One of the settlements, as mentioned above was the tribal village of Tlokweng, while the other, informally known as the “Village,” consisted of some colonial government buildings, a jail and police compound, along with the official residences for the people who were posted to the area. The planning problems presented by these areas were framed in terms of their existence being a threat to the look, order, and development of the plan for Gaborone. It was thought, for example, that continued development in Tlokweng and the Village would undercut Gaborone’s growth in the crucial early years of its existence. In the case of the Village, an external expert from the Building Research Station in London suggested that because it would eventually become a suburb of the new capital, “all possible steps should be taken to ‘tidy it up.’”¹⁶⁶ The Village, in other words, was to be tolerated, spruced up, and ultimately incorporated into the development of

¹⁶⁵ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborone Township Report’, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from Acting Director of Public Works to the Government Secretary, 22 November 1962’.

Gaborone as a suburban satellite community. The tribal village of Tlokweng however, was viewed as a unique challenge that needed to be overcome in order to preserve the viability of the plan for the Headquarters Project. Consequently, it was recommended that the full force of the bureaucracy be utilized to prevent any further construction or development of Tlokweng.¹⁶⁷

In a 1962 meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee, the topic of controlling the development of Tlokweng appeared on the agenda. The minutes of the meeting records one of the participants making the argument that as Gaborone is established, the population of Tlokweng will increase exponentially as the job-seekers who flock to the capital city will need a place to live. If that happens, he predicts “the position could develop where a model township would develop on one side of the Notwani [River] and an unsightly slum on the other.”¹⁶⁸ In one of the early official planning manuals for Gaborone the alarm was also sounded. Failure to take the “vitally necessary” action to control development both inside and outside the borders of Gaborone would result in the “defeat of the planners” thereby eliminating the chances that the vision of the “model township” outlined on paper would come to fruition.¹⁶⁹

Although the “problem” of Tlokweng was identified early on, finding a viable solution to a puzzle that was likely unsolvable was a far more difficult task. One suggestion to increase the availability of clean water in Tlokweng to aid in sanitation efforts was dismissed by the Director of Medical Services as tacitly granting individuals the government’s approval to settle in the

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Headquarters Development Committee Meeting at Gaborones, 13 June 1962’; Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Headquarters Development Committee, 9 July 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters—Headquarters Development Sub-Committee Minutes, June 1962-April 1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/10, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

¹⁶⁹ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Capital Project’, p. 2.

BaTlokwa village.¹⁷⁰ Other officials lamented that there was little the government could do to dissuade movement into Tlokweng. In an internally circulated memo, the Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications speculates,

the great majority of casual workers will prefer to build a traditional African house in Tlokweng on ground which will cost nothing and where he is not concerned with rates and other incidentals that are necessary in a regularly organized township. . . . As far as the African is concerned . . . he would rather do without the benefit of water and light on the site and save his money for food and clothing.¹⁷¹

The seemingly exasperated acceptance by the colonial government that “Africans” were going to move into the area was accompanied by an apparent unwillingness to actually do anything to improve the quality of life of the people who would be moving to the region in search of work or better opportunities.

The worry over the schematic for Gaborone being impinged on by circumstances entirely outside the control of planners is reflected in the apprehension over Tlokweng’s burgeoning development. But as with other episodes in the planning of the new capital, the specific focus on anonymous (African) laborers and “slum” development suggests that the concern went beyond the technical or logistical. Instead, these worries impact directly on who is, and perhaps more revealing, who isn’t allowed to reside in and around Gaborone. While allowances were made for a working (non-civil service) population, the presence of a population unplanned and unaccounted for was damaging to the plan’s objectives. One planning official paints this hypothetical when discussing what will likely happen as the number of African migrants into the area increases:

¹⁷⁰ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Headquarters Development Committee Meeting at Gaborone, 13 June 1962’.

¹⁷¹ Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Note on Housing Loan Scheme’ (Collected Files, ‘Housing African non-Governmental Employees: Gaborone New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

Suppose a portion of land were to be set aside within the town area in which workers were allowed to build an African village at low cost to themselves. There are reasons for thinking that the result would be a slum and a disgrace to the new town. The workers would be in a completely different position from the inhabitants of a town such as Kanye. In the Tribal Headquarters towns there is a Chief and a Tribal Organization and it is they who keep the town decent and clean. There is an age-old system of tribal custom and allegiance to an all powerful chief. If a section of Kanye were to be scooped up by a Titan's shovel and deposited on the outskirts of Gaborone it would quickly degenerate into a slum.¹⁷²

Once the city was built the presence of large numbers of unemployed and poor slum dwellers living outside the reach of the traditional authority structures present in their home villages, as well as the formal administrative arms of the newly constructed State, represented a particularly disastrous outcome.

The fear of a blighted town caused by shanty growth in Tlokweng—an “eyesore on the boundary of the town” as one description phrased it—was no doubt important to Gaborone's founders.¹⁷³ However, the problem went beyond the realm of the aesthetic or the desire to maintain the orderly organization laid out by the blueprint for the town. A slum on the margins threatened the fabric of the modern life that was to be practiced by the residents of the city. Just as the wild, untamed landscape around Gaborone was something to be controlled and administered, a slum adjacent to the city presented a similar problem. Both the vegetation in the bush and the people in the slum required gardening, demanded management. A so-called modern town set in a so-called un-modern land existed on unstable ground and required constant vigilance in order to protect it. The presence of a slum nearby would have a derogatory

¹⁷² Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Housing for the Lower Paid Inhabitants of the New Town of Gaborone’, (Collected Files, ‘Housing African non-Governmental Employees: Gaborone New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

¹⁷³ Watts, ‘The Planning of Gaborone, the New Capital for Bechuanaland’, p. 6.

influence on the inhabitants of the town, not to mention diminishing the glow of the beacon of the country's "model township."¹⁷⁴

For the State, the specter of a slum, exemplified by the adjacent village of Tlokweng, represented not just a subversion of authority, but also an absence of formalized administrative authority. Through the appearance of a wild zone of urban frontier space, not only would the plan be thwarted and the planners "defeated," but the exercise of control over the most potentially volatile elements of the population would be sporadic at best, non-existent at worst. Cooper's description of the shebeen as deflecting the glare of "official eyes" and as a site of resistance is also applicable to the case of Tlokweng specifically, and the slum more generally.¹⁷⁵ In a city based on neatly organized urban and residential compartments to be occupied by the faithful servants of government and their subordinates, the appearance of autonomous people and places that don't adhere to this description is, to say the least, problematic. Indeed, in a memo to the Administrative Secretary, the District Commissioner of Gaborone argues against the provision of African beerhalls in the area. He observes, "one big beer hall is a source of trouble. It leads to passions being raised, [and] to the focussing (sic) of political action. . . ."¹⁷⁶ For a planned city designed around principles of organization, order and predictability, officially sanctioning such a location capable of disrupting these objectives was a non-starter. Instead of unsupervised beerhalls full of large, likely rowdy crowds of Batswana, therefore, the D.C.

¹⁷⁴ In this chapter, I only touch briefly on slum development in Gaborone so as to place the emphasis on zoning and planning in a broader context. In Chapter Six, I explore in detail the case of Old Naledi, the city's oldest and largest urban slum.

¹⁷⁵ Cooper, 'Urban space, industrial time, and wage labor in Africa', p. 8.

¹⁷⁶ Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the D.C. at Gaborone to the Administrative Secretary at Mafeking 17 December 1963' (Collected Files, 'Beer Halls: Production and Distribution of Local Beer, December 1963-September 1964', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.399/16, Gaborone, 1963-1964).

suggests smaller scale “pubs” located in “suitable places” as being a preferable, more manageable solution.¹⁷⁷

The State’s inability to account for people and activities deviating from the urban plan has been well documented. De Certeau argues that the “theoretical” city drawn on a planner’s blueprint lacks knowledge of the behaviors of the people who inhabit the city. To planners and administrators, “the ordinary practitioners of the city live ‘down below,’ below the thresholds at which visibility begins.”¹⁷⁸ The invisibility of the everyday that de Certeau examines becomes troublesome for the authorities because the person who exists outside the bounds, guidelines and normative regulations set down by the planner, unknowingly presents, enacts on a minute scale, an alternative to the planning vision.¹⁷⁹ Because of the chasm—big or small—that exists between the plan on paper and the city in practice, others have argued that the city is better studied in terms of how it responds to these gaps, dissonances and “leaks.”¹⁸⁰ As we have suggested above, and will reiterate below, in the case of Gaborone, the urban plan’s emphasis on zoning and the placement of low-cost housing into clearly demarcated residential compartments—that were by no means neatly achieved in reality—served as an important organizing device directed to maintaining control of the population. Whether we’re talking of Cooper’s shebeens, or urban slums, or the meandering informally named pathways of a traditional Tswana village located on the outskirts of the capital, or the occasionally bewildering vibrancy and activity present in the central bus-station in contemporary Gaborone, these

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Michel de Certeau, translated by Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, Los Angeles, CA, 1984), p. 93.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁸⁰ Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, “Writing the world from an African metropolis”, *Public Culture*, **16**, 3 (2004), p. 354.

locations—not to mention the certainly undocumented, potentially autonomous, workers, migrants and unemployed individuals who occupy them—need to be eradicated at best, or at the very least, remade so the State can make sense of them.

The quest for the city’s transformation into something legible or simplified in order to “read” the urban landscape is a point repeatedly made in Scott’s *Seeing Like a State*. The efforts made in the pursuit of what Scott terms as “high modernism”—Hausmann’s Paris, Brasilia, or even to far less dramatic effect, Gaborone—are designed to strengthen and centralize control over the natural and manmade environment. Equating the modern city to a geometrically regularized “scientific forest,” Scott states, the “city laid out according to a simple, repetitive logic will be easiest to administer and to police.”¹⁸¹ Such a place, will, in other words, be more readily knowable. Accordingly, from the perspective of the administrator or the planner, the “grid city”—de Certeau’s “theoretical city”—is granted the status of utopia.¹⁸² And while Gaborone doesn’t necessarily display every characteristic of a grid city, there is enough correspondence to this ideal urban type to suggest that the rationales motivating the elaboration of the “high modernist” urban form were present in this context as well.

There are a few logics imprinted into the plan for Gaborone that might be worth noting. For one thing, the making “legible” of the urban form is, Scott notes, an important prerequisite for any large-scale state intervention.¹⁸³ In the case of Gaborone, for example, its symbolic position as a “model” township and maker of modern citizens required that it adopt the trappings of the modernist discourse and the practices legitimated by it. If lives and lifestyles were to be transformed, if the town was really going to live up to its billing as “new and modern in

¹⁸¹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 55.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

conception,” the founders of Gaborone needed to simplify and regularize the location through zoning or landscaping mechanisms that not only cleaned up the “wild” environment, but also its people and places. To realize the vision for the city, these activities would have likely been advocated not only by the colonial planners, but also by the Batswana modernizers and elites who would be taking control of the city following the conclusion of the capital project at independence.

Also of concern to the colonial and post-independence government, would have been the creation of a city that would eventually be economically viable. Although the early years of the city—even, perhaps, the initial decades of Gaborone’s life—were thought to most likely retain the character of a solely administrative city, the planners realized that at some point industrial development would occur in or around the area occupied by the capital. In the earliest plans for Gaborone therefore, land set was aside for industrial development. A readily readable, homogenized, arrangement of the city thus conformed to the future requirements of capital, industry and production. And while Scott makes the general observation that a neatly organized city is mostly beneficial for the purposes of dividing up land for real-estate developers, in the context of Gaborone¹⁸⁴—both in the colonial period and into the independence era—the presence of a low paid labor-force in and around the city also made the regularized grid-like modernist spatial arrangement attractive. Cooper’s suggestion, for example, that the control of labor necessarily extended outside the walls of the factory has post-colonial implications as well.¹⁸⁵ The management of labor by the State would pose difficulties to Protectorate officials as well as the BDP government. The regularization of the workforce through the manipulation of the urban

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁸⁵ Cooper, ‘Urban space, industrial time, and wage labor in Africa’, p. 20.

spatial, as well as temporal,¹⁸⁶ environment would be seen as an important strategy in the efforts to control low paid (and unemployed) workers. In the context of Southern Africa, townships and compounds built to control the domestic, leisure and labor practices of potentially dangerous and destabilizing working classes were a common, though not usually successful, solution to the problem of control. Despite their mixed record as a method to urban spatial organization and racist underpinnings, the housing and building policies common to the region appear to have seeped into the plan for Gaborone, influencing the thinking of the planners on how to best grapple with the presence of low paid workers.

The seepage into Botswana from places like Rhodesia and South Africa tended to take the form of borrowing and adaptation; both of a planning style and ideology, along with the more technical and practical aspects of high density neighborhood development. The rigorous application of organized, modernist, and ostensibly scientific planning techniques that privileged “efficiency” over “disorder”¹⁸⁷ was first attempted in South Africa. Beginning with the importation of the Garden City movement in the second decade of the 20th century and continuing into the 1930s with the techniques outlined in the CIAM planning doctrine, European theories of urban planning were easily adapted to circumstances in South Africa.¹⁸⁸ While initially intended to improve the quality of life in all urban areas—inhabited by both Africans and poor whites—the modernist style simultaneously fulfilled a symbolic function allowing

¹⁸⁶ Cooper’s case study of dockworkers in Kenya provides a look at the colonial need to “colonize time” in order to create laborers better suited to the practice of Western-style industrial capitalism. See: Frederick Cooper, ‘Colonizing time: work rhythms and labor conflict in colonial Mombasa’, in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed), *Colonialism and Culture* (The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI, 1992).

¹⁸⁷ Brenda Bozzolli, “Why were the 1980s ‘millenarian?’ style, repertoire, space and authority in South Africa’s black cities”, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, **13**, 1 (March 2000), p. 92.

¹⁸⁸ See: Fassil Demissie, “Controlling and ‘civilising natives’ through architecture and town planning in South Africa”, *Social Identities*, **10**, 4 (2004), pp. 483-507; Alan Mabin and Dan Smit, “Reconstructing South Africa’s cities? the making of urban planning 1900-2000”, *Planning Perspectives*, **12** (1997), pp. 193-223.

cosmopolitan white South Africans to both accentuate their “Europeanness” through architecture and differentiate themselves from the rest of the African population.¹⁸⁹ Modernist planning propelled by its emphasis on practices devoted to the establishment of green belts, rigid zoning, and the social health of communities, was therefore eventually directed to creating, and later, maintaining the segregationist spatial framework of the South African regime.¹⁹⁰

In keeping with the broad tendencies of the modernist approach, planning was not simply a technical concern, but became fundamentally bound to a more ambiguous moral terrain in which the way life should be lived, politics practiced, or power distributed was contested. A French colonial planner employed in Madagascar observed that his planning endeavors had “quit the technical terrain [and] enter[ed] into the realm of social politics, of which urbanism is evidently (sic) one of the principal means of action.”¹⁹¹ Similarly, in the case of South Africa, planning, space and architecture did not just represent a form of State action performed on behalf of its population, but served also as a visual monumental voice communicating the intentions, authority and power of the State. As Herwitz notes, apartheid’s most imposing architectural achievements proclaimed a “power that does not have to account for itself”¹⁹² and whose existence was typified by “rigid spatial formulae . . . the institution of bureaucratic control, [and] the inflexibility of system. . . .”¹⁹³ Not only does this observation echo the planners of Gaborone’s call for the city to convey the “concept of ordered Government, Law and Justice” to

¹⁸⁹ Daniel Herwitz, *Race and Reconciliation: Essays from the new South Africa* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2003), pp. 130; 136-137.

¹⁹⁰ Mabin and Smit, “Reconstructing South Africa’s cities”, p. 204.

¹⁹¹ Jean de Cantelou quoted in Gwendolyn Wright, “Tradition in the service of modernity: architecture and urbanism in French colonial policy, 1900-1930”, *The Journal of Modern History*, **59**, 2 (June 1987), pp. 312-313.

¹⁹² Andries Gouws quoted in Herwitz, *Race and Reconciliation*, p. 148.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

the citizens of the territory, but it also suggests that these messages could be found in everyday structures, such as domestic residences and neighborhoods, that were not expressly built to serve ceremonial or ornamental functions. Indeed, the presence of a modernist planning doctrine active in South Africa in the early decades of the 20th century was a necessary prerequisite for the construction of “township” and “location” neighborhoods in South(ern) Africa.¹⁹⁴

Broadly conceived spatial theories whose principle concerns revolved around issues of order, organization and stability prompted an easy transition to more specific regulations grappling with where and how poor Africans lived. State and local governments, along with private industry, such as mineral concerns, had an interest in managing the lives of their citizens and employees. For businesses, the problem of African housing was a balancing act requiring working populations be located close enough to urban areas in order to participate in the engines of production, but far enough away from the respectable parts of the city so as not to contaminate it or encourage intermingling.¹⁹⁵ And for the State, the control and management of African housing was deemed necessary in order to prevent the formation of opposition movements that might pose it a threat.¹⁹⁶ As White points out in her study of housing and prostitution in colonial Nairobi, the presence of autonomous individuals who were tied neither to the formal economy nor to the state represented an intolerable danger to the government.¹⁹⁷ The construction of housing for Africans, first in the form of barracks or hostels, and later, in small houses to be occupied by a worker and his immediate family, provided the authorities with a means to keep

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁹⁵ Demissie, “Controlling and ‘civilising natives’ through architecture and town planning in South Africa”, p. 500.

¹⁹⁶ Susan Parnell and Deborah Hart, “Self-help housing as a flexible instrument of state control in 20th century South Africa”, *Housing Studies*, **14**, 3 (1999), p. 375.

¹⁹⁷ Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in colonial Nairobi* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1990), pp. 131-132.

tabs on a potentially dangerous population. The hostel-barracks erected in South Africa represented what Bozzolli termed a “mad form of modernity” relying exclusively on prison-like methods to keep control of its occupants.¹⁹⁸ The African neighborhood composed of single-family houses was founded on a more subtle vision of control. A romanticization of domestic life, advocates of large-scale construction projects of austere tract housing argued that the inculcation of western ideas of moral values and family life would train the African working classes to become proper law-abiding individuals constituting not a threat to the State, but a “society of compliant citizens.”¹⁹⁹

Applied to the case of Gaborone during the formative period of its planning, modernist low-cost worker housing policies practiced elsewhere in the region provide insight into the inspiration for the models for high density housing designed for local implementation. Planners in Gaborone, when considering where and how to house the African working population—space for non-working Batswana was not included in the plans for the city—didn’t attempt to reinvent the housing wheel operationalized in countries nearby. Instead, they made use of the examples presented by their closest neighbors. Consequently, in the archival record, there aren’t any grandiose theoretical statements detailing the rationales behind the adoption of one housing policy or another: planning officials made use of tried and true formulas about low-cost housing, merely tinkering with questions of practicality and logistics in order to fit these schemes into the specific financial and political circumstances of the Protectorate. It doesn’t appear that those involved in the planning paid much attention to the contradiction between their mandate to create a new kind of city in sub-Saharan Africa and their decision to replicate, in Gaborone, the very

¹⁹⁸ Bozzolli, “Why were the 1980s ‘millenarian’”, p. 98.

¹⁹⁹ Robert Home, “From barrack compounds to the single-family house: planning worker housing in colonial Natal and Northern Rhodesia”, *Planning Perspectives*, **15** (2000), p. 330.

urban models used in support of the kinds of regimes from which Bechuanaland was trying to distance itself. Questions of intentionality aside, the formal documentation suggests that although the planners of Gaborone saw housing as a technical problem in need of a solution, the fact remains that they adapted urban spatial practices expressly developed in order to preserve a particular set of unbalanced power dynamics.

As the planning for Gaborone progressed, much hand-wringing and debate revolved around the topic of what to do with the low-paid workers involved in the city's construction or who would later be employed as the manual labor needed to ensure the functionality of the new administrative capital. More so than other facets of the plan for the new capital, the issue of low-cost housing brought to the fore the tensions and contradictions present in the oft-stated desire to create a new kind of urban environment in sub-Saharan Africa. The lofty aspirations Batswana and colonial elites often spoke of for Gaborone rarely corresponded to the planning schematics produced by the Protectorate's government. Class, race and social fissures were most visible, and perhaps most intractable, with regards to low-cost housing in Gaborone. It probably isn't all that surprising then, that the decisions taken tended towards the safe and conservative rather than something that might radically transform the political, social and economic landscape.

Early on in the planning for Gaborone, there was recognition by the Assistant Attorney General and others that the success or failure of the new city would be judged according to the type and quality of accommodations provided for the "lower grade employee."²⁰⁰ Accordingly, the suggestion of the British government consultant, Kenneth Watts, sent to the Territory to advise on the Capital Project, urged local officials to move beyond the "individual box"

²⁰⁰ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Report of a meeting held at Lobatsi on Tuesday 10 April 1962'.

mentality for low-cost African housing popular in Southern Africa.²⁰¹ To those already in the Protectorate, Gaborone represented a unique opportunity to not simply tinker with or improve on something already there, but to found a city from scratch—buildings, people and all the rest—built for a specific purpose. The open-ended possibilities presented by a city that existed only in minds or on paper in the early 1960s were characterized in terms of prevention. The Assistant Secretary of Townships, Works and Communications framed the task in Gaborone to be not one of “organiz[ing] and improve[ing]” an existing city, but how to “prevent unsatisfactory development” in a place not yet built.²⁰² How, in blunter terms, could a city be established that would lack slums both in the present and into the foreseeable future? As the District Commissioner for Gaborones, P. Cardross-Grant, is recorded arguing in the minutes of an April 1963 meeting of the Headquarters (Development) Sub-Committee, the prevention of “slum conditions in Gaborones” must be the guiding principle of all planning decisions taken by the Protectorate Government.²⁰³ Debate over the quality of housing evidenced by those involved in the planning of Gaborone likely stemmed not from a concern over the well-being of the people who would be occupying these houses, but rather from a worry that unsightly slums might have a derogatory influence on the viability of the new capital’s self-image as a new kind of city in Africa or impinge on the expected quality of life the new capital was to afford the elites.

²⁰¹ Kenneth Watts, ‘Letter from Kenneth Watts to Ray Renew of the Department of Public Works in Mafeking, 9 April 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters: High Density (or low cost) Housing, January-June 1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).

²⁰² K. J. Windsor, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Note on High Density Housing, 26 March 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters: High Density (or low cost) Housing, January-June 1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).

²⁰³ Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Headquarters Sub-Committee, 17 April 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters—Headquarters Development Sub-Committee Minutes, June 1962-April 1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/10, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

Two of the most problematic contradictions surfaced due to the government's insistence on maintaining a city divided by class but not race. First, the goal of a city founded on non-racial principles was at odds with the government's borrowing of housing models utilized in racist regimes and colonial settings. In 1956, long before the decision to relocate the new capital from Mafikeng was taken, "African Housing," as it was typically labeled in the files and memos of the period, in places like Gaborone and elsewhere was already considered to be an urgent policy matter. One suggested solution to the problem was to house the urban African population in "locations" of the sort that might be found in the South Africa or Rhodesia. "The provision of African housing," the minutes of one meeting read,

other than for a small number of domestic servants, is a normal local government responsibility, and usually takes place in what is called a 'location,' a centre of African settlement in a township area, where such settlement, its sanitation and control can be effectively managed. It is obviously more desirable that Africans be decently housed amongst their own fellows than they be huddled together in overcrowded hovels in the insanitary (sic) back-premises of stores and industrial concerns. There are employees too who do not desire the residence of domestic servants in close proximity to themselves."²⁰⁴

The creation of a separate urban space for the (African) working population was discussed as being solvable through the construction of hostels or single-family housing units. Although the Europeans considered hostels to be an easy solution to their desire to keep the new capital "neat and tidy,"²⁰⁵ this option was ultimately rejected due to their failure in Southern Rhodesia and due to the disdain felt towards these residences by the people expected to live in them.²⁰⁶ If hostels,

²⁰⁴ Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes from a Meeting with the G.S. [Government Secretary], 3 May 1956' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaborone, 1947-1960', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).

²⁰⁵ Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the Headquarters Sub-Committee, 17 April 1963'.

²⁰⁶ Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing at Gaborone, 5 April 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaborone Headquarters: High Density (or Low Cost) Housing', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).

of the sort tried on the Copperbelt to the north, for example, were not the answer, planning officials looked to the South; to the mines of Kimberly and the suburbs of Johannesburg.

Into the 1960s, advice about how to efficiently house the Tswana urban population was sought from South Africa, including a June 1962 trip by the Secretary of Townships, Works and Communications (A.N.W. Matthews) and the Director of Public Works (W.O. Davies). In the reports following their return, the housing estates are described as “most depressing; rows upon rows of houses gave no atmosphere to the estates. In Kimberly, the estates were soulless—trees had been ripped out, stand pipes were provided only once every 400 ft.”²⁰⁷ A blunter judgment appears in their firsthand account of the trip:

A regrettable feature noted during the visit to the Government Housing Scheme [in Johannesburg], was the unsightly tin hut additions [emphasis in original] to the standard brick buildings. These ‘shack-like constructions must have been sanctioned by the estate managers, but the effect was depressing, and the ultimate result must be the propagation of the evil [emphasis in original] that the Estates were intended to replace—Shanty Towns.²⁰⁸

Although the negative assessment provided above seems to preclude the possibility of “townships” of the type populating South Africa’s urban landscape, there remained some ambivalence about the utility of this style of residential organization for the Protectorate. On the one hand, officials were leery of bringing a location “system” across the border as they did not want to be bothered with its attendant “administrative and political difficulties.”²⁰⁹ Yet, in a memo written approximately three weeks later, the provision of a “satellite township” was

²⁰⁷ Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the HQ Development Committee, 9 July 1962’.

²⁰⁸ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Visit to Johannesburg—Messrs. Matthews and Davies, 18th-21st June 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Housing African Non-Government Employees: Gaborone New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

²⁰⁹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Housing Low Income Group Workers—Extract from the Minutes of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Council Meeting held in December 1961’ (Collected Files, ‘Housing African Non-Government Employees: Gaborone New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

thought to be the optimal way to proceed. The document predicts that because the “majority of occupants for many years to come will be semi-tribalised, and will [therefore] not wish to mix either with the more highly educated and paid African or European.”²¹⁰ Due to the tension between the wish not to outright mimic the discriminatory practices conducted in South Africa and the unappealing—for the White and Tswana elites—option of living in close proximity to “semi-tribalised” Batswana, the construction of low-cost housing in Gaborone ultimately adopted some of the principles and techniques found elsewhere in the region.

Against this backdrop, Batswana elites also cautioned colonial officials against establishing residential townships divided exclusively by race due to the “inherent difficulties which would result.”²¹¹ Whatever the ambiguously termed “difficulties” referred to in the planning document, the colonial government too, found it best to avoid an urban geography officially divided by race. Separation based on the metrics of economics and class was seen as a much more palatable planning guide. And while unspoken in the official record, it could not have been lost on those engaged in the planning specifically, or the government generally, that if Gaborone were to be divided economically, it was also to be segregated by race.

Questions about sanitation, overcrowding and unplanned development in the Protectorate’s nascent urban areas were being asked as far back as 1952.²¹² By 1958, one solution thought applicable to the general problem of unplanned urban development in Bechuanaland—a version

²¹⁰ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Low Cost Housing—Bechuanaland Protectorate, Paper No. 2, 5 April 1962’ (Collected Files Entitled, ‘Housing African Non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

²¹¹ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Africa, Proposed New Capital City’, p. 7.

²¹² Government Secretary, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Government Secretary to: Director of Public Works, Director of Medical Services, Divisional Commissioners North and South, DC’s of Gaborones, Francistown, Lobatsi, Ghanzi, 24 January 1952’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning Gaborones, 1947-1960’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).

of which that was to eventually find itself inserted into the blueprint for Gaborone—was compartmentalizing cities into regions of high, medium and low cost housing. Even then, in the official correspondence, great care was taken to point out that these divisions were matters of money and not of skin color, as the Divisional Commissioner in a meeting on the planning for Gaborone, is recorded as emphasizing that the three-tiered housing breakdown was “suitable for people of differing economic standards, not different races.”²¹³ Later, as the doctrine guiding the plans for Gaborone were laid out, these concerns were more explicitly articulated, although not always clarified. One version of the planning manual for Gaborone was able to confidently state for example, that the town plan would not be beholden to any particular “social or political or economic ideology, but [be] based at all times upon hard economic and sociological facts.”²¹⁴ Only one page earlier however, the document unwittingly outlines the social and economic ideology on which the town plan was to be founded. The authors mandate,

Social and [economic] differentiation exists and is a factor which controls and dictates the development of the town no less than factors of cost, use, climate, topography, etc. They are important factors, intimately related to the question of residential densities and density zoning, which cannot be properly and intelligently considered without a frank realization of social and economic differentiation. An attempt has been made in this plan to grasp firmly all the elements necessary to bring the geographic, economic, and sociological factors in harmony with human purposes.²¹⁵

Hierarchies of class and status, in other words, are taken as givens on par with the weather and the unrelenting desert sun. I don’t want to be seen as criticizing the planners too heavily for their failure to vanquish these often-intractable cleavages or for their inability to magically conjure an “everybody-let’s-hold-hands-and-sing” societal transformation. Yet it must be pointed out that

²¹³ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of a Meeting Held in the Courtroom, Gaborones on 20th October 1958, on the subject of the proposed plan for Gaborones Township’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning Gaborones, 1947-1960’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).

²¹⁴ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Township Report’, p. 3.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

their willingness to accept as “hard sociological facts,” and replicate wholesale, the sharp divides between the elites, whether colonial or Tswana, and the rest of the urban population had important consequences for the future course of Gaborone’s spatial, political, social and economic development.

Part of the problem facing the government as it settled on a housing policy was a somewhat muddled conception of who would eventually inhabit the city. In the plan’s formative stages, colonial officials dismissed the possibility that the capital would attract many Batswana. They tended to characterize much of the labor presence arriving in the city as “temporary”²¹⁶ or “migratory.”²¹⁷ As a result, there was no real plan for what to do with the poorest and unemployed migrants who might make their home in the city despite the absence of employment opportunities. This planning failure, discussed further in a later chapter, played out most dramatically in the largely futile efforts to dismantle slums and shanty areas constructed to house people not accounted for in the formal organizational plan for the city. Of course, this wasn’t an entirely accidental omission, despite the practical problems it later caused.

As outlined earlier, Gaborone was meant to be a modern city inhabited by a modern population. Migrants circulating between the urban and the rural would disrupt the new kind of life to be practiced in the capital because they would not conform to the behaviors and values the ruling Tswana and colonial elites envisioned to be present in a modern urban citizen. Indeed, a memo written by D.A.T. Atkins, a onetime District Commissioner of Gaborones, suggests that the Batswana permanently inhabiting the new urban space of the capital would not be typical of

²¹⁶ P. Hansford, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Medical Officer of Health (Dr. P. Hansford) to the Member for Townships, Works and Communications, 14 March 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters: High Density (or Low Cost) Housing, First Half of 1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).

²¹⁷ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Capital Project’, p. 14.

those who remained behind in rural areas. Africans in Gaborone will inevitably not “fall into the normal definition of peasants in this Territory.”²¹⁸ Taking up residence in Gaborone did not merely signify a change in address, but represented part of a process of “urbanization” that culminated in a complete transformation of an individual’s life. Because they deviated from the linear trajectory presupposed by development or modernist discourse of the period, temporary—African—residents were deemed unfit for Gaborone living due to the danger of contamination presented by their “rural” or “non-modern” ways.

In the same way that unemployed migrants were not granted space in the city, the location of residential housing was similarly tied to the sort of work done by those who would reside permanently in the capital. The plan for Gaborone identified four broad economic populations who would occupy the city and for whom housing would have to be provided: the upper, middle, low paid worker, and lowest paid worker.²¹⁹ As noted earlier, the final plan for Gaborone called for the residential areas to be divided by a large open-air mall or plaza with the more well to do adjacent to mall’s northern border and the working classes to the south. It was generally assumed that the lower paid residents of the city should be located within walking distance²²⁰ of the areas set aside for industrial use—even if that caused neighborhoods to be situated outside of

²¹⁸ District Commissioner of Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from District Commissioner of Gaborones (D.A.T. Atkins) to Government Secretary at Mafeking, 9 May 1960’ (Collected Files, ‘Crown Lands, Township: from the District Commissioner of Gaborones, 1956-1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number DCG. 15/13, Gaborone, 1956-1963).

²¹⁹ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Capital Project’, p. 14. The distinction between the 2 lowest grades of worker seems to have been determined on the basis of whether or not housing could be provided at “economic” rates; that is, without some form of government subsidy.

²²⁰ Walking distance was considered not to exceed 2 miles. See: Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Low Cost Housing—Bechuanaland Protectorate, Paper No. 2, 4 May 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

the borders of Gaborone.²²¹ Ostensibly put forth out of a concern for the convenience of the workers and families who would live in these areas, the expectation that low-paid African laborers would reside in close proximity to the industrial sections of town—whether inside or outside the boundaries of Gaborone—had the added effect of controlling the movements and behaviors of the urban poor. Binding the workplace to the homeplace meant that the Batswana working class, especially those thought to be of a more backwards disposition, was to tread a limited path in the urban space of Gaborone, cordoned off from the more respectable and modern parts of town occupied by the administrative and business elite.

Furthermore, there were gradations underneath the broad label of “low-cost” housing. One suggestion discussed was to divide the Batswana working class into “satellite” neighborhoods and “suburbs” whereby the less urbanized workers and families could be kept at a distance from the upper classes. A working paper on the topic of housing advised that suburbs closer to the central mall could “house employees in the higher income groups who have developed their standard of living along the western pattern.”²²² Conversely, those who have not reached an acceptable standard—however vaguely defined—would be relegated to the urban periphery. Fitting into this spatial schematic, and echoing the colonial tendencies practiced elsewhere in the British Empire, some in the Protectorate considered the maintenance of distance as a measure of the plan’s success as the objectives of “privacy and seclusion” were “major considerations.”²²³ So much so, in fact, that the high density servants quarters situated in the low density areas

²²¹ Windsor, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Note on High Density Housing 26 March 1963’.

²²² Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Low Cost Housing—Bechuanaland Protectorate, Paper No. 2, 4 May 1962’.

²²³ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from Director of Public Works to the Member for Local Government, Social Services and Commerce, 24 November 1961’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaborone: New Township 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

would be adequately cordoned off, as this “area is,” Ray Renew, the chief surveyor advised, “well-screened from the surrounding area by parks and a school site, and [therefore would] have no detrimental effect on the general character of that particular area.”²²⁴ However much the plan proclaims the virtues of integration between the working classes and the administrative elites and the races, it seems likely that the neighborhoods housing the African laborers were generally viewed in terms of their utility in supporting the new capital’s operation. They were vital to the functioning of the city, but could otherwise be done without. By relegating African workers to the periphery, the modern, civilized and organized urban core could be better preserved, at least until the Batswana were more fully integrated to the complexities of urban living at some indeterminate point in the future.

The privacy and seclusion afforded by residential segregation was supported by the housing density regulations enacted in the new capital. In the same document where isolation and privacy was described as important to the achievement of an acceptable residential environment, the Director of Public Works tentatively outlined the expected housing densities for Gaborone’s future neighborhoods. The high cost/low density housing compounds were to be composed of plots between 1-5 acres, while the highest density neighborhoods were to be made up of between 10-15 single-family dwellings per acre.²²⁵ As the plan was refined into 1962 and 1963, the demand for such spacious plots was tamped down, since domestic spaces modeled after those found in the colonies seemed at odds with the coming of the Protectorate’s independence. Not only would larger houses be more expensive to maintain and conflict with

²²⁴ Ray Renew, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Township Layout—Scheme B: Survey Branch Submission, 18 May 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning, Gaberones New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.74/1, Gaborone, 1962).

²²⁵ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from Director of Public Works to the Member for Local Government, Social Services and Commerce, 24 November 1961’.

the objective of a compact city, the British adviser Watts asserted, the “spreadout of towns of colonial empires are an uncomfortable bequest to newly independent peoples, whose standards are inevitably lower than those of the vacating peoples.”²²⁶ He goes on to advise that the lowest density housing should be no greater than 3 houses per acre. By February 1963, his suggestion was largely hewed to, as low-density housing was set at 2 houses per acre.²²⁷ High-density residences for the low paid worker remained a problem in need of a solution up to, as well as following, the completion of Gaborone.

Any policy and planning solution for high density housing had to deal with a wide variety of issues, ranging from how to most efficiently use the limited space of the city to accommodating the wishes of the Batswana who would live in these plots. Also ever-present in any discussions of the living situation of the urban working population was the prospect of low-cost housing areas devolving into slums. The fear of slums—as a catchall term encompassing disease, sanitation, crime or immorality—was a constant throughout the planning of Gaborone. Not only was it felt that slum development within the city have a derogatory influence on the life and look of the city, it was also assumed that the presence of slums would prevent the development of urbanized Batswana with the “right” types of values and behaviors fit for city living. Without deviating from the already set parameters dictating that the African population be located near the industrial areas, live in fairly close and cramped quarters (the figures most often discussed were 8-10 houses per acre), and not be housed in hostels, Protectorate officials ultimately decided that the single family house was the optimal way to prevent slum development and facilitate the evolution from rural African peasant to proper urban citizen.

²²⁶ Watts, ‘The Planning of Gaborone, the New Capital for Bechuanaland’, p. 4.

²²⁷ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from Acting Director of Public Works to Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, 20 February 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborone Headquarters: Town Plan’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

Following an approach popular in the region during this period, detached houses occupied by some semblance of a Western-style nuclear family were perceived as having transformative capabilities. Not only could housing help create stable Victorian family values amongst those who lacked them, but a domestic life modeled after the Western pattern would teach principles of capitalism and private property to Batswana by making them renters obligated to a private or public landlord, or “owner-occupiers” of a specific plot of land.²²⁸ In this way, workers and their families could be bound to the nascent money-based economy, thus adding another layer to the formal observation and management by the State of Gaborone’s working population. For a city founded on the imported notions of modernity, development and a turning away from the past, the private family house as both a preventative measure against the appearance of slums and a visible symbol of Western values could be seen as critically important to the making of Gaborone. As a “perfect system of control,”²²⁹ starting with the children, the household became a central front in the development struggle for the “hearts and minds” of the Batswana working class.

By recognizing degrees of low-paid workers, there were accordingly, three degrees of low-cost housing. At a cost of £200 for construction and site development, the upper end of the low-cost range consisted of a 2 or 3 room house that included a verandah, a sheltered outdoor cooking area and services such as roads and street lighting.²³⁰ Grade III housing for the poorest residents was to be of “minimum standard,” and even then, was only allowable under the

²²⁸ A. H. Taylor, ‘Aided Self-Help Housing, December 1961’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaborone: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962). It’s worth noting that Taylor was, at the time, Kenya’s Chief Health Inspector.

²²⁹ J. B. Robinson quoted in Home, “From barrack compounds to the single-family house”, p. 338.

²³⁰ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Low Cost Housing—Bechuanaland Protectorate, Paper No. 2, 5 April 1962’, pp. 2-3.

condition that a Western-style house be built in its place in the near future.²³¹ In keeping with the symbolic and design intentions of the new capital, traditional *rondavels* constructed without the need for specialized building knowledge and out of readily available materials at next to no cost, just like the “temporary” migrants to Gaborone who might build them, were considered “undesirable,” since they would likely fail to conform to the exacting standards of hygiene and construction outlined by the city planners.²³² The decision to forbid people to erect traditional housing in favor of permanent “box-like” houses common in African urban areas in Rhodesia and South Africa ignored the fact that most people couldn’t afford such structures. Early on, there was a realization amongst the planning committees that the government would either have to substantially raise wages or subsidize housing.²³³ The lack of funds available however, prevented the government from taking either action, which caused severe housing shortages and squatting into the later 1960s and beyond. During the planning, it was estimated that about £11 million would be needed to complete the capital project.²³⁴ But as reported in a 1965 *New York Times* article on the birth of Gaborone, only £7 million in funding was available.²³⁵ Stretched thin financially, the 1963/68 Development Plan notes that only £50,000 was granted to a loan

²³¹ Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Low Cost Housing at Gaborones, 5 April 1963’.

²³² Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Housing—Low Income Group Workers, Extract from the minutes of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Council Meeting, held in December 1961’.

²³³ Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the HQ Development Committee, 9 July 1962’.

²³⁴ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee, Friday 14 December 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

²³⁵ *New York Times*, ‘A new life begins in Bechuanaland: Protectorate transforming hamlet into capital’, 25 January 1965, p. 80.

program for high-density residential occupants.²³⁶ An amount that was nowhere near enough to fund the building of houses or provide loans to the people who migrated to the area shortly after the start of the capital's construction. From the beginning therefore, the town's blueprint calling for neat separation of classes and methodical urban development went awry as the government tried to figure out what to do with an unexpectedly large population. A trend that is recurrent into the present, the plans for Gaborone typically fail to reflect the needs and on-the-ground circumstances.

The fact that there was a recognized discrepancy between the need for housing and the money available to provide it, forces us to pause and ask the question as to why traditional housing was deemed such an unpalatable option. Questions of control, as a means to protect both the vision of the plan for Gaborone and the interests and lifestyles of the Tswana and European administrative elite, were of paramount importance during the formative period of planning and construction. The struggle over the physical and imaginary space of the capital—whether speaking of an idyllic version of a modern city of the future, the emphasis placed on the location of the poor, or the attempted prevention of traditional housing becoming a permanent feature of the city—reflects a particular approach and organization of power in Gaborone. Why were these housing decisions taken and what did they imply for the broader dynamics of power and politics transmitted through the new urban spaces forged by the capital project?

Conclusion

You can get a sense of the motivations operating just below the surface of a planning process dominated by Protectorate officials, and the Batswana who advised them, by honing in on the imperatives of obtaining an urban population ordered, organized and legible. The

²³⁶ Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing at Gaborones, 5 April 1963'.

blueprints detailing the imaginative and physical spaces of Gaborone allowed the State to separate the wild from the tamed, the civilized from the backwards, while granting them the hope of directing the population's transition to a lifestyle more palatable to Westernized tastes. Indeed, in those descriptions of the plan suggesting that the least developed Batswana reside on the fringes of the city, moving closer to a privileged center only after they've become suitably urbanized, one can envision Gaborone as a geographic representation of the population's Westernization: viewed from above, at the abstract level of the plan, someone's level of development could be determined merely by locating their address on a map. Achieving this level of knowledge required the carefully regularized placement of people. Conversely, temporary workers and the temporary places they occupied, which were neither permanent nor easily counted, were anathema to the creation of the town "new and modern in conception" Gaborone was supposed to exemplify.

On one level, the planners of Gaborone recognized the practical problems of allowing temporary housing to become established in the city. "The trouble," with unauthorized housing development, one official writes,

is that it is always difficult to remove temporary housing. The gradual improvement of temporary housing would be a chancy business in the context of Gaborone, and the only alternative is the bulldozer, which, in these days, always becomes a political weapon—the government *versus* [emphasis in original] the people. We therefore favour the construction of permanent housing.²³⁷

Once these kinds of dwellings become established, in other words, they become exceedingly difficult to remove. True. But the issue of permanence and the desire not to antagonize residents of a slum points to another reason for the worry expended over them. The thinking at the time assumed that people living in slums might be less docile, a bit less amenable to the virtues of

²³⁷ Watts, 'Letter from Kenneth Watts to Ray Renew of the Department of Public Works in Mafeking, 9 April 1963'.

development than those who lived in permanent, if relatively austere, single family houses. Moreover, permanent structures composed of wood, concrete, and metal were more or less immovable—urban families couldn't easily move from one place to another within the city limits meaning they were essentially rooted to the spot set aside for them by the city authorities. This outcome was not accidental. Maintaining a stable urban citizenry easily incorporated to the formal money economy and efficiently governed was important to Gaborone's founders.

Some administrators no doubt were resigned to the fact that no matter what was planned, there would still be unauthorized housing within the capital's city limits. What could be done however, was to plan for this contingency by providing areas with some level of basic services enabling the government to still exercise a degree of observation and supervision.²³⁸ A more direct statement of the problem was provided by Dr. P. Hansford, the Medical Officer of Health, who in a 1963 memo about the need for hygiene and sanitation controls in Gaborone rightly predicted the inevitability of a "larger African population [that] will move to Gaborone whether provision is made for it or not."²³⁹ Therefore, he continued, "it is better to have [housing] organised [rather] than squatting in the bush and evading the administration. . . ."²⁴⁰ One organizing tactic Dr. Hansford suggests is to employ Tswana supervisors as sanitary inspectors who will possess the authority to administer sanitation regulations, prevent overcrowding and otherwise evict people who fail to follow the rules.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing at Gaborone, 5 April 1963'.

²³⁹ P. Hansford, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Medical Officer of Health (Dr. P. Hansford) to the Member for Townships, Works and Communications 14 March 1963'.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

What these apprehensions, along with the techniques discussed or implemented to alleviate them, tells us is that we might be wise to call into question the oft-stated proclamation that Gaborone was a new kind of city in the region, Sub-Saharan Africa or anywhere else in the post-colonial world. Indeed, as I have shown, the archival record suggests otherwise. In Gaborone during the formative period of its planning and construction, there remains a sharp discrepancy between the public and official rhetoric used to describe the city and the planning schematics and regulations eventually implemented. Obviously, Protectorate officials did not mimic wholesale their apartheid neighbors in the planning of Gaborone, but at the same time, their calls to create a new model for urban living in post-colonial Africa remained unfulfilled. Instead, the plan for Bechuanaland's new capital fell somewhere between these two extremes. And although colonial officials didn't aspire—at least officially or overtly—to compartmentalize Gaborone according to race, its decision to divide the living and working spaces of the city along economic cleavages did just that. Over the long-term however, into the post-colonial period and beyond, the decision to build sharply delineated class identification into the city-space had more profound effects for life and politics in Gaborone. This seems particularly true for a city founded on principles of development, Westernization, and civilization: the starkly constructed rich/poor binary implied in the plans for Gaborone were much more than just being about who had more money in the bank, but rather these generalized categories made a deeper statement about who was an urban citizen fully attuned to the procedures of acceptable modern city living. The imaginative and geographic spaces of urban Gaborone became key sites of struggle over who had rightful access to these symbols and ideologies. But as time went on however, and the space one occupied in the urban landscape became a less reliable indicator of one's position on the development scale, other factors, such as automobile ownership and one's broader consumption practices, became

important. In mentioning these more contemporary concerns though, I'm jumping ahead in the narrative of the chronology of Gaborone.

Beyond the more abstract tensions and conflicts suggested above, dividing the population of Gaborone according to socio-economic class had the practical effect of helping to protect the post-colonial establishment's political and economic interests. Crucially, the new capital, born of colonial planners, adapted and perhaps inadvertently, adopted, some of the layout principles that appeared in traditional Tswana settlements. Continuity between the past and present, and most importantly, the future, helped legitimate a post-colonial political structure whose paternalism, hierarchy and control strongly echoed the chiefly power framework of the past. A capital conceived along the supposedly modern tendencies of class division that privileged the central core of its urban setting was not the exclusive purview of Western planners. Instead, the design of Gaborone had strong linkages to the look and symbolic intent of a typical Tswana village whereby the chief occupies the geographic and symbolic center of social and political life while his subjects and serfs radiate outwards toward the geographic and symbolic periphery. Although certainly not inspired by Tswana cultural practice, the new capital closely hewed to a spatial framework familiar to Batswana. These commonalities provided an easy transition from the chiefly rule of previous eras to that of the BDP, a secularized and modern equivalent of the chiefly paternal figure, better suited to govern the post-colonial and post-traditional (perhaps neo-traditional is a better term) times upcoming for the new nation of Botswana. For the foreseeable future, the spaces of Gaborone, a city unexpectedly connected to both its developed future and its traditional past, set the tone for the political, social, and economic struggles to occur following the demise of Bechuanaland and the birth of an independent Botswana.

CHAPTER 3

RECLAIMING THE CITY: GABORONE'S TRANSFORMATION FROM COLONIAL HEADQUARTERS TO POST-COLONIAL CAPITAL DURING THE 1970S AND AFTER

The previous chapter documents the ideological underpinnings and urban planning processes that produced Botswana's capital city, Gaborone. I describe how the prejudices, biases and political and economic objectives of both Bechuanaland Protectorate bureaucrats and influential Batswana elites helped to forge an urban center whose shape and structure would be severely limited in the years and decades after independence. Some of these planning gaffes and miscalculations, such as the underestimation of Gaborone's future population—although perhaps we ought not be overly forgiving given the various predictions' vast inaccuracies—can be overlooked and even understood. Other flawed planning decisions however, such as the near total neglect to make space for, or even acknowledge the likely presence of, non-employed African migrants to Gaborone, are far less excusable.¹ Of course though, when considered that Gaborone was designed to be a government-only town with a restricted citizenry, the logic behind the failure to prepare for a city composed of a diverse population at least becomes understandable.

Apart from these big picture questions of who is supposed to live in Gaborone and who isn't, the consequences of planning decisions taken from before the grounds were surveyed and staked in the early 1960s are still felt today. Residents of Gaborone live in a city nearly bursting at the seams—and indeed, in many instances, it has already surpassed them, as Gaborone's urban development bleeds into neighboring villages. Land for residential housing is scarce as thousands sit on waiting lists to be allocated for plots, formal state planning processes appear both mysterious to most observers and haphazardly applied, and too many automobiles vie for a

¹ These issues are also explored in much greater detail in Chapter 6, which traces the development and transformation of Gaborone's first squatter settlement, Old Naledi.

spot on the city's congested roadways—the plethora of crescent shaped streets, cul-de-sacs, and one-way roads that might have been charmingly pleasant in the less-trafficked early days of Gaborone are now a daily source of annoyance and frustration.

Barolong Seboni, a local poet and newspaper columnist, captures much of the contemporary ire directed toward Gaborone. Writing weekly satirical columns that provide topical political and social commentaries about life in Botswana in the form of conversations between imagined characters at a local shabeen, the Nitty Gritty, in 2004 Seboni turned his farcical eye at the planning of Gaborone. In Seboni's conception, he imagines a trio of British planners camped underneath a tree increasingly intoxicated from an ever-present supply of gin and tonics. How else to explain, Seboni suggests, the messy and incoherent final product? Of the plans behind the centrally located government enclave for example, Planner 2 advises his fellow planners,

Well, whatever you chaps do make sure that the area is small enough to create planning and developmental nightmares in the future, but large enough for massive holes that can be easily abandoned in cases of corruption and mismanagement.²

Joking about the inadequacies of the plan aside, Seboni's writing doesn't mask the serious point he makes, as he takes aim at the inherent divisiveness of the original town plan. I quote at length from the first of the pair of columns about Gaborone's colonial invention:

Planner 2: A cinema? I beg your pardon old chap, what do you need a cinema for in the middle of the bush[?] The natives won't use it!

Planner 1: Yes, but the Peace Corps and other European expatriates will. Remember we are planning to put several embassies around this central place [the Main Mall].

² Barolong Seboni, 'Long road to independence', *Mmegi*, 15 October 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday15/953987629926.html>> (1 August 2007). The hole referred to in this joke is the spot where the Botswana Housing Corporation headquarters was supposed to be sited. The location was excavated, but after the BHC's financial scandals in the 1990s, nothing was built. The site was vacant until the new Ministry of Health headquarters was built there in 2005.

Planner 2: We should have a road that runs around this central place and leads nowhere in particular. What do you think number 3?

Planner 3: I think it's a splendidly super notion to have a road that leads absolutely nowhere. Although you could extend it just a little bit to go into those government buildings we were thinking about.

Planner 1: Okay, a road that goes into the government buildings . . . but that's all, no further than that. You don't want the natives driving all over the place aimlessly. . . .

Planner 3: Driving? You mean there will actually be some natives who will own their own cars apart from the Prime Minister, the embassies and the cabinet?³

The preceding and remaining bits of the dialogue continues along much the same lines. Of course though, Seboni isn't the first to identify the exclusionary, colonial-inspired urban design that characterized Gaborone in its early days. (Though as suggested in the previous chapter, the Batswana leadership assented to, and benefited from, these same designs they were to later criticize.)

These critical observations penned in 2004, though colorfully put, certainly aren't new. They, along with a variety of others, have been in circulation in one venue or another for nearly as long as Botswana has been independent. A 1971 report commissioned by the government to articulate a vision for the future development of Gaborone states that one of the primary flaws of the 1963 plan drawn up by former Protectorate officials was that the development controls and zoning regulations were unable to efficiently or effectively manage the growth of the new capital.⁴ Two and a half decades later, another development plan for Gaborone suggests that one of the great flaws of the original design of the city that continues to influence contemporary urban infrastructure was the insistence, premised on the prediction that there would be few cars

³ Barolong Seboni, 'Motherless city fathers', *Mmegi*, 8 October 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday8/761976391420.html>> (1 August 2007).

⁴ Republic of Botswana, 'Gaborone Planning Proposals' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 5340, Gaborone, 1971), p. 18.

traversing Gaborone streets well into the future, that human and vehicular traffic remain completely segregated from one another.⁵

Such are the tone, perspective and voracity of criticisms directed at the 1963 plan for Gaborone, that they occasionally contradict each other. Commenting on a more expansive view of Gaborone city planning, the authors of the Department of Town and Regional Planning's (DTRP) 25 year plan for Gaborone conclude that the massive growth of the city has "largely occurred against the backdrop of the absence of an integrated comprehensive development guide for the entire city."⁶ Written at approximately the same time however, the DTRP's *Physical Planning Handbook for Botswana* complains that Gaborone, and a number of other urban centers across the country, adhered to a general framework of

planning concepts and principles [that] were European ones, based on cost-recovery, affordability and income segregation. The overall planning concept was technically and economically oriented and not based on social and traditional values.⁷

Based on what I've shown about the early planning of Gaborone in the previous chapter, it seems more likely that the latter evaluation is closer to summarizing the planning reality. For much of Gaborone's history, it is not that the requisite plans and regulations have not been in place to shepherd the growth of the city, it is just that they have not always been effectively, competently, or efficiently implemented.

Indeed, just five years after independence (around 1971), the government of Botswana embarked on a large-scale effort to transform the organization of urban space across the country,

⁵ Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Gaborone City Council, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'Gaborone City Development Plan (1997-2021)' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2001), p. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷ Department of Town and Regional Planning, Swedeplan, Republic of Botswana, 'Physical Planning Handbook for Botswana' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1997), p. 19.

Gaborone included, as they tried to rectify the urban polarization of residential neighborhoods inherited from the Protectorate era. Maundeni, for example, notes that urban segregation during the independence period stemmed largely from the type of employment in which a person might be involved; lower level government officials and staff were housed south of the Main Mall in places like White City and Bontleng, while the upper echelon bureaucrats occupied residences north of the Main Mall.⁸ While this is true, it ignores a critical aspect of this form of segregation: Maundeni dismisses the racial and social components that factored into urban planning during this period. As demonstrated at length in Chapter 2, the economic segregation favored by, and advocated for, colonial planners was synonymous with racial segregation, a fact which Protectorate officials and Tswana elites could not but have been well aware. This correlation between race and class served a dual purpose. On the one hand, it allowed whites to remain largely separate from the Batswana masses, while also enabling Tswana authorities to maintain the social and spatial distance from their subordinates that characterized the spatial arrangement of Batswana villages.

To many observers, the presence of such blatant polarization across the urban landscape, fractured along racial and economic lines, seemed at odds with Botswana's claim that the newly independent nation represented something new, exemplified a departure from the usual ways of operating that typified southern Africa during this era of White-dominated rule. In a 1975 speech to Parliament, BDP MP for Gaborone, Willie Seboni, summed up these concerns.

Stating:

There is something basically and radically wrong with our Housing Policy especially for Low Cost Houses. It is my belief that our policy as far as Low Cost Houses are concerned is pregnant with Colonial undertones and hang-overs and I think we have only ourselves to

⁸ Zibani Maundeni, *Mapping Local Democracy in Gaborone City* (Botswana Association of Local Authorities and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Gaborone, 2004), p. 14.

blame . . . [though] I think I should be fair with our Government that White City possibly was the design of our Colonial Masters. But I think that now that we are in a position to shape our own destiny, it is the time that we should correct anomalies which we feel are a thorn in the flesh.⁹

Opposition MP P. G. Matante of the Botswana Peoples Party concurs by saying, “When imperialists build houses for [Africans] they think in terms of a compound. Now this idea of a compound house should no longer be accommodated in our democratic state.”¹⁰ Across the board then, it was generally agreed that the housing situation in Gaborone was a serious, widespread problem in need of a solution.

What emerged out these discussions was a policy of mixed density housing that sought to integrate Botswana’s urban spaces first in terms of race, and then later, in terms of socio-economic status. The mixed density scheme was portrayed as a contemporary application of what were viewed as traditional Tswana values and cultural traits. To understand this post-colonial housing policy, we must first explore the values that underpin it. It is to these we now focus our attention.

Principles with which to Build a Nation

It has been a well-documented (see Chapter 1) fact that Botswana’s infrastructure, economy, and social services, along with pretty well everything else, at the time of independence, were at best, under-funded and at worst, non-existent. Long neglected by the Protectorate government, development in Bechuanaland was determined to be not worth the

⁹ Republic of Botswana, *National Assembly: Official Report (Hansard 54): First Meeting of the Second Session of the Third Parliament, Sittings from 24th November to 5th December, 1975* (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1975), pp. 57-58. In the same speech Seboni goes on to describe what, precisely, was the matter with the low cost housing available in Gaborone, adding: “If one takes a look at our houses in our villages, it is striking to discover that the average home consists of about two to five houses depending on the size of the family. . . . [In White City however] one finds that our people are denied privacy. Those little houses at White City consisting of two rooms, take a man whose children are big enough now to be students in the Gaborone secondary school who all to themselves occupy a small little hut with two rooms and . . . you need only to scratch yourself as a parent, and all the children wake up in the next room.”

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

bother or the money. Why appropriate a budget, the colonial accountant in London might well have thought, only to invest in a sparsely populated, African desert backwater? Indeed, according to the recollections of Peter Wass, who was appointed Social Welfare Officer for the whole of the Protectorate in the early 1960s, the provision of social services by the Protectorate had been, up until that point, restricted to three areas: funding the Scouts and Guides program, managing the Soldiers Benefit Fund for permanently injured or destitute Batswana veterans of the Second World War, and maintaining a mobile cinema van that traversed the country.¹¹ There was then, amongst Botswana's soon-to-be post-independence leaders, the palpable sense that not only were they constructing a democratic state, but that they were also building from scratch everything else too; the basic, constituent parts—roads, schools, industry—that compose a nation. Reflecting this upward trajectory of efforts to raise Botswana from the ground, the graphic symbol of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party has been, since its inception, the image of a car jack.¹² Adhering even today to the effective symbolism of the automotive tool—conveying practicality, sturdiness, stability, strength—the BDP's supporters often simply referred to the party by the jack's Afrikaans name, “Domkrag.”

¹¹ Peter Wass, “Initiatives to promote civil society in Botswana in the late 1960s: a personal memoir”, *Botswana Notes and Records*, **36** (no date), p. 75.

¹² Botswana Democratic Party, ‘Raising a Nation: Botswana Democratic Party: 1962-2002: Commemorative Brochure’ (Front Page Publications, Gaborone, 2002), p. 19. The ‘Commemorative Brochure’ suggests also that the adoption of the symbol might have been accidental, presenting the possibility that some supporters would cry “domkrag” at rallies, being unable to properly pronounce “democratic.” Another writer suggests however, that the similarity between “democracy” and “domkrag” was intentionally played up party supporters. See: Jan-Bart Gewalt, “El Negro, El Niño, witchcraft and the absence of rain in Botswana”, *African Affairs*, **100** (2001), p. 558. Being present during the time, Vice-President, and later Botswana's second President Quett Masire perhaps provides the most authoritative version of the *Domkrag* appellation. Masire says that the name was originally intended as an insult, used by P.G. Matante—leader of the opposition Botswana Peoples Party. *Domkrag*, in its literal translation means “stupid power.” “Mr. Matante said: ‘Those fellows are just stupid power—*Domkrag*,’ making fun of the word ‘democratic’ in our party’s name. But, it was appealing to us, since we knew it was an object that everybody in the country recognised, and they knew what function it performed. *Domkrag* is used to lift up (*tsholetsa*) an ox-wagon; and we were going to lift up this country! So, our slogan became: ‘*Tsholetsa! Domkrag.*’” See: Quett Ketumile Joni Masire, Stephen R. Lewis Jr. (ed), *Very Brave or Very Foolish?: Memoirs of an African democrat* (MacMillan Botswana Publishing, Gaborone, 2006), p. 51.

Accompanying this broadly conceived Horatio Alger style ethic of pulling a nation up from off the mat were a set of national principles, descended from what were said to be traditional Tswana values and cultural norms, and were to guide the development of Botswana into her post-colonial independence. These principles were primarily devised by a trio of Botswana's most influential founding fathers—Seretse Khama, Quett Masire and Moutlakgola Nwako.¹³ From their earliest invention, they were invoked in speeches, party politics, national development plans and all the while, were used as rallying points around which Botswana could grow its nascent national identity.

Seretse Khama lays out the general model for Botswana's development in the *Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development* written to map the transformation from Protectorate to independent state. For example, in the preface to the document, Khama writes that even though at independence Botswana is “beyond doubt one of the poorest nations in Africa,” it remains the “primary aim of the Government” to “take all steps necessary to create a strongly united nation, to overcome all parochial, tribal or racial rivalries and to make clear to the whole world our determination to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereign independence of our country.”¹⁴ Khama concludes by urging all Batswana to take responsibility for the growth of their country: “the energies of the nation must now be devoted to the economic and social development of the country. The Transitional Plan sets out in much detail what has to be done. Every Motswana must play his part.”¹⁵ Soon after President Khama laid out Botswana's governing ethos in generic terms, these national goals coalesced into four overarching national

¹³ Email communication with Sandy Grant and Quill Hermans, 21 July 2007.

¹⁴ Republic of Botswana, ‘Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1966), p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

principles. Former President Masire says of the simple motivation behind these national principles in his autobiography many years later, “We knew what we wanted; and from observing other countries, we knew what we wanted to avoid.”¹⁶ Framed as values intrinsic to Tswana culture that were adapted to fit a modern, post-colonial context, all government policies were therefore to be founded on principles of: democracy (*puso ya batho ka batho*), development (*ditiro tsa ditlhabololo*), self-reliance (*boipelego*), and unity (*popagano ya sechabe*).¹⁷ This four-pronged framework was conceived so as to influence everything from rural development and education policy to the de-emphasis of tribal identifications and authority structures.

And while meant to be applied generally to the entire nation—they were something that all Batswana could get behind and support—it is worth noting that almost immediately they adopted a partisan tinge, as the BDP sought to claim them, and the universal values they represented, for explicitly political purposes. In a political environment dominated by the BDP, party elites sought to make Botswana’s “national” principles synonymous with the ruling party. This clever discursive turn subtly sent the message that to support the BDP was to support Botswana, while to oppose the BDP meant that one rejected “democracy” or “development.” As then Vice President Masire said in a speech given before the party faithful at the 9th annual BDP conference in the village of Molepolole in 1970, the BDP prefers to

use words which immediately convey a clear meaning. Let us talk in terms that we can all easily understand. The BDP is a national party dedicated to national unity and democracy, to development and self-reliance. We must therefore, be concerned to follow policies

¹⁶ Masire, *Very Brave or Very Foolish?*, p. 49.

¹⁷ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan 1976-1981’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1977), p. 15.

which promote the wellbeing of all the people and not just of a few of the people. We are a party of the common man.¹⁸

Today, beyond representing co-opted slogans used in the practice of electoral party politics, the number of national symbols has been added to, and their usage expanded. The fifth national principle is *Botho*. According to the *Vision 2016* project that articulates Botswana's utopian society to be attained by the time of the nation's 50th birthday,¹⁹ *Botho* refers to

one of the tenets of African culture—the concept of a person who has a well-rounded character, who is well-mannered, courteous and disciplined, and realises his or her full potential both as an individual and as a part of the community to which he or she belongs.²⁰

Elsewhere, the government of Botswana's internet homepage explains the responsibilities incumbent on each citizen in order to fully adhere to the principle of *Botho*: “*Botho* as a concept must stretch to its utmost limits the largeness of the spirit of all Batswana. It must permeate every aspect of our lives, like the air we breath [sic], so that no Motswana will rest easy knowing that another is in need.”²¹ The concept of *Botho* is nowadays invoked to variously govern the conduct of candidates running for elected office,²² the implementation of the nation's HIV/AIDS policy,²³ and the direction of Botswana's economic development.²⁴ Taken together, these

¹⁸ Sir Seretse Khama, Dr. Q. K. J. Masire, and A. M. Dambe, ‘Development in Botswana: Speeches by Sir Seretse Khama, Dr. Q. K. J. Masire and Minister of Agriculture Mr. A. M. Dambe’ (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 2121, Gaborone, no date), p.2.

¹⁹ Among the stated goals for the project are for Botswana to be an “educated and informed nation,” a “compassionate and caring nation,” and a “moral and tolerant nation.”

²⁰ Republic of Botswana, ‘A Long Term Vision for Botswana: Towards Prosperity for All’ (Gaborone, no date), p. 5. The full text is available at <<http://www.vision2016.co.bw>> (4 August 2007).

²¹ Republic of Botswana. Government homepage accessed August 7, 2007. Available at: http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=79.

²² *Daily News*, ‘The academic world—Botho as an ingridinet (sic) of elections’, 22 October 2004 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20041022&i=THE_ACADEMIC_WORLD_-_BOTHO_AS_AN_INGRIDINET_OF_ELECTIONS> (1 August 2007).

²³ Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute, “Ethics: the concept of Botho”, *Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute Quarterly*, 1, 1 (2003), p. 3 <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/bhp/news_publications/quarter1_2003.pdf> (30 July 2007).

principles are to lead to the attainment of *Kagisano*, or social harmony,²⁵ an ethic that one observer has gone so far as to label it the “national philosophy of Botswana.”²⁶

Why take the time to mention these principles? From the beginning of Botswana’s post-colonial politics and history they have ostensibly formed the basis of policy implementation. The emphasis on abstract concepts such as unity, harmony, egalitarian development point the way to an explanation about why the government of Botswana promoted efforts to facilitate a non-racial, non-polarized economy and society, including the issue at interest here: the re-organization of the post-colonial city.

Take for example, the issue of unequal resource distribution. Recognizing the historical and cultural durability of income inequality, the *Transitional Plan* cited a few pages earlier states in the section outlining eventual economic and social goals that a more equitable distribution of wealth in Botswana is a “long-term objective.”²⁷ Similarly, in the speech before the party faithful in Molepolole, Vice-President Masire elaborates on the structural inequities persistent in Botswana:

We all know that much of the cattle wealth in the country is concentrated in the hands of a few. However undesirable this is, it is not a new feature of our society. It has been so for

²⁴ The Vision 2016 document states that all economic growth must adhere to five social, moral and political principles implied by *Botho*. Development in accordance with *Botho* must avoid: “jobless growth,” “voiceless growth,” “ruthless growth,” “rootless growth” [meaning that all ethnic groups should benefit], “futureless growth.” See: Republic of Botswana, ‘A Long Term Vision for Botswana’, pp. 47-48 <<http://www.vision2016.co.bw>> (4 August 2007).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5. The adoption of a more skeptical take on the notion of *Kagisano* offers a different perspective. The emphasis on unity and social harmony as a national ethic has a useful political function supportive of the established hierarchies and the continued political dominance of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party. Requiring unity of opinion has as much to do with the subtle repression disobedience, raising questions to authority, or supporting opposition parties, as much as it does with obtaining community integration and social tolerance, for example. The BDP has quite successfully framed vocal, critical analysis of the status quo as obstructing *Kagisano*, as ill-mannered, as opposing Botswana values and as, therefore, something to be avoided.

²⁶ Keketso Jeremiah, *Junior Secondary School Students’ Recognition of Kagisano/Social Harmony, the National Philosophy of Botswana* (Florida State University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2005), p. 10.

²⁷ Republic of Botswana, ‘Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development’, p. 6.

a long time in the past. But in the past, our people had over the years evolved a social system in which the rich shared the use of their wealth with the less fortunate members of society. . . . If we cannot maintain these and perhaps develop them to fit in with the aspirations of a modern society, then we must evolve new systems which are fair and just. The BDP wishes to see great disparities in wealth reduced.²⁸

And even into the early 1980s, the redistribution of wealth to create a more harmonious state that achieved some semblance of “social justice” required that “all citizens should benefit from the nation’s development.”²⁹ Of course though, even casual observers of Botswana’s current economy recognize that these goals, however noble, have fallen well short of their targets. It is probably fair to wonder, as I do, just how genuine these objectives were from the onset: was it ever likely that those occupying the upper brackets of politics and economics would willingly, not to mention radically, alter the structural circumstances that allowed them to proffer such lofty goals in the first place? These utopian aspirations were perhaps best left on paper. And indeed as we will see below, the government of Botswana today, has in some sense backed away from populist suggestions that society be completely restructured. Favoring instead, generalized optimism that by 2016, “Income will be distributed equitably. [and] Poverty will have been eradicated. . . .”³⁰ With this bit of foreshadowing, I’m getting ahead of myself. We will return to this point shortly.

Up to now, we have examined two seemingly divergent things: first, the problems and flaws of Gaborone in the years immediately following its completion. And second, the meaning and application of Botswana’s so-called national principles. In the upcoming sections, these

²⁸ Khama et al., ‘Development in Botswana’, pp. 2-3.

²⁹ Ministry of Finance and Development, Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan 1976-1981’, pp. 16; 19.

³⁰ These proclamations have been well-publicized and can be found in a variety of venues. In this case, I’ve taken them from the section dealing with Vision 2016 on the Government of Botswana’s homepage. Available at: Republic of Botswana, ‘Vision 2016 Homepage’ <http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=79> (1 August 2007).

themes will converge, as we see how they were used to justify government interventions to transform urban space in first Francistown, then Gaborone. Changing them—or at least trying to—from cities polarized by race and class into egalitarian, mixed urban locations in which these sorts of cleavages were to be planned out of existence.

Fish out of Water: An Apartheid City in a non-Apartheid State

The method used to integrate Botswana's urban centers relied on large-scale state interventions that sought to redirect the organization of urban space across the country's cities and towns. Perhaps inspired by Botswana's national principles and the ethics of living and citizenship compelled by the concept of *Kagisano*, Seretse Khama is credited with demanding the reordering of urban space in Botswana so as to counteract an urban geography riven by class and racial divisions. The oft-circulated legend describing the genesis of the idea for mixed density housing development claims that the policy was prompted by Khama's living in the overwhelmingly white neighborhood north of the Main Mall—derisively nicknamed “Little England”—in Gaborone.³¹ While this might be the case for Gaborone as it outgrew the inhibiting skin of its original colonial plan and expanded into farmland adjacent to the town's borders, it did not represent the first efforts to radically alter an urban landscape. For that, we must turn our attention northward, to Francistown, the oldest town in Botswana. Before, though, we briefly³² look at the specific case of Francistown, one final word about the principles involved in the mixed density housing policy.

³¹ Department of Town and Regional Planning, SwedePlan, Republic of Botswana, ‘Physical Planning Handbook for Botswana’, p. 20.

³² The history and politics of Francistown is both fascinating and complicated, worthy of its own dissertation project. The upcoming discussion of the city then, can not be much more than cursory. It is though, necessary, since it with regards to Francistown that the ideology and specific regulations embodied in the mixed density housing scheme are most fully elaborated. The policies attempted in Gaborone amount to an imported variation of those tried in Francistown.

In broad terms, why was a mixed density housing policy deemed necessary, and what specifically did it mean conceptually and practically? We can glean some sense of the motivations behind this approach from a much later government appraisal of the role and function of urban planning. The handbook written by members of the Botswana planning bureaucracy and their Swedish advisors in an effort to standardize the practice of urban planning in Botswana employs a medical metaphor to describe the relationship between the planner and the community in which s/he works:

A community can be compared to a living body; all the necessary parts, like bones and muscles must be present and in the correct order. But the organism must also have life, and in the case of town planning, if the people who use the roads, parks, buildings etc. do not have their needs satisfied, there will be at best, a very defective life for that community.³³

Planners as “doctors of space”—to employ Lefebvre’s appellation—are vital to keeping a city and its inhabitants “well.” To extend the imagery a bit further then, a city fractured by race and class divisions is sick, and in need of a cure. It was precisely the feeling that there was something wrong or dysfunctional—down to the invocation of a similar health metaphor or judgments about what is normal or abnormal in an urban setting—with Botswana’s towns in the years immediately after independence. For example, this excerpt from a government housing report about the consequences of state-subsidization of expatriate housing:

It was submitted to the Commission that special housing for expatriates had serious social implications. Big expatriates (sic) houses were built in exclusive residential areas. The location of these houses helped to isolate expatriates from Batswana and did not expose them to normal non-formal contacts. Consequently, segregated living arrangements bred suspicion, contempt, and complexities. This situation can be the cause of social unrest.³⁴

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁴ Republic of Botswana, ‘Report of the Presidential Commission on Housing Policy in Botswana’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1981), p. 31.

Speaking more generally about housing policy, the National Development Plan covering the years 1976-1981 states—under the sub-heading, “Social Harmony:”

Although economic development is an important aim, it is not a totally exclusive one. The prevention of polarization, social or economic, is essential in maintaining the social health of urban areas, and to some extent this qualifies the insistence on cost effectiveness. Urban expansion projects will be planned so as to avoid the physical separation of socio-economic groups—all groups within an area using common commercial and community facilities.³⁵

While the government lauded the practical effects of a mixed-density housing policy, viewing it as the best way to bring urban infrastructure—electricity, water, garbage collection, etc.—to all income levels, rather than limiting these services to the enclave areas occupied by upper income citizens, the emphasis was clearly on transforming the social landscape achieved via a spatial compression of urban geography. Indeed, the authors of the National Development Plan immediately preceding the one cited above listed the elimination of social and economic disparities the number one objective of urban policy during this period. The report states,

Future development must not promote, and should if possible reduce, polarization between people of different races and income groups. Future town planning will have this as one of its main objectives, and will therefore mix areas of different types of housing.³⁶

Though no doubt sounding good and noble when exchanged across a Ministry’s boardroom table, these ideas were far trickier and complicated when confronted with murkier on-the-ground realities. How, to state the problem bluntly, do you make people get along? How does geographic proximity evolve into community integration? Even at the time, the potential difficulties and limitations were noted by the planners charged with making these transformations happen. The consultants charged with planning the second phase of Gaborone’s

³⁵ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan 1976-1981’, p. 90.

³⁶ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan 1973-1978: Part I: Policies and Objectives’ (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 2085, Gaborone, 1973), p. 74.

development note that their ability to accomplish the government's set goal is likely beyond the scope of urban planning. They write,

The chief political aim of planning the towns is that [of] non racial development. This raises the problem of the extent to which people from different races and classes can be mixed together in a housing layout. This is particularly intractable for physical planning, as the form and layout of a housing area in themselves can do very little to further the achievement of this aim; it is mainly a question of social attitudes and behaviour.³⁷

Despite these obvious obstacles, in order to retain Botswana's self-proclaimed reputation as a non-racial state and avoid charges of hypocrisy or a double-standard, something had to be done. The need to act was made especially urgent in light of the continued problems in Francistown, a town cloven by racial segregation since its inception. It is here where we can explore the motivations and intentions behind the mixed density housing policy initiated by the Botswana government—the “why” of the matter. Though, hopefully by now it should be clear how these efforts neatly complement, and indeed, are perhaps demanded by, the nation's founding principles and their accompanying governing ethic of *Kagisano*.

Much has been made, both inside and out, of Botswana's national non-racial experimentations. To those most closely tied to Botswana's transition to independence, its non-racialism was, perhaps, the most important component of its move to self-governance. In a speech given to the attendees of the annual meeting of the African Studies Association in 1965, Seretse Khama went through the socio-economic difficulties facing what was still then Bechuanaland, but concluded his talk, to a standing ovation, on a more hopeful note. “I present gloomy facts,” he said, “But the picture I would prefer to leave with you is one of a nation which does need international assistance, but happens to play a useful part in world affairs. Bechuanaland has nothing material to offer others, but I believe our efforts to create a non-racial

³⁷ Republic of Botswana, ‘Gaborone Planning Proposals’, p. 148.

society can provide inspiration to others with the same problems.”³⁸ Hope, then, was to be the nation’s greatest export, a form of currency with which to engage the world.

The challenge of this vision offered by Khama in his visit to the United States was how to translate this message into tangible changes in behavior and comportment. Because, despite the lofty rhetoric, not all was well in terms of Botswana’s race relations. These cleavages extended to broadly painted suggestions of African inferiority, such as appeared in the state published magazine, *Kutlwano*—whose English translation, “Mutual Understanding,” carries more than a tinge of irony in this instance. An info-tainment piece providing some trivia and history on railroading in Africa proclaims that the “story of the coming of the railway from South Africa through Bechuanaland to Rhodesia is the story of our country.” However problematic that statement is, it is immediately followed by more overtly racist concluding lines: “Elsewhere in Africa we have only got to look at the spiked lines on the maps, which represent railways in almost every country, to see that without the railways this would be a land of ignorance and savagery now waiting for air travel to reach the unawakened lands. . . . Everywhere the railways have carried in men, and machines, and wealth, and knowledge and light.”³⁹ Reflective of the fact that the discriminatory attitude noted above was not an isolated occurrence in Botswana is the fact that most, if not all, of the sporting and social clubs in operation during the Protectorate’s twilight years either implicitly (via informal membership practices: e.g. Gaberones Sports Club, Mahalapye Club, Palapye Sports Club, Maun Sports Club, among others) or explicitly restricted their membership to “Whites only” in the writing of their club constitution (Francistown Club,

³⁸ *Bechuanaland Daily News*, ‘Prime Minister addresses African Studies Association in U. S. A.’, 2 November 1965, p. 1.

³⁹ Pat Charlton, ‘Did you know?’, *Kutlwano*, 2, 4 (April 1963), pp. 4-5.

Mahalapye Railway Recreation Club).⁴⁰ In response to these racially exclusive social clubs, the government exerted pressure on their membership to get them to change their ways. Failing that, they threatened to close them down—this was especially true of the recalcitrant Francistown Club, whose continued obstinacy was viewed as capable of disrupting “the efforts of the many people of all races who have loyally tried, and are trying, to remove from Bechuanaland a feature which has caused distress and disturbance elsewhere.”⁴¹ Parallel to the top-down efforts, progressive elites—both black and white, and specifically the former Protectorate economist Quill Hermans and the Motswana politician Gobe Matenge⁴²—sought to create new social clubs with an open membership. The most famous example of these efforts to carve a new non-racial space into the city is Gaborone’s Notwane Club. Creating an alternative site to the Gaborone Sports Club was seen as imperative for a new town trying to break free of the usual segregation-minded colonial legacies.⁴³ To this end, the Notwane Club was a marked success, as it supplanted the Gaborone Sports Club as the hub of elite interaction in the new capital.

Even so, whatever its achievements at racial integration and tolerance, its impact was inevitably limited. By focusing solely on facilitating interaction between Gaborone’s new movers and shakers, it excluded the vast majority of Batswana residents who were neither economically well-off nor particularly influential—thus replicating the same problems inherent

⁴⁰ For a fuller description of the government’s efforts to deal with the issue of race and social clubs, see: Racial Discrimination Select Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, ‘Racial Discrimination Select Committee, 19 February 1963-23 December 1964’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.591/1, Gaborone, 1963-1964).

⁴¹ Extracted from a letter written to the Francistown Club by the Senior Officer, Ministry of Home Affairs, 23 December 1964. The full letter is available in the files of the ‘Racial Discrimination Select Committee’.

⁴² For further reading, Richard Werbner’s 2004 book provides a detailed biographical perspective on Matenge’s life and political career, especially chapters 8 and 9. See: Richard Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The public anthropology of Kalanga elites* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2004).

⁴³ Wass, “Initiatives to promote civil society in Botswana in the 1960s”, pp. 79-80; Masire, *Very Brave or Very Foolish?*, pp. 81-82.

in the overall layout of Gaborone: the upper echelons of society were fairly well integrated, not so much however, as one moved down the socio-economic ladder. More on this later, as the mixed density housing policy is eventually deployed to combat these fissures. Before the socio-economic segregation could be rectified—or at least, an attempt made to do so—the more immediate problem of racial segregation needed to be addressed. And for this, the government needed a broader policy to achieve its non-racial aims that extended beyond the narrow confines of white-only social clubs, a holistic approach that tackled the entirety of a particular space. It is here that we can reintroduce the policy of mixed density housing.

The most egregious example of segregation during the early period of Botswana's post-independence history was to be found in the northeastern urban center of Francistown. The first public volley in the effort to realign the space of Francistown into correspondence with Botswana's non-racial reputation and national principles was fired by then Vice-President Masire in a May 1971 speech to the town's residents. His presence in Francistown, he remarked, was to bring attention to the fact that Government was "extremely dissatisfied" by the lack of progress in integrating the town.⁴⁴ Masire explained to his audience that while he couldn't force people to be friends or associate in private, the government could—and would—remove the structural impediments (e.g. customer service, employment opportunities, etc) that were until then precluding racial equality in public. To do this, Masire asked citizens in Francistown to ask themselves what kind of city they wished to occupy. Telling them, "A town does not only consist of the land and buildings constructed on such land. A town is essentially a community that lives and works in it, and it is this aspect of community relationships that I wish to speak

⁴⁴ Quett Ketumile Joni Masire, 'Speech by the Honorable Q.K.J. Masire, Vice-President of Botswana, to Francistown Residents on the 17th May, 1971' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 6785, Gaborone, 1971).

about this morning because it is fundamental to the kind of town that we in Botswana are determined to have.”⁴⁵ Later telling them one way or another change is coming, so as to “make Francistown a better, more integrated and fairer place for all its citizens regardless of their colour or social standing.”⁴⁶

Approximately three months later, Masire addressed Parliament to announce that nothing had improved in Francistown. And that in fact, his speech served only to increase hostility amongst the town’s white population, noting that “the vast majority have either dragged their feet or have adopted deliberately unhelpful, truculent, and even provocative, attitudes.”⁴⁷ To fix the problem in Francistown, Masire announced that the government would implement a wide array of regulations, laws and planning interventions to force change amongst the population, both there and across Botswana. In describing the urgency of the circumstances, he suggests that to do nothing equates to dooming Botswana’s future: “We are dealing today with an issue which is inextricably bound up with Botswana’s national principles and objectives. If we fail to apply these in Francistown, and indeed through the country the very foundations of our non-racial democracy will be undermined.”⁴⁸

Masire’s strong words voiced in the public forum of the Parliamentary floor—and subsequently made even more visible by the speech’s printing and distribution by the government—created quite a stir in the days after it was delivered. In the same session of Parliament, for example, the issue of unequal or discriminatory treatment of white employers

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Republic of Botswana, ‘Community Relations in Botswana, with Special Reference to Francistown: Statement Delivered to the National Assembly by his Honour the Vice-President Dr. Masire on Monday 13th of September 1971’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1971), p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

towards their African employees was taken up. The nationalist, generally anti-white minority parties took these official revelations as an opportunity to attempt to raise public ire against whites and the ruling BDP said to be enabling their behavior—opposition MP Tshane derisively labels their supposedly willful ignorance, “Domkrag ostrich psychology.”⁴⁹ The most vocal critic, being P. G. Matante of the Botswana Peoples Party, who attacked the government for “being so lenient,” only taking a cosmetic action, “threaten[ing] one little town where there [are] about three culprits” when the discrimination and double-standards exist everywhere: “Look if an African commits a small offence at Naledi, you get the whole police station there to go and arrest one black who has committed no serious crime. But a white man can get away with murder.”⁵⁰ From the other side, white MP and BDP treasurer Ben Steinberg advocated for a more cautious approach. Urging that if Francistown needed to be dealt with, that was one thing, but it was quite another to indiscriminately go “hunting” for white people which would cause outsiders to note that “once Batswana people are in power . . . they chase out the whites.” Whatever actions the government takes, Steinberg said that they must tread carefully, since the whole world is watching: “Botswana is a shop window of Africa today.”⁵¹

In the end, Botswana didn’t embark on a racial witch-hunt or reverse discrimination—befitting their reputation for pragmatism, the BDP steered a moderate course. Yet, even so, the option decided upon—remaking the city of Francistown, and shortly thereafter, Gaborone to be a more inclusive space—was still, both then and in retrospect, a fairly radical policy decision.

⁴⁹ Republic of Botswana, *National Assembly Official Report (Hansard 38): Second Session (Second Parliament) Fourth Meeting: Sittings from 13th to 22nd September, 1971* (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1903, Gaborone, 1971), p. 157.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

The general experience of urban settings in Botswana during its existence as a British controlled Protectorate isn't that much different from other nations in the region—the few urban centers present in Bechuanaland during the early and middle decades of the 20th century were divided along racial lines. Indeed, the Motswana historian Rodgers Molefi has concluded that “Colonial Bechuanaland’s townships were founded on racial segregation and were much like those in South Africa.”⁵² Francistown, however, was different than other places in Botswana, since it was owned and operated by the privately held Tati Company—it was its own largely autonomous city-state within the territory of the Protectorate. Because Francistown was a “company town” the Tati Company could create, administer and enforce its own laws and urban planning arrangements. Initially founded as a boomtown to take advantage of the discovery of gold in the region, by the mid-1880s the mineral vein had dried up and the town’s European citizenry redirected their efforts to broader business and trading opportunities.⁵³ It was around this time—1888—that the Tati Concession and Mining Exploration Company Limited acquired sweeping rights from the local Matabele ruler, Chief Lobengula, who granted the Tati Company not only mineral rights and concessions, but also the power to enact laws “for the peace, order and good government of the Tati district.”⁵⁴ Without detailing the full history of growth and development in Francistown under the authority of the Tati Company, it is sufficient to say that the Tati Company had strict rules on the books governing the conduct and living arrangements of its African population that were in effect well into the 1960s. This isn't to say though, that these rules were effective or enforced, since, for example, although Africans were forbidden from

⁵² Rodgers Keteng K. Molefi, *A Medical History of Botswana: 1885-1966* (The Botswana Society, Gaborone, 1996), p. 87.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, ‘Francistown: Planning Proposals’ (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 4500, Gaborone, 1970), p. 10.

establishing permanent residence in Francistown, this regulation was never seriously implemented in practice.⁵⁵ Instead, the Africans who moved to the area constructed their own slum residential areas roughly demarcated by the railway line and the Tati River—Tati Town, Blue Town, Somerset, etc—that were tolerated so long as they remained spatially distinct from the White areas.⁵⁶ And, too, much like apartheid cities elsewhere, there were special areas set aside for mixed-race citizens residing in Francistown.⁵⁷

Pushing the chronology forward into a more contemporary period, Francistown has retained aspects of its previous colonial, segregationist heritage. In an ethnography of urban space and symbolism in late '80s, early '90s, Francistown, van Binsbergen notes that while there is more intermingling than in the past, residential and business areas, down to the street signs affixed to the signposts in neighborhoods with a heavy white concentration, the city remains racially divided.⁵⁸ Van Binsbergen for example, notes that even as public spaces have been desegregated in Francistown, Whites and Batswana elites have simply stopped using them, suggesting that whatever integration there might be, it is largely superficial.⁵⁹

At the time though, government thinking presumed that urban redevelopment policies with a more egalitarian focus would be able to overcome the grossest injustices and inequities in Francistown. As suggested previously, and reiterated here, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party saw the remaking of Francistown as a chance to live up to the ideals of their four national principles. The party's 1969 election manifesto stated, for instance, that the area “presents an

⁵⁵ Molefi, *A Medical History of Botswana*, p. 100.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁷ Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, 'Francistown: Planning Proposals', p. 12.

⁵⁸ Wim van Binsbergen, 'Making sense of urban space in Francistown, Botswana', in Peter J. M. Nas (ed), *Urban Symbolism* (E. J. Brill, New York, 1993).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

opportunity to rebuild Francistown as a town and a community . . . of which Botswana can justly be proud.”⁶⁰ This would be no easy task. Before any such reforms could take place, the government needed to acquire land for the project from the Tati Company. In 1970, through a combination of donations and land purchases, the government received 500 square miles (out of a total of 2,000 square miles then owned by the Tati Company), including 3,600 acres within the Francistown town limits.⁶¹

Having solved one problem by obtaining land in the area outside the jurisdiction of the Tati Company, the government had to face another if their mixed density housing scheme was to be successful: the skewed demographics of Francistown. Government surveys at the time placed the population of Francistown to be approximately 16,000 individuals—940, mostly white, lived in high cost housing; 900 Muslims, mixed-race, and some Batswana lived in the medium cost area, as well as in the Government Camp; the remaining 14,000 mostly Batswana residents lived in the peripheral slum areas dotting the landscape around Francistown’s center.⁶² The outside consultants charged with devising a plan for Francistown recognized the difficulty of arriving at any semblance of a mixed population when Batswana vastly outnumbered whites. Instead, they pinned their hopes to the future when there would be a tendency for upward mobility amongst the Batswana population. “Then,” they speculate, “The question would be whether it would become an aim of planning policy to encourage a mixing of people from different income groups.”⁶³ In this instance, they raise the important point that more than being a matter of urban planning policy, the mixed density approach was ultimately a social and political project that

⁶⁰ Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, ‘Francistown: Planning Proposals’, p. 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3; 12-13.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

would be unlikely to succeed without individual changes in attitudes and behaviors. The mixed density vision for the city, achieved through non-racial development, was in the end an objective wholly “political [in] nature.”⁶⁴ Planning could only present a model for non-racial living; it could not force people to abide by it.

And even as the State pursued its efforts to produce a more open, egalitarian city, it was still forced to make judgments to determine who might be welcome or granted legitimate entry in these recast urban spaces—be welcomed, that is, as an acceptable ingredient to the mixed density pot—and who would not. Echoing concerns voiced in Gaborone during the construction of the new capital regarding the kinds of people urban planners should make room for (see Chapters 2 and 6), the Francistown plan also exhibited the planning bureaucracy’s worry over how to restrict the presence of squatters and those without steady employment. Clearly referred to as the “third aim” to be targeted in the new planning of the town was the need to “restrict the growth of population at Francistown to those who have work in the town or who are otherwise able to afford properly organised forms of urban housing, however low the standard.”⁶⁵ Stated another way in the report’s prefatory summary, planners suggested “land for housing [be allocated] only for those who can afford and want an urban life style, broadly those with paid employment in town.”⁶⁶ As part of this urban housecleaning, it was recommended that approximately 2,100 traditionally styled houses be “cleared and replaced.”⁶⁷ Policies directed toward establishing a minimum socio-economic benchmark for residency in Francistown was, like in Gaborone, a way to first inaugurate, and then protect, a sanctified space for a new (i.e. modern) form of living in

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. XIII.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. XIV.

Botswana. Noting an evolutionary trend, the planners behind the *Planning Proposals* built into Francistown flexibility able to deal with new trends in “shopping habits, the demands for education and recreation, car ownership . . .” that will inevitably occur as Batswana residents “chang[e] from a traditional village way of life to an urbanised way of life.”⁶⁸ Based on what we know of Gaborone, then and now, it is perhaps not surprising that in the list of new behaviors and goals inherent to the expectations of modern living, and for which, room must be made in the reinvented Francistown, an alteration of “shopping habits” was mentioned first.

As an urban center in southern Africa during the early 1970s, Francistown was to be unique and new because of the efforts to reshape it as a non-racial city—an oddity for the region. That much is clear. But, no doubt, it was also to be new because of its status an innovative space for modern, urban living in Botswana. This mode of urban living required a form of citizenship and identity which, again as in Gaborone, could not be open and accessible to everybody. In the end, these trepidations expressed in the planning report for Francistown foreshadowed the difficult balancing act required when implementing a mixed-density development that advocated non-racialism but said little about socio-economic integration. This untenable juxtaposition resonates in present-day Francistown, as van Binsbergen demonstrates in his semiotic ethnography of the city. He suggests that cleavages of race and class today manifest in Francistown produce “effects [that] are far from limited to the use and conceptualization of space, but amount to a compartmentalization of life worlds and symbolic universes.”⁶⁹ What results are parallel cities with an almost spectral relationship to one another—the physical ground might be shared, but the symbolisms, usages, transit spaces (van Binsbergen employs the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶⁹ van Binsbergen, ‘Making sense of urban space in Francistown, Botswana’, p. 201.

contrasting example of automobile roadways and footpaths), and perceptions are distinct, enclosed and don't overlap.⁷⁰

Or, to put it in more concrete terms: following the “glamorous opening” of the Galo Shopping Centre in April 2004, the new mall was expected to garner “national attention and hordes of unemployed people.”⁷¹ Reporting the dichotomous scene of tranquil shopping inside the compound and anxious would-be employees camped beyond the metal security fence, *Mmegi* describes one individual as “just one of the hundreds of youth who are still loitering around the mall in search of a job. Every morning they stand by the gate waiting for the opportunity for the security guard to lose concentration so that they can sneak in. Some jump over the fence to gain entry.”⁷² The imagery of the shopping mall as a fortress, as a citadel, protecting the consumerist fantasies of the Francistown shopping class on the one hand, keeping out those might potentially infringe on their experience, on the other. This moment, perhaps as much as anything else captures both the reality of the spectral, parallel city in contemporary Francistown, as well as what happens when these divergent worlds intersect.

Designing a Mixed Density, Non-Racial Town

Following the completion of the 1970 *Francistown: Planning Proposals* report advising on the need and ideological basis for non-racial development in the northeastern town, 10 months later a more specific housing blueprint was drawn up and published.⁷³ This document explores

⁷⁰ Even so, I would argue that the question of non-overlapping spaces and urban universes is perhaps not as sharply drawn as van Binsbergen suggests. See: Chapter 4 on Riverwalk and consumer behavior, and Chapter 6, on the discursive construction of slums in Gaborone. Or, at the least, that the sharpness of boundaries depends on what you're referring to.

⁷¹ Alice Banda, 'New Francistown mall won't satisfy unemployed', *Mmegi*, 22 April 2004, p. 9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷³ Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, 'Francistown: First Stage Housing' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 4501, Gaborone, 1971).

in greater detail what a non-racial urban development policy would look like in practical terms. The external consultants hired to prepare the plans come up with four desirable planning outcomes. One of the long-term products of such a plan revolved around the establishment of a real estate market based on property values comparable to what might be found in “more highly developed countries.”⁷⁴ As for the other three, it is perhaps beneficial to quote these in full:

- (a) that anyone of any race should be able to live in whichever type of house he can afford, without feeling socially isolated
- (b) that people in the high and medium cost housing should at least be aware of the other housing areas
- (c) that people in the lower cost housing, especially those in self help housing, should be given every encouragement, through proximity and example, to improve their houses[.]⁷⁵

The phrasing of these goals provides some critical hints as to what motivated the plans, as well as exposing some questions and ambiguities. Again, while it seems clear that a policy of non-racialism sat at the heart of early post-colonial urban planning policies, closer inspection of these goals suggests things are, in fact, less clear. What, for example, does “without feeling socially isolated” mean? The same question could be asked of the proposal that elites “should at least be aware of the other housing areas.” Founding a policy on opaque feelings and perceptions seems an odd thing to do, particularly since there is no real explanation as to how awareness becomes integration. This seems to imply, at best, a fairly superficial definition of community. Here, I think, we can begin to see the extent of the limitations of the non-racial housing proposals, which at first seemed so radical or revolutionary. Without challenging the social and economic inequities inherent—then and now—in the structures of Botswana society, a mixed density housing proposal based almost exclusively on race could produce only limited effects. Whether

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

intended or not, what seems to have happened is that by enforcing these planning policies one form of segregation was simply exchanged for another.⁷⁶

At the same time, the third aim listed above returns us to the issue of the desire to create new kinds of citizen, both urban and modern. Only by watching and learning from the experiences, attitudes and comportments of the more well-to-do, will the (very) poor be able to overcome their currently deficient state—say, being too Motswana, or too rural. Through close contact with—“aware[ness] of”—their richer neighbors, the town becomes a vessel that people can ride into a new era of modern living. To the recent arrival, Francistown is a one-way portal to the future. The normative implications of such a future are, of course, up for debate. Though this interpretation does offer another perspective on the national principles of Botswana urging *Kagisano*, unity and development. Since in this case, the development ideal seems to involve replicating the established, bourgeois model offered by the Batswana (white or black) upper class. The poor should, apparently, aspire to a manicured, square-walled house equipped with the latest in roofing technology. No word however, on running water or electricity. The examples provided by the elites, can only provide a rough cosmetic approximation, a simulation of upper class living, not however, the substance.

Despite these obvious incongruities, the physical layout of the mixed-density urban development blueprint seems to have been intended to reinforce “through proximity and example” a particular mode of town living. The basic community design for the First Stage development in Francistown was based on the assumption that each “environmental area” would form a self-contained, self-sustaining unit—with a school, shopping area, low, medium and high

⁷⁶ This conclusion is supported by an early statement in the document that advises that the “implementation of the general aim that urban development should be only for those who want and can afford an urban life style....” It is, I suppose, easier to achieve the type of city desired if there are restrictions in place making it difficult—the government wanted to avoid housing subsidies if possible—for poor people to assert a place for themselves in the city. See page 14 of the report ‘Francistown: First Stage Housing’.

cost housing—bordered on all four sides by roads.⁷⁷ Occupying the central sections of the “environmental areas” would be the low-cost housing areas, bi-sected by footpaths and the occasional service road. Meanwhile:

The high and medium cost housing is located on the edge of the area next to the surrounding road and served by loop roads, giving good access by car. People from these areas are likely to form their social relationships with people from other environmental areas and in other parts of the town, and less likely within the environmental area itself.⁷⁸

Deciphering this statement requires that we read it as a polite way of saying the elites—be they white or Batswana—have little intention of mingling with their poorer neighbors. Admitting this before the ground for the site was broken or the first brick laid, seems like an odd thing to do, since it implicitly acknowledges the entire exercise is largely futile: rearranging the space of the city does nothing to affect the behaviors and attitudes of the people who live within it.

Heightening the already steep difficulties facing the stated goal of community integration was the decision to ensure that the medium and high cost houses remained grouped together within each “environmental area,” so as to “form homogeneous areas sufficiently large to instill a sense of security and identification with neighbours.”⁷⁹ Again, it is worth noting too, that even the definition of “neighbor” is drawn around the edges of class—and probably racial—lines. From the beginning, it seems, the possibilities for community under the mixed-density, non-racial rubric, were more or less, foreclosed. At least in Francistown, but what of Gaborone. To what depth was the mixed-density urban development policy deployed in the nation’s capital?

In Botswana’s new capital, Gaborone, conditions both similar and different to those evident in Francistown prevailed. On the side of difference, Gaborone was a much newer town

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

than was Francistown during the period of the early to mid 1970s. Being only a decade removed from the initial planning conducted by the team behind the Capital Project, the original blueprint and planning predictions were obsolete nearly as soon as the first phase of construction was completed during the transition to Independence in 1966. Due to an influx of migrants into Gaborone, the government was under pressure to do something to deal with the, what was at the time unexpected, growth. Decades later, in the pages of the current 25 year plan for Gaborone, government urban planners lamented the fact that “overurbanization” is ongoing, propelled forward “by the *bright light* theory by which migrants troop to the city in search of *the good things of life* even when they have full knowledge that these may be elusive [italics in original].”⁸⁰ This was no doubt true during the period under discussion here. The plans for the first major expansion of Gaborone into the Broadhurst farms northeast of Gaborone’s original borders state, for example, that approximately 87% of the town’s population was classified as either lower or medium income.⁸¹ And that within the Broadhurst neighborhood in which the second phase of urban development was to occur, nearly 83% (from a population projection of 12,110 for 1978) of the people who settled there would be able to afford only traditional, site and service or low cost housing.⁸² The stark demographic imbalance between the rich and poor that existed in Francistown was also present in Gaborone.

Similar to the “environmental area” concept utilized in Francistown, the Broadhurst development plan adopted a holistic approach. Bounded to the west by the north-south railroad

⁸⁰ Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Gaborone City Council, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘Gaborone City Development Plan (1997-2021)’, p. 132.

⁸¹ Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘Broadhurst: Stage Two: Volume 1’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1975), no page. I gathered this information from Table XIII, ‘Stage Two Population Breakdown into Income Groups and to Desired Housing by Income Categories’.

⁸² *Ibid.*, paragraph 3.6.

and by the Notwane and Segoditshane rivers and floodplains to the east, the area for Broadhurst was to encompass space for educational, commerce, shopping, industrial and residential locations. And according to maps provided in the *Broadhurst State Two* planning manual, as in Francistown, the mixture of high, medium and low cost housing was to be determined along the same model of geographic organization. Much of the interior areas of the residential sections would be occupied by the low cost and self help housing areas, while the peripheries adjacent to the system of roads was to be the site of the high and medium cost housing. Between the high and low cost housing were spatial buffers, usually shared open spaces. Accessible, open spaces to be shared by residents of the area were, from the beginning, viewed also a possible site of consternation and tension between the users of these spaces, since as the planners note, “Areas of responsibility are in dispute and privacy and security at risk . . . predictably the area between houses becomes a trampled wasteland and often a rubbish dump. Open spaces, beyond the maintenance resources of authority, suffer the same fate.”⁸³ Disputes caused by a mixed density version of the tragedy of the commons though, weren’t the only conflicts envisioned by the implementation of this urban development policy. Many years later, a Motswana friend’s well-to-do mother, who was part of the first generation of Gaborone residents, having arrived with her husband in 1969, recalled the nostalgic days of life in Gaborone, before mixed density residential housing was fully established, when a person could leave their keys in the car while shopping. Of the close proximity of rich and poor in today’s Gaborone, she posited this doomsday scenario: “I can imagine if one day we have an uprising, I can imagine that people [referring to those living in low cost or self-help housing areas] will go burn down the rich houses.”⁸⁴

⁸³ *Ibid.*, paragraph 5.4.

⁸⁴ Interview with Mma Ketlogetswe, Gaborone, 24 February 2005.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the disparate socio-economic and racial balance, new development in Gaborone was to be modeled on the mixed-density approach envisioned for Francistown. Recalling Seretse Khama, who was quoted earlier in this chapter, he complained of residing in “Little England” and wanted to reshape the polarized landscape of Gaborone. Even at the time however, the thinking was not limited exclusively to racial polarization—economic status was factored into the planning calculus in Gaborone. A report on the problems related to land security and housing the poor in Gaborone noted that “a frequently-voiced complaint about Gaborone is that it offers everything for the rich, nothing for the poor.”⁸⁵ And while the 1971 *Gaborone: Planning Proposals* state that the number one priority for future development in Gaborone is the enforcement of “Government’s non racial policy as applied to urban development,”⁸⁶ no serious undertaking to achieve this end could happen without reevaluating the economic inequities pervading the town.

However, two pages after laying out the Government’s planning objectives for Gaborone as it moved into the 1970s and beyond, the report’s authors identify the major difficulty confronting the endeavor. In practical terms, while non racial development is the announced policy of government, “There is still no clear expression of what this means in town planning terms, but [even so] it must affect every level of planning from the urban structure to the detailed local planning.”⁸⁷ They continue:

It is arguable that the existing form of Gaborone runs counter to this [non racial] aim, as it comprises three large, strongly contrasted areas of housing. But this criticism may arise from a confusion between the question of non racial development, and the more difficult one of class and economic distinction. The low and medium cost housing areas of

⁸⁵ E. B. Egner, ‘Report on a Preliminary Survey of the Bontleng Self-Help Housing Scheme, Gaborone, 28 July 1971’ (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number 10,672, Gaborone, 1971), p. 6.

⁸⁶ Republic of Botswana, ‘Gaborone Planning Proposals’, p. 15.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Gaborone are both relatively poor and almost entirely occupied by black people. But the high cost housing area north of the [Main] Mall is truly multi racial, and sharply set off from the rest of the town by class distinction and economic differences.⁸⁸

Rarely, in the documentation I've come across, is the root problem put so clearly or succinctly. And while the allusions are made early in post-independence five-year development plans about the need to equalize the distribution of wealth in Botswana—calls that are stated only generally and even then, as a long-term objective that is unattainable for those of the first post-colonial generations. The message is even more vague and ambiguous today, as no longer are outright calls for a redistribution of wealth made in government publications, but rather, these socio-economic goals are subsumed into generalized national principles that call for *Kagisano*, unity, *Botho*. A potentially hopeful message to be sure, but one with neither the enforcement teeth nor the detailed policies to arrive there. And indeed, even the attitude toward individual success disseminated these days seems to articulate the mood of the governing elite with regards to individual achievement and the accumulation of wealth: describing one of the many tenets that compose the *Botho* ethos, the Vision 2016 *Long Term Vision for Botswana* “encourages people to applaud rather than resent those who succeed.”⁸⁹ To behave as a good Motswana, one is to cheer the achievements of the few, rather than question their own marginal position in the economy. Equal parts subtle and clear, there is perhaps no better advertisement for supporting the socio-economic status quo in contemporary Botswana. With this passage though, we anticipate what is to come in the conclusion.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁹ Republic of Botswana, ‘A Long Term Vision for Botswana’, p. 5 <<http://www.vision2016.co.bw>> (10 August 2007).

Conclusion

A cursory look at Botswana's more recent five-year national development plans and urban development plans suggests a rather emphatic break with past trends, particularly in the last two decades. Early iterations of Botswana's housing and urban development policy tended to prioritize large-scale interventions designed to alter the shape and style of urban living—mixing residential areas to include different races and a range of socio-economic levels. To change the face and substance, in other words, of “Little England.” In more recent government publications however, there seems to be reevaluation of what is desirable in the towns and cities of Botswana. No longer do you see sweeping statements describing the possibilities of a utopian reengineering of urban space. And while an objection to this conclusion might be that these goals are now simply subsumed under the auspices of *Kagisano* or one of the other national principles, I would argue that doesn't seem to be the case. In the past, the national principles were listed in conjunction with specific mentions of the mixed density goals. Instead, today, the national principles as discussed in government publications related to housing and urban development are mentioned alongside specific mention of different, less revolutionary policy goals.

Perhaps the other objection to this might be that they are no longer listed outright because they have succeeded, and thus need no longer be explicitly spelled out. Maybe. But as future chapters will suggest, whatever “success” there might be is at best ambiguous and its consequences mixed. It is probably true to conclude that poorer residents of Broadhurst, and the later expansion into the area known as Gaborone West, gained access to some city services—electricity, running water, indoor plumbing—that they might not otherwise have been able to tap into by virtue of living in the same area as their wealthier neighbors. And too, the government did achieve some success—over much resistance—in forcing people of different income levels to live nearly side by side. And indeed, where I stayed during most of my stay in Gaborone, in

the Phase 2 sub-development of Gaborone West, adjacent to the Molepolole road and within walking distance of the bus rank and the still vacant Central Business District, it was not unusual to see multi-story brick homes ringed by an electric razor wire fence across the street from a square, two-room cinder block house. Of course though, simply living in close proximity to those in the next income bracket, higher or lower, does not at all mean that the neighborhood is “mixed” in terms of community or interaction, as my friend’s mom who worried about being the first target of “uprising[s]” by the poor suggested. Though for its part, the government has contended that “the mixing of neighbourhoods of various income categories in the same area, though unorthodox, has removed the glaring disparities in environmental quality and social standing which are common in other African countries,”⁹⁰ a drive through Gaborone’s many residential areas might bring these more rosy-hued conclusions into dispute.

Without attributing motivations or intentions to the writings authored, or at least authorized, by various national government ministries, it nonetheless is clear that the focus has changed. Rather than taking the lead to initiate broad urban transformations, the government has adopted more pragmatic, rather than ideological, objectives while looking to cede control over urban development to the private sector. Consider, for example, the outline of aims and objectives appearing near the beginning of recent writings on urban development. Whereas in the early post-colonial period, the goal of non-racial development was almost always listed first and was described as being the guiding principle to all facets of urban planning, this is no longer true. Instead, less lofty—though still important to general quality of life—standards are now targeted. In the section on Residential Land Use in the 1995 *Development Control Code*, for example, the four mandates listed for the purpose of “providing a good living environment for all

⁹⁰ Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, Republic of Botswana, ‘Review of the National Policy on Housing’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1997), p. 26.

users” were: safety, amenity, accessibility and “energy conservation and environmental protection.”⁹¹ Or out of the eleven targets the 25 year plan for Gaborone was intended to achieve, not one approached the ideological, politically-tinged planning blueprints of the past. Rather, the goals were more modest, less controversial, focusing on questions of budgeting, synchronizing long and short-term planning, and technical and bureaucratic efficiency.⁹² Perhaps the only one slightly reminiscent was a bullet point vaguely calling for future planning “to promote the physical environment of Gaborone City as a setting for human activities which is functional, efficient, healthy and conducive.”⁹³ But even there, it is a poor approximation—hewing to concerns about the quality of environmental spaces, rather than the quality of social relations.

More recently, too, in the ninth National Development Plan (NDP 9) published in 2002, the goal of the housing and urban development strategy during the most recent planning cycle focused on three areas: “. . . the focus will be on housing policy effectiveness, facilitation of housing delivery and promotion of home ownership.”⁹⁴ A critical component of this new emphasis depended on the encouragement of the private sector increasing their presence in the Gaborone housing market. This reexamination of the role of government in urban development represents an enormous reversal in policy thinking and approach. At the moment, the role of government still looms exceedingly large, as even NDP 9 notes that in Gaborone, only three

⁹¹ Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘Development Control Code, 1995’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1995), p. 1.

⁹² Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Gaborone City Council, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘Gaborone City Development Plan (1997-2021)’, pp. 3-5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan 9: Part I—Policies and Objectives’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2002), p. 340 <<http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001172/index.php>> (20 August 2007).

private developers possess holdings of any substantial size.⁹⁵ But the future direction is clear: government is slowly backing away from broad-based urban planning intended to reshape urban living, in favor of privatized market forces to determine the shape, look and style of Gaborone into the next few decades.⁹⁶ Maybe though, this withdrawal of the State on behalf of the market shouldn't be seen as too surprisingly or unanticipated. Back in the early 1990s, as evidenced in a short, non-descript passage in NDP 7, the heady rhetoric of the early post-colonial days advocating for a fairer, more balanced economic and social system had been long disappeared. Replaced instead, under the bolded heading “Social Responsibility,” a word about the duties of government:

Although Government has an obligation to serve the people, Government should not be seen as the solution to all problems. As well as people accepting responsibility for their own betterment, it is also important for the beneficiaries of development to serve the community as a whole.⁹⁷

From admonishing the population to take responsibility for their social and economic marginalization, it is only a small distance to the suggestion that for people to behave as good Batswana, they ought to “applaud” those who succeed. And thus, good citizenship depends not just on the preservation of inequities, but on the cheerful acceptance of them.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 335. The three private real estate developers referred to in the plan are: Time Projects, Phakalane Estates and Universal Builders.

⁹⁶ This is not however, likely to be a fluid transition that will be of ultimate benefit to a wide range of the population. Instead, as the Lesetedi Commission findings showed, the transition to a market based system will be marred—perhaps intentionally so—by corruption, inefficiency, bureaucratic incompetence, a lack of transparency and cronyism. The report produced by the Lesetedi Commission provided ample evidence of a land allocation system that is at best severely dysfunctional, and at worst, intentionally tilted in favor of well-funded individuals and companies able to successfully navigate the government's bureaucracy. See: Republic of Botswana, ‘Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Land Allocations in Gaborone’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2004). A subtle indication of the Commission's damaging findings is the fact that the report cost P100, substantially more than the usual price for government produced documents. At a cost of P100, few people would have the luxury of buying and reading the entire document.

⁹⁷ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan 7: 1991-1997’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1991), p. 386.

Or does it? A corollary of the government's earlier efforts at mixed density housing emerges. The compression of urban space it required, by forcing elites to live next close by their poorer neighbors served to efface the usual—I wouldn't go so far as to say "normal"—distance that separates people of varying status. Because residential location no longer adequately functioned as a universally reliable marker of social status—in the case of Gaborone in its initial inception, this meant that the rich lived north of the Main Mall, while the low class houses and shanties were located to the south—other methods of differentiation were employed. In the upcoming three chapters, we visit the shopping mall; the slum; and the street corner where the dynamic interplay between the citizen and the stranger is examined. Each of these sites tells us something about the struggle for status and urban citizenship as it unfolded in Gaborone during the early years of the 21st century. Unlike the stark borders offered by physical spatial distance, the discursive and imaginative urban spaces contested, are neither stable, nor so clearly defined. The fluidity of these terrains proves fertile ground for understanding the making and meaning of urban citizenship in today's Gaborone.

We will begin this next phase of exploration with a look at Gaborone's burgeoning shopping and consumer culture.

CHAPTER 4
BUY, BUY, BUY: CONSUMPTION AND THE MAKING OF MODERN CITIZENS IN AND
AROUND THE SHOPPING MALLS OF GABORONE, BOTSWANA

“Money is important to people. Lots of money is important to people. Everybody wants to be the who’s who in town. Everybody wants a house in Phakalane. Everybody wants to drive a Beemer. . . .”

(So says a 19 year old who works in the Riverwalk shopping mall, in answer to the question: “What is important to people in Gaborone?”)

Introduction

A point of departure: the shopping mall as a subject worthy of discussion in American popular culture has a fairly long, if not always illustrious or distinguished, history. Take its portrayal in recent years in the venue of film and television. Stories told about shopping malls, along with the people who inhabit these spaces, have presented themes alternately fantastic, nightmarish, apocalyptic, cautionary or absurd. There are narratives about lovelorn clerks (*Shopgirl*) or lovelorn display case objects (*Mannequin*); tales showing the mall as a refuge for the teenage stoner-slacker (*Mallrats*) or following the emergence of a zombified middle America, the mall is magnet both for the human survivors, as well as the undead who retain vestigial memories of their past consumer lives (*Dawn of the Dead*); B-movie visions of the mall as a contemporary technological dystopia that is not only alienating but also dangerous (*Chopping Mall*); the mall as home to both our innocent aspirations and our failings as consumers (*Christmas Story*, *Jingle All the Way*). These are but a sampling of many. The mall as a setting for stories has been so well mined in fact, that the writers of *Seinfeld* were able to build two separate episodes detailing the disorientations and difficulties accompanying the act of parking your car at the mall.¹

¹ The episodes I’m referring to are: “The Parking Garage” (1991) and “The Handicap Spot” (1993).

And while these stories might well be situated, or the plots unfurled, in the mall, they are rarely ever actually about the mall. Instead, the examination of questions related to the practice of capitalism, identity, power, or the absurdities and mixed-up priorities of our lives as consumer-citizens is never far from the surface. Indeed, while a viewer of a movie like *Dawn of the Dead* recognizes the legitimacy of the mall as a sanctuary of last resort as society crumbles around its last survivors or perhaps as a monumental edifice encapsulating American values in the latter stages of the 20th century, at the same time, we derive some satisfaction watching it, and the order and norms it symbolizes, destroyed, overrun by zombies or smashed to bits, as in the car chase scene in the opening minutes of *The Blues Brothers*. Watching the ordered and policed environment of the mall violated by rebels—whether undead suburbanites or musically inclined ex-cons from Joliet—is liberating, even from our position as voyeur engaged in fantasy. These emotions of course, reach their revolutionary apogee in the final moments of *Fight Club*, as the global corporate and banking complex—along with all records of our consumer driven credit card debt—are incinerated in a series of explosions triggered by car bombs.

Despite the ambivalence of our feelings towards the mall, whether viewed on the screen or experienced in our local shopping complex, there is much to be gleaned from studying them. This seems an especially worthy endeavor in places outside the American heartland where increasing numbers of shopping malls are having profound impacts, transforming the practice of politics, economics and social interaction in the places in which they are built. If we look to Africa, and in particular, Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, the alterations wrought by the increased presence of shopping centers as the focal point of a burgeoning consumption-driven lifestyle are especially apparent. The new kind of citizenship forged through consumer practices is explicitly political, yet also de-politicizing. It is political in that it reifies an existent politico-

economic structure that is highly polarized and exclusionary. Simultaneously these practices remain de-politicizing because although the majority has been unable to attain the coveted consumer position manifested by the disposable income of the wealthy, their efforts and aspirations are directed towards replicating the elites' lifestyle, rather than challenging the political, cultural and economic systems working to maintain their relatively marginal status. The glossy new Western and South African influenced shopping malls that have popped up in Gaborone since 2002 are perhaps the primary sites where these practices, struggles and contradictions are enacted.

The story presented here is one of snippets and fragments, one of anecdotes and observations. It is, therefore, necessarily interpretive. There are many narratives to tell about the practice of everyday (urban) life in contemporary Gaborone. However illuminating and revealing a telling of shopping and consumption might be for our understanding of Botswana—and for urban life in the developing world more generally—what follows just happens to be the one that best reflects my own experience. Consequently, the focus isn't just limited to some sort of discursive/semiotic textual exegesis of the space of the Mall (though there is some of that), but rather, locates the Mall in a broader analysis of consumption and identity in Gaborone that views the Mall as the best exemplar of trends, behaviors, and ways of thinking about lifestyle and status among the residents of Botswana's capital.

To demonstrate what I am getting at, let me present three observations and episodes that we will unravel as we travel along. One: a banner hung at the entrance of Riverwalk, the shopping mall of primary focus in this Chapter, proudly announces to the visitor arriving by car that they have reached the "Shopping Capital of Gaborone." Capital of what? Capital for whom? A Capital presided over by whom? These questions are left unanswered by the signage,

and likely by the customers, as well. Pondering the implications of the advertisement is of little importance when compared to the knowledge that you've arrived at the center of a symbolic somewhere, a destination of note, crossing into the parking lot you're now a citizen (subject?) of a new and exotic land, your cash and credit card serving as passport.

What does it mean to be a resident of Riverwalk? Perhaps one of its denizens can tell us. Two: during my many days and hours hanging out at Riverwalk, I tended to see the same folks over and over again. I was introduced to one of them, a teenage girl, by a friend while browsing magazines at a South African-based chain bookstore located in the mall. During the exchange of greetings and pleasantries I mentioned that I had seen her around the mall many times before. Her response, echoing the cheery phrasing of southern California Valley Girls parodied in innumerable movies, songs and TV shows, was "well, what can I say? I'm a Riverwalk girl." Allegiance to her adopted homeland confirmed, what did it mean, I wondered, to be a "Riverwalk anybody?" Is it a style, a mindset, a way of being, a form of display, a new site of imagination and daydreams,² a place of flux, mobility and transition? All of the above? Can it be practiced by anyone? Is it, in other words, accessible?

And finally, a hint at what it might mean to be a Riverwalk girl. Third: while working in Gaborone's largest urban slum I hired a research assistant from the neighborhood, or "village" as many of the older residents referred to it, to aid me in my fieldwork. As the research progressed we encountered some difficulties communicating and arranging appointments because though I had a cell phone, he did not. One of my roommates, a Canadian volunteer who was leaving the country shortly, gave me his phone to give to my research assistant. Now, the phone was one of the earliest models to be introduced into Botswana in the early 2000s. Consequently, it lacked

² Something along the lines of: Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1994).

among many other things, the color graphics interface and aerodynamic flip-top look exhibited by most of the more recent models that were becoming increasingly popular across the city. Clunky looking though it was—a digital age equivalent of a rotary phone—it could dial numbers and send text messages. And it was free. When, the next morning I arrived at my assistant’s house with the phone, he studied it for a moment and then proceeded to list all the reasons why it was completely unacceptable, most of which boiled down to the simple fact that he couldn’t be seen using such a phone. It carried the stigma of poverty, of not being able to afford something better. The phone quickly went into his pocket and that was the last I saw of it; by the next morning he had swapped phones with his father, who had a much newer, more modern looking model.

This anecdote illuminates a few key points. It suggests the importance of self-presentation, of self-display, of the utility of accessories as a marker of status and perhaps hints at the existence of a hybrid public/private space in which the phone you use, the car you drive or the beer you drink functions as a form of visual communication—extensions of your body exhibited for public consumption, the anonymous audience’s gaze. Such observations are not new, I think. Second, and perhaps more interesting, is that the obviously rich “Riverwalk girl” and my definitely un-wealthy friend and research assistant are participating in the same visual conversation about status, belonging and urban citizenship. The Riverwalk lifestyle then, isn’t just occurring at the obvious centers of wealth, commerce and consumption, but appears also at the margins and in the relatively obscure capillaries of politics, culture and economics in Gaborone. The primary difference being that for some, this lifestyle, this conversation, is easily realized and engaged in, while for most others, the aspirations are there, but the actualization of the gold standards represented by Riverwalk is something else entirely.

Writing about the symbolic significance of the space of display in Gaborone evidenced by the emphasis placed on where you shop, what you buy and what you use, I'm reminded of *Fight Club*'s Tyler Durden's shrill admonishment, "You're not your job. You're not how much money you have in the bank. You're not the car you drive. You're not the contents of your wallet," culminating in his punchy concluding expletive: "You're not your fucking khakis."³ Among the urban populace of Gaborone however, the relationship between the person and the possession is not so easily untangled.

Modern Houses for Modern Living (Maybe Next Door to the Former President or in Close Proximity to Other Celebrities)

The relationship between identity, modernity and materiality has been explored elsewhere. For example, in the specific case of housing and the internal domestic spaces we inhabit, the home has been privileged as a primary site of daydreaming. The protective space of the home shelters the imagination and functions as the preserve of the "near poet" that we all become in our most introspective moments.⁴ More than that however, Bachelard argues that the intimate space of the home stabilizes the lives of its residents. He writes,

Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another. In the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being. . . . It is the human being's first world.⁵

Beyond the enclosed, internal space of the home it carries a significance reaching outside the minds of its inhabitants. In a study of the autoconstruction of houses amongst the Brazilian urban poor, Holston suggests that rather than focusing solely on the internal dynamics or symbolisms carried by the house-space, we ought to consider the demonstrative capabilities, the

³ David Fincher, *Fight Club* (1999).

⁴ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

public face, of the house. An emphasis on the externality, the superficiality of the domestic space as “surface—as public façade, signboard, decorated wrapper, [and] second skin”⁶ allows us to examine the public dimensions and pronouncements of domestic material space. The home, in other words, is both a space internally, as well as externally, oriented. The autoconstructed house, Holston writes, is an expression of an “imagined future” and functions as a method of communicating aspirations, prestige and status.⁷ Similarly, the role of the house as an architectural artifact transmitted through the interaction between the spectator and the building itself is a way to broadcast claims about the occupant.⁸

If the communicative aspect of material displays, in the above example of domestic space holds true, what is the message being sent? In the case of the mid 20th century emergent African middle class in Southern Rhodesia, the adoption of European housing standards and practices by the new elite class served to distinguish themselves from the majority of African laborers, poor and unemployed urban dwellers.⁹ Amongst the two South American examples presented by Holston and Colloredo-Mansfeld, emphasizing difference from one’s neighbor is only part of the story. Adapting to new or modern or popular styles not only legitimates the prestige and power

⁶ James Holston, “Autoconstruction in working class Brazil”, *Cultural Anthropology*, **6**, 4 (November 1991), p. 457.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 451; 456.

⁸ Rudolf Colloredo-Mansfeld, “Architectural conspicuous consumption and economic change in the Andes”, *American Anthropologist*, New Series, **96**, 4 (December 1994), pp. 849; 855.

⁹ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2002), pp. 99-100. Though as West points out, accentuating difference wasn’t the only reason the middle class wanted to leave the townships and relocate in more respectable neighborhoods. African middle class men, for example, wanted to control the sexuality of their wives, who might, for example, be seduced by other, more uncivilized, men living in the townships.

of the few elites whom they are emulating¹⁰ but also replicates and inscribes the same hegemonic power relations onto the remade domestic sphere.¹¹

To insert Botswana and particularly, Gaborone, into a discussion of this apparent paradox, one might consider the contemporary use of fences around the plots of most residents in the city. When traveling around the wealthier neighborhoods of Gaborone it is readily apparent that nearly every house was enclosed behind large security walls. Most often, the walls stand taller than eye-level—severing the view of the street from that of the house inside—includes an electronic remote-controlled metal gate and are topped with occasionally electrified razorwire. And although crime seems to be increasing across the city, it was always my impression that the rise of the house-as-fortress in Gaborone was more a product of the influence of the South African home security complex than as a preventive measure to ward off an increasing threat.¹² Having an imposing security structure was just something you did if you had the money to pay for the service, meaning that the wall served as an expression of wealth and consumer values as much as it functioned as a mechanism of protection.

In the less wealthy areas around town, many plots were also demarcated by fencing. Usually these were less elaborate, less sturdy, and as they might only be constructed of chain-links, were shorter and more easily climbable, and not electrified¹³, they were, therefore, probably also far less useful as security deterrent. And although fencing was a standard feature

¹⁰ Colloredo-Mansfeld, “Architectural conspicuous consumption and economic change in the Andes”, p. 862.

¹¹ Holston, “Autoconstruction in working class Brazil”, pp. 448; 456. Holston elaborates by noting that although autoconstruction is both a form of resistance and a subversion of authority, the poor’s entrance into the consumer lifestyle that accompanies home ownership entangles them in the very economic and political system keeping them poor and located on the margins of the urban periphery.

¹² Especially considering that security fences have long been part of the urban landscape of Gaborone, dating back until at least the early 1990s, if not earlier.

¹³ Although not electrified, some owners opted to place shards of broken glass on the tops of the fences instead of, for example, razorwire.

of traditional Tswana housing, predominately useful to stake out the boundaries of the family compound and to separate the private domestic space of the *lolwapa*¹⁴ from the more public spaces in the village, I would suggest that in an urban context, they wield a more symbolic, rather than functional, purpose. At the level of aspiration, these structures exhibit a correspondence with those found in the wealthier areas of town. They announce that inside the external walls, however flimsy, there are not only occupants, but also consumer goods worth protecting. Failing to have a fence would not only publicly demonstrate one's poverty but possibly serve as evidence of ignorance of what is valued, of what is important in today's Gaborone. In this instance, a fence serves as an important entrance into the discourse of urban consumption. It is both a form of participation and of belonging, demonstrating that while a family might not yet have the means to practice an active consumer lifestyle, they recognize the value of attempting to attain it, lest they be stigmatized as poor, backward and having a village mentality. The fence as a representation of striving toward future achievements, an announcement of the adoption of urban living and values, and an accentuation of the difference between themselves and their poorer or less "with it" neighbors, as it has been suggested earlier, reinforces and legitimates the moral and economic universe of the elites.

To flip the discussion, we might turn our attention to the exclusive spaces of the rich in the greater Gaborone area by discussing Phakalane, Gaborone's nascent haven for wealthy expatriates and Batswana. Just as much as the less rich citizens of Gaborone have been trying to occupy the same symbolic space of the monied urban consumer class, the rich have similarly attempted to distance themselves spatially, discursively and socially from interlopers barging in on their already insulated political and economic space. Phakalane Estates is a self-contained

¹⁴ The term *lolwapa* denotes the family's outdoor "living room" common to traditional style housing in Botswana.

residential, golf and recreation, and business community situated 15 kilometers to the north of Gaborone.¹⁵ Owned by the family of a former Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) government minister, the neighborhood has become the home of Gaborone's *nouveau riche* class of entrepreneurs and government officials.¹⁶ Encompassing 1100 hectares and seemingly modeled after the exclusive—and exclusionary—gated suburbs of South Africa and the US, Phakalane Estates has positioned itself as the epitome of modern, secure, serene community living available in Botswana today. Indeed, perhaps the primary difference between Phakalane and its American cousin is that the Botswana version eschews the nostalgic romanticism of small town living evidenced in the model of the New Urbanist community¹⁷ in favor of a planned community explicitly severed from the past, and is instead inextricably connected with the globalized discourse on wealth and consumption. Phakalane, however, presents its own form of romanticism in that it replicates the idealized model—a trope with which we're all familiar—of a boutique elite suburban golfing community found in the West. While a poor person's fence in a typical Gaborone neighborhood might suggest one's aspiring to the good life, owning a home in Phakalane *is* the good life, achieved by situating Botswana elites' own aspirations to locate themselves in the global economy of consumption (of both culture and commodities) and identity. We might go so far as to conclude that in the final analysis, what is ultimately being consumed is a product of the imagination, the very idea of what it ostensibly means to be a Westernized consumer.

¹⁵ All the quotations and information, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the homepage of Phakalane Properties. Available at <<http://www.phakalane.com/property/intro.asp>> (8 November 2006).

¹⁶ As one Botswana friend explained it to me, Gaborone's "old money" still resides largely near the original city center, while the newly rich have tended to migrate towards the recently developed exclusive suburban enclaves.

¹⁷ For an entertaining, anecdotal description of this type focusing on Disney's "Imagineered" experimental community in central Florida, see: Andrew Ross, *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, liberty and the pursuit of property value in Disney's new town* (Ballantine Books, New York, NY, 1999).

As the tagline announces in bold lettering at the top of their website's front page:

"Phakalane suburb, the address that says it all!" (italics appear in the original)

What it says or whom it says it to is left unstated. We are left to infer to its meaning. The advertisement posted online however, provides some guidance to the uninformed. A visitor to Phakalane's homepage is told in a series of bullet points:

"Living on a golf estate offers a **lifestyle of family value**." (bold lettering appears in the original)

"Exclusivity and security are the cornerstone of a wholesome family lifestyle nowadays, ensuring peace of mind for residents."

"**Existing celebrity investors** as neighbours . . ." (bold lettering appears in the original)

Explaining further, the advertisement continues:

"[Being built in Phakalane is the] retirement home for the current President of Botswana (this means more security for [the] golf estate)."

And also, we are informed:

"Nobility from the United Kingdom and SADC region have endorsed Phakalane Golf Estate and Hotel resort as second homes."

Leaving the enticements of the website behind, what should we take away from this? Obviously, the "public façade" suggested by Holston is important not just to the poor and to those who find themselves mired in the lower levels of status, but also, and perhaps even especially, to those positioned at the pinnacle of prestige and status. Having a Phakalane address is a statement by the economic and social elite to the residents of the urban core of Gaborone. At the same time, it is a not so subtle nod to the world outside Gaborone—to the world of international celebrities and royalty, to the influx of tourists, investors and dignitaries who will inevitably travel to the region in the years leading up to the South African World Cup in 2010, and to the universalized discursive domain where a "wholesome family lifestyle" is exemplified by security and exclusivity.

The realization of these values, where “lifestyle” itself becomes the primary locus of consumption, can best be accomplished in spaces that exist apart—or, at worst, are only tenuously linked—to locations and people who don’t quite measure up. A suburb like Phakalane, or a shopping center like Riverwalk, exist as such venues, where the dominant economic and political hierarchies are most readily exhibited and activated, while the negative consequences of these relationships are pushed to the fringes, if they are present at all. In Gaborone however, the serenity and security desired by those who frequent the mall or live behind their security systems, or better yet, in their very own insulated communities, is not so readily achieved. The image of a sterilized utopian consumer space does not often translate in practice. The push-pull between the wealthy urban elite consumer, and those who aspire to be one, impinges on the imaginative utopian spaces of these residential and shopping sanctuaries.

To bring this point home, a concluding sidebar: a feature that doesn’t garner attention in the glossy investment literature on Phakalane is the substantial numbers of squatters living throughout the development. Part of the problem is self-inflicted and the consequence of the developers’ preference for cheap labor. Much of the construction workforce involved in the building of houses in the community consists of illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe. As the houses are being built, the laborers are allowed to squat on the property in ramshackle huts constructed out of leftover building materials. Consequently, a large squatter community has developed as other “unauthorized” individuals came into the area to provide services for the construction workers or, in some cases, to find a place to live due to the scarcity (not to mention expense) of acquiring land in the urban core of Gaborone. As the *Daily News*, Botswana’s state newspaper, notes,

It is the upmarket suburb in northern Gaborone where most of Botswana’s elite live. . . . The place has adopted the name “*tshaba ntsa*,” meaning beware of the dog. . . . As with

anything that has got two faces, Phakalane has another side, which is not so glorious—the squatter camps and shebeens that have infested the classy location. The squatter camps [some of which you can see from the North-South highway] . . . are an eyesore.¹⁸

The presence of squatters poses a stark contradiction when considering the branding of the Phakalane, as a label, as an address of envy (for those who don't live there) and affirmation (for those who do). Accordingly, as the managing director of the property development tells the newspaper, if it wasn't for the law, he would just utilize the “yellow monster” and bulldoze the squatters in the “Mugabe way.”¹⁹ Explaining further, he continues, “I did not give these people permission to live there, as you might be aware Phakalane is an upmarket place.”²⁰ Where, to finish the thought, some are welcome but most are not.

Here, we'll leave Phakalane, and the consumption of community, behind, traveling on to a discussion of the practice of a more generalized consumer identity in Gaborone that isn't anchored to one specific place. Instead, we'll find ourselves in a flashy realm of cash and cars and clothes and cell phones.

“You're not your fucking khakis” vs. “No one can see if your belly is empty”

To talk about consumption in Gaborone often means we must enter into discourses beyond the transactions of buying and selling or the exhibitions of the self. For instance, consumption touches on the practice of gender and sexual relations. While brandishing consumables is no doubt important as a measurement of prestige and status, as well as a means to distinguish the true “Big Man” from the aspiring poser chaff, it is also a significant factor in the practice of gender relations in the contemporary urban environment. As one author puts it,

¹⁸ *Daily News*, ‘Squatters haunt Phakalane Estates’, 16 November 2005 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20051116&i=Squatters_haunt_Phakalane_Estates> (2 October 2006).

¹⁹ This is an obvious reference to Robert Mugabe's mid-2005 Operation Murambatsvina (“Drive out the Filth”) slum clearance scheme that destroyed the homes of approximately 700,000 Zimbabwean squatters.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Nowadays a man without a car is like a kraal without cattle. Lifeless. Those with cars are the cream of the town, and sure they hang out with the most beautiful women. A classic case of flies clustering around the honey pot! Most modern women will agree with me that cars add a little spice to their lives. . . . Our sisters-with-bodies seem to understand what is really expected of them nowadays, and they play the part. One friend of mine once boasted that “in Gabs you don’t have to chat her up because once she steps inside the car she is yours.” . . . He who drives is able to take twenty four women to bed in just 24 hours.²¹

Although there is certainly some accuracy to the above exaggerated characterization, I’m not sure we want to simply stop there and suggest only that accoutrements of the space of display are relevant only as a way to meet girls, or for women to extract “love tariffs”²² from their suitors. Recognizing this seems especially pertinent, considering the fact that many recent theoretical discussions of consumption have emphasized its inherently political character.

De Certeau, for example, places the practice of consumption in the context of resistance to authority. Arguing that through consumption, anonymous individuals are able to evade, subvert or short-circuit the established order by making use of the products of the dominant political-economic hierarchies in new and unscripted ways, de Certeau sees consumption as embedded in layers of social situations and the power dynamics accompanying them. He writes, “the tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices.”²³ The spaces occupied by consumption are invisible to the totalizing, “panoptic” structures of authority, becoming instead home to innovation and

²¹ John Brown, ‘Immorality raids Gaborone . . . sign of the times?’, *Kutlwano*, **33**, 9 (September 1999), p. 43.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1984), p. XVII.

liberation. In the same way—and in a different context—Scott²⁴ privileges *metis* and local knowledge, so does de Certeau.²⁵

For his part, Baudrillard²⁶ also understands consumption to be part of a greater system of power transmitted through political, economic and social networks. Baudrillard however, has a much darker view of the purpose and practices of the consumer. His description of an “insatiable” consumer of not concrete goods, but signs and symbols, is not one of liberation but a stark example of our bondage to the prevailing politico-economic structures. By entering into the realm of consumption we are furthering the foundational inequities of a culture whose “fundamental imperative [is] of maintaining an order of privilege and domination.”²⁷ And where the “consumer is sovereign in a jungle of ugliness where *freedom of choice has been forced upon him* (italics in original).”²⁸

While not wanting to get too distracted from the empirics of the case of Gaborone in the pursuit of a normative debate on the virtues of consumption, de Certeau and Baudrillard provide a substantial launching pad to push the discussion forward as we move to consider the framework of consumption in Botswana. Indeed, their emphasis on the symbols, imagery and visuals exhibited by consumers seems especially relevant as global society has increasingly come to valorize the “heroes of consumption.” In the US, this might be best exemplified by the explosive growth of MTV’s popular “look at how rich I am” shows: *Cribs*, *Super Sweet Sixteen*,

²⁴ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1998).

²⁵ See, for example, the chapter entitled “Walking in the City” in *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

²⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and structures* (Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1998).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Laguna Beach.²⁹ For those with satellite television in Botswana, these images are readily available, facilitating the construction of “heroes of consumption” in Gaborone. Here, I’m reminded of one young businessman, well known in Gaborone, explaining to me his intentions of importing the first Hummer into Botswana. Or of the above article’s suggestion that even a regular man, who fails to qualify as a “hero of consumption,” without a car in today’s Gaborone, is not only someone to be derided, but isn’t even alive. Writing of the *sapeur*, a Congolese variety of fop or dandy, Gondola concludes that a particular style or look is not about sending visual messages to external viewers, but rather, that at some basic ontological level, the clothes *make* the wearer.³⁰ Similarly, in the context of Gaborone, objects don’t simply send messages to other people about who we are—or perhaps more aptly, who we would like to be—they are essential indicators of vitality, of existence, of life. In urban Gaborone, life sits exposed on the surface at the level of the accessorized epidermal.

This message is perpetuated in newspaper advertisements, for example. Worth mentioning here is that newspapers in Botswana—other than the free government daily—are largely the purview of a more elite, urban audience, the consumer lifestyles therefore advocated in the newspapers are directed toward an exclusive readership, not for eyes outside of the targeted demographic composed of Gaborone elites and aspiring urban sophisticates.³¹ The exclusionary

²⁹ At the same time, we also like to see the “normal” side of our idealized celebrities. As in, for example, *US Weekly*’s “They’re Just Like Us” photo column. Where, in a Fall 2006 issue, you could see Lawrence Fishbourne buying beer, Al Pacino with a stain on his shirt, and Keanu Reeves picking up change off the street.

³⁰ Ch. Didier Gondola, “Dream and drama: the search for elegance among Congolese youth”, *African Studies Review*, 42, 1 (April 1999), pp. 30-32.

³¹ Private newspapers are not readily available in the rural areas of Botswana, nor can poorer individuals usually afford the added expense of paying for daily or weekly newspapers (priced slightly north of 2 pula per issue). Accordingly, in terms of circulation statistics, there are only 41.47 issues per 1000 people printed in Botswana (as of 2005). I should note though, that this doesn’t account for the informal circulation of newspapers that occurs on the street or in public markets: a purchased newspaper is likely to be passed through many hands over the course of a day. See: UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, ‘Botswana General Profile’ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/GEN/countryProfile_en.aspx?code=720> (February 8, 2008).

intent of the advertisements is nicely conveyed in an April 2004 full page color ad announcing the opening of a new shopping complex in the northern town of Francistown, Botswana's second largest city. Directly underneath large bolded lettering screaming "Opening Welcome!" and the mention of the Galo Center being "the meeting place" in Francistown, we are told that the mall is "private property" and the "right of admission [is] reserved."³² For those allowed entry, the opportunities presented inside the confines of the mall will allow you to (re)make yourself fit for urban living as both a consuming subject and an object to be consumed. Queenspark, a South African clothing chain states in one ad, "Queenspark fashion is refreshing and inspirational, and will blow everyone's mind. . . ." The ad concludes by encouraging the reader to "make a statement."³³ An ad for Woolworths goes one step further by stripping away any pretensions of marketing gloss. Without pictures or graphics, the bare Woolworth's ad consists of a paragraph of text that gives it to us straight. We are told,

There is no getting away from the fact that we are judged by the way we look. We are faced with a series of occasions that require careful dressing. . . . Woolworths' stylish accessories will set you apart from the crowd and make you feel special. . . . After all one of the fundamental pleasures of the human bodies [sic] is to clothe it and it is not only about silhouettes and colours, it is closely caught up with our social being.³⁴

In practically the same breath, the passage emphasizes the utility of clothing as a method of differentiation—standing out from the crowd—and the need for the "right" kind of clothing and accessories to bind us tighter to the web of interpersonal relations that constitutes our "social being." This duality hints at an important motivation of consumption in Gaborone: it is important, for those who are able, to distinguish oneself from those who are unable to participate by removing the possibility of being mistaken for someone poor or in possession of a village or

³² The ad can be found in: *Mmegi*, 16 April 2004, Advertising Insert, p. 3.

³³ This ad also appears in: *Mmegi*, 16 April 2004, Advertising Insert, p. 2.

³⁴ *Mmegi*, 23 April 2004, Style Guide, p. 1.

“bush” mentality (for example), while at the same time visually linking yourself to not only local urban elites and trendsetters, but also to the globalized urban consumer consciousness.

If we take another example, we might read these consumer tendencies as a form of repudiation—or at the very least, the transformative erosion—of previous practices and icons of status that carried symbolic weight in earlier Tswana culture. As people increasingly move to urban areas and their ties to the traditional rural-based value system diminish, the car, for instance in the above *Kutlwano* commentary, is equated with life and status, rather than the quality and quantity of cattle as members of past generations might have done.

Along the same lines, a current ad campaign by the international mobile phone service provider, Orange, advocates a similar transition. Whereas in the past propertied men would have congregated in the village *kgotla* to discuss matters of importance to the community, these advertisements both acknowledge and demonstrate the changing times. Affixed to a photograph of five older Batswana men, sitting in the *kgotla* sharing a few gourds of traditionally brewed beer, the promotion announces the arrival of conference calling services: “you don’t have to meet to chat” now that you can “talk to up to 5 people at the same time.”³⁵ The next stage in the evolution of the *kgotla*’s development is portrayed as the end of face-to-face dialogue in exchange for communication in a public sphere transmitted across the digital ether. Ironically, the people most likely to see this message—since it is reproduced online and much of the rural population has yet to become “wired”—have probably already familiarized themselves and adapted to these new practices. Perhaps though, that is the point. Observers of this advertisement are granted a feeling of continuity, however tenuous, to the past even as its forms and practices are altered in order to fit the expectations of modern urban living in the shops and

³⁵ This electronic ad banner appeared on *Mmegi*’s website in October and November 2006. It was available at <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday10/opinion.html>> (10 November 2006).

streets of Gaborone. Though whether this is more than a passing over-the-shoulder glance to the past or a deeper reflection on the interconnection between past events and future trajectories likely depends on the individual interpretation.

Of course, this is not to say that the residents of Gaborone are somehow exceptional in their consumer behaviors and desires or in the manner of their entrance into the “modernity discourse” however we wish to define it. Indeed, I have tried to point out the connectedness of life in Gaborone—real and imaginary—with other locations—real and imaginary—throughout the globe. As others have stressed, Africa finds itself embedded in “multiple elsewheres” in which the linkages rather than the differences between Africa and these “elsewheres” needs to be emphasized.³⁶ Appadurai makes a similar observation related to the practice of consumption as a result of the “disjunctive” force of the global (and globalizing) economy. The layers of confusion, destabilization and confusion wrought by the five “scapes” (ideoscapes, technoscapes, etc.) he identifies serve as the constituent parts of world(s) now fundamentally imagined.³⁷ As a storehouse of decontextualized images, in which global forces are easily “indigenized” by local ones, the universe of the consumer is open to innovation and possibility, rather than confined to sheer replication or mimicry.³⁸

Following this style of approach, many studies of informal cultural politics in Africa have written of the potentialities for invention granted by practices of consumption. Folke Frederiksen writes of the opening of alternate public spaces and the renegotiation of identity

³⁶ Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, “Writing the world from an African metropolis”, *Public Culture*, **16**, 3 (1994), pp. 348; 351.

³⁷ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1996), p. 32. For a more detailed elaboration see the chapter entitled, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

made possible by the transnational flow of popular culture images (in this case, the American television shows *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*).³⁹ Likewise, Gondola suggests that the consumption of particular clothing styles and labels facilitates the construction of a utopian space that creates connections between their circumstances and those prevalent in their fantasies of Europe, “a dreamlike order, otherwise unreachable.”⁴⁰ Chris Abani’s fictionalized evocation of life in the slums of Lagos in the early 1980s notes something similar. The young boys who populate the book inhabit an imaginative space dominated by Western slang and figures like Elvis Presley, Clint Eastwood and Sam Peckinpah. By quoting TV lines or whistling theme songs, “somehow it all made sense to them, like some bizarre pig latin. And there was a power in the words that elevated them, made them part of something bigger.”⁴¹ Accompanying the issue of connection, of juxtaposition, perhaps even a form of breaking free, comes the techniques of innovation, having been noted in studies of consumption and identity in post-apartheid South Africa,⁴² of Sebago shoes in Senegal,⁴³ or in the tentative consumer behaviors of a recent rural migrant into the northern Botswana city of Francistown.⁴⁴

What are we to make of this focus on appearances, on particular styles of shoes or shirts, on department store advertising campaigns, on kids in Nigerian slums conversing with one

³⁹ Bodil Folke Frederiksen, “Popular culture, gender relations and the democratization of everyday life in Kenya”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **26**, 2 (June 2000), p. 210.

⁴⁰ Gondola, “Dream and drama”, p. 25.

⁴¹ Chris Abani, *Graceland* (Picador Press, New York, NY, 2004), p. 150.

⁴² Sarah Nuttall, “Stylizing the self: the Y generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg”, *Public Culture*, **16**, 3 (2004), pp. 430-452; Belinda Dodson, “Are we having fun yet? leisure and consumption in the post-apartheid city”, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, **91**, 4 (2000), pp. 412-425.

⁴³ Suzanne Scheld, “The city in a shoe: redefining urban Africa through Sebago footwear consumption”, *City and Society*, **XV**, 1 (2003), pp. 109-130.

⁴⁴ Wim van Binsbergen, ‘Mary’s room: a case study on becoming a consumer in Francistown, Botswana’, in Richard Fardon et al. (eds), *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of globalization, consumption and development in Africa and beyond* (EIDOS, Leiden, 1999), pp. 179-245.

another through dialogue borrowed from *The Wild Bunch*, on the importance placed on the make and model of the car you drive? This collection of these, and other, fragments forces us to consider another framework for understanding the city. Writing of Johannesburg, but making a point, I think, applicable to the specific case of Gaborone, Mbembe and Nuttall argue that rather than considering the South African metropolis solely as the “spatial embodiment” of inequity or as an urban “theatre of capitalist accumulation and exploitation” we should instead read the city as an “aesthetic vision.”⁴⁵ This isn’t to marginalize the economic and social inequalities that remain pervasive in places like Johannesburg or Gaborone. Instead, it forces us to adopt an additional lens with which to view the city. Important to this theoretical turn seems to be the spaces of imagination, the spaces of fluid and shifting linkages, and the effacement of barriers and borders that are re-erected elsewhere, and perhaps even “elsewhen” (a de-contextualized and de-temporalized shopping center like Riverwalk, as we will shortly suggest, establishes a privileged version of a future whose access is limited).

Before moving on to a fuller discussion of Riverwalk, I would like to pause for a moment in order to draw some broad conclusions about the “aesthetic vision” of Gaborone. What is, in other words, motivating the practice of consumption and the emphasis on the imaginative geography represented by the body and appearances? In his recent ethnography of the rise and fall of the modernity narrative along the Zambian Copperbelt, Ferguson explores what happens to individuals caught up in a discourse of modernity that is no longer attainable—their connection to global capitalism is experienced in terms of de-industrialization and failed promises.⁴⁶ And while the story of modernity has been in decline in Zambia for decades, in

⁴⁵ Mbembe and Nuttall, “Writing the world from an African metropolis”, pp. 353-356.

⁴⁶ James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1999), p. 242. Especially relevant for the issues discussed here as the

Botswana, this narrative remains largely ascendant. Despite Botswana's rampant poverty or unemployment, the practice of capitalism and the attainment of consumer lifestyles remains a much sought after desire for many. Stresses in the system however, are becoming apparent.

One common story told about life in Gaborone today is about the people living outside their means in order to give the impression that they are well-off people of means. Practically everyone I asked had stories about “people”⁴⁷ who had fancy foreign cars (BMW's and Mercedes seemingly the most popular brand) yet lived in servants quarters, about guys who would “be pushing [driving] the big toys” and yet only be able to afford to put 20 pula (about 4 dollars) worth of gas into the car, about guys who would cruise around the Riverwalk parking lot in their BMW's with the windows rolled down because they couldn't afford the extra fuel required to run the air conditioners, or of seeing nice cars parked next to roadside restaurants and tuckshops as the occupants are buying dinner, “not because they liked it, but because they couldn't afford a better meal.”

A few observations are worth mentioning here: the car stories always involved men. Women were usually characters only as a form of accessory—in, for instance, the stories I heard about Big Men going to the University in their luxury cars at the start of the school year in order to go “fishing” or “trolling” for female students newly arrived from the villages. At the same time though, living outside one's means wasn't only the domain of men. As one wealthy female twenty-something explained to me the reasons why her contemporaries spent lots of money on clothes they couldn't afford, “no one can see if your belly is empty.” This succinct explanation of the difference between being poor and looking poor serves as an even blunter assessment

chapters “Asia in Miniature: Signification, Noise and Cosmopolitan Style” and “Global Disconnect: Abjection and the Aftermath of Modernism.”

⁴⁷ Interestingly, no one could ever specifically name someone they knew—all the stories I heard were of the “friend of a friend” variety.

about the importance of appearances and perceptions than was published in the Woolworth's advertisement discussed above.

One other point to be made about these stories is that when relayed to me by more well-to-do residents of Gaborone, there was a sense of exasperation and annoyance at these interlopers who impinged on the markers of status that were previously used to distinguish the elite urbanized consumer from everybody else. The efforts made by people to position themselves in a higher social and economic class than would otherwise be warranted if we measured solely by the size of their bank account, blurred the boundaries and hierarchies of elite status.⁴⁸ If a BMW no longer was a significant marker of status, other spaces needed to be created where the aspirations of the “proper” globalized elite consumer could be practiced, their difference highlighted, without being infringed upon by someone unauthorized to be there. Riverwalk and Phakalane are two such locations, but even there, the barriers of exclusivity are far from impermeable.

The search for difference exemplified by pursuing the new and modern at the expense of the past or the traditional seems to sit close to the core of the consumer-citizen identity in Gaborone. I would like to make one final leap that may confirm the continued activation of a modernity discourse operating along the lines described by Ferguson, while also alluding to the “aesthetic vision” being constructed in Gaborone. Most Batswana have adopted the international development discourse deeming Botswana as “exceptional” or the “African miracle”. The internalization of this image requires that the labels of “civilization” or “modernization,” accompanied by the need to show off where one fits in on this progressive linear scale, become

⁴⁸ Outside the bounds of this study, but probably part of the efforts to live beyond one's paycheck is the recent growth of check-cashing and short-term loan “businesses”—more like loan sharks—that have opened their doors in the past few years across Gaborone in order to provide customers an immediate cash fix.

important. This can, for example, be observed in the talk surrounding the so-called wild and undeveloped Bushmen.⁴⁹ In recent years, the language used to describe the indigenous people of Botswana has become increasingly combative and derogatory—although they have long retained a marginal, serf-like position in Tswana society—as the government has come under international pressure because of their relocation, resettlement and “development” policies. One of the government’s stated objectives of the plans to remove the nomadic indigenous populations from their Kalahari homelands into permanent villages is to civilize them. The Foreign Minister of Botswana has said,

Our treatment of the Basarwa dictates that they should be elevated from a status where they [currently] find themselves. We all came from there. We became civilised and drive expensive vehicles . . . we all aspire to Cadillacs and would be concerned with any tribe to remain in the bush communing with flora and fauna.⁵⁰

This position is echoed outside the halls of government amongst regular Batswana. In talking about the “Bushmen” the common theme was that as a modern country, Botswana couldn’t have “backwards” and “not-modern” people living within its borders who had to hunt for their next meal or spent their time “running around in skins.” Or, as opposition MP Robert Molefabangwe said in an address to an audience gathered at the Gaborone bus rank, “Why should we desire to see Basarwa wrapped in skins when we don’t wear them ourselves?”⁵¹ Another informant used the imagery of a sliding scale of development and civilization. He argued that while the vast majority of Batswana are at “Level 8” in their development, the “Bushmen” sit mired at “Level

⁴⁹ This is an entirely different can of worms worthy of its own in-depth analysis. There is though, I think, a linkage to be made.

⁵⁰ Foreign Minister Lt. General Mompoti Merafhe in London on 29 July 2001. Quoted in: Kenneth Good, ‘Bushmen and diamonds: (un)civil society in Botswana’ (Discussion Paper 23, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2003), p. 27.

⁵¹ Letshwiti Tutwane, ‘BNF supports Basarwa relocation—Molefabangwe’, *Mmegi*, 16 April 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Friday16/9437894371144.html>> (7 November 2006).

0.” Why shouldn’t Batswana, therefore, he continued, desire to increase their standards of living, up to, for example, “Level 3?”

What these comments suggest is that there is a need to dissociate from the past or from the cultural state in which all Batswana “came from.” If, in other words, Botswana is to be counted as a modern nation, the people who are the greatest affront to the country’s collective self image must be directed to “aspire to drive Cadillacs.” Modern living in Botswana generally, and Gaborone specifically, is directly correlated to consumption: to drive “expensive cars” is to be “civilized.” To locate Mbembe and Nuttall’s “aesthetic vision” in Gaborone, we must look to the sites—of physical urban geography along with the landscapes of imagination—that specifically privilege consumption by both building and reaffirming the connections to the world beyond Botswana’s borders. As with the Phakalane development however, these places, as sites of differentiation for the elite consumer-citizen, remain exclusive and closely guarded terrains. Returning now to the place from which we started:

Thank You for Visiting the Shopping Capital of Gaborone

In the beginning of 2002, there were no shopping malls in Gaborone. If you wanted to hit up a shopping mall, you had to head to Johannesburg where, in the post-apartheid years, shopping centers were a booming business. Lacking the means or the inclination to travel to Johannesburg, most residents of Gaborone did their shopping in the unenclosed “squares” comprised of a mixture of businesses, government offices, and shops and stores that were a long established part of the life of the city. Places like the Main Mall, Broadhurst, or the African Mall that had been open for business for nearly as long as Gaborone was a city (its first phases completed by 1966). As development across the city became increasingly consolidated in the hands of private developments, rather than being led by the public sector as had previously been the common practice, shopping malls began to dot the urban landscape. By the end of 2004, five

shopping complexes had been erected across the city: The Fairgrounds Mall, Molapo Crossing, Game City, The OK Foods complex, and Riverwalk.⁵² One of the main questions that puzzled me in the early days of my fieldwork was how come so many malls had been built in such a short time? This construction boom seemed especially odd since the population as noted during the last census completed in 2001 was approximately 186,000, and of those, a bit less than half lived below the poverty line.⁵³ The number of shops and stores and boutiques represented by these new malls seemed unsustainable considering the limited numbers of people who could actually afford to purchase things. Placed in the broader context of consumption described above however, Gaborone's nascent "mall culture" made more sense.

Riverwalk, a P75 million development,⁵⁴ constructed on the edge of Gaborone adjacent to the border with the tribal village of Tlokweng, was the first to bring the South African/Western style shopping experience to Gaborone. A friend of mine, who also worked in the management of Riverwalk, described the general feeling of excitement accompanying the mall's opening:

I thought: oh my God! This is the place to be. . . . Ten years ago, this place [Gaborone] was like living under a rock. [And now] We are excited about having restaurants and movies in the same place. . . . Being a chick, you could come and get your shoes, get your hair done, get your makeup. All in one place."

Although laid out in a pattern typical to shopping malls we might be accustomed to, the corridors of the mall are not completely roofed-over, thus exposing customers moving from place to place to the elements—but since rain is rarely a problem in Botswana, the need for a self-contained, environmentally controlled mall seems less a priority. The three main arterial hallways leading

⁵² Since then, a new mall has opened up in the Phakalane development, furthering its "self-containment" with the rest of Gaborone's urban core.

⁵³ More detailed demographic and economic statistics can be found at: Republic of Botswana, Central Statistics Office, <www.cso.gov.bw> (2 November 2006).

⁵⁴ *Daily News*, 'Riverwalk complex to house Pick 'n Pay', 4 May 2001 <<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20010504>> (2 November 2006).

from the various parking areas converge on an open area used for large displays in front of Riverwalk's primary anchor merchant, the Pick 'n Pay grocery store. The two-story mall, home not only to the country's first escalator, but, in line with the convenience my friend mentions above, Riverwalk houses nearly eighty shops, businesses, clothing boutiques, restaurants and recreational activities. Riverwalk touts itself as the "Shopping Capital of Gaborone," and after spending many hours hanging out on its premises, my ethnographic impression is that it is indeed the preferred place to "see and be seen" in the city. Almost every store in the mall is a South African import⁵⁵—Nando's Portuguese Chicken, Exclusive Books, Pick 'n Pay grocery store, Capitol Cinemas, Fishmonger, Primi Piatti, MICA Hardware, Hi-Fi Warehouse, Cape Union Mart—geared towards an upscale shopping clientele. Indeed, probably the only shops catering to a less well-to-do customer are the South African based Pep Stores which target the working class or the Pick 'n Pay's lunch take-away counter which provide a cheaper alternative than would otherwise be available at Nandos or the Debonair's pizza chain. A further indication that Riverwalk is for an explicitly paying public, is that unlike the other older plaza-style shopping areas in the city, there are few places to sit without purchasing something. Unless circumstances have changed since I was last in Gaborone, there are only 6 benches scattered throughout the mall. Otherwise, most of the seating resides in the "food court" area where you would generally need to buy something in order to occupy a seat.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Oddly enough, the only American chain in the mall was a Redwings Shoe Outlet. Always devoid of customers—I made it a point to look nearly every visit—the rumor was that it was a front for some sort of illegal activity. In any case, it finally ceased operations shortly before I left in July 2005.

⁵⁶ Perhaps one final example hinting at the mall management's disapproval of lingering for too long in one place—if you're sitting, you're not buying—is that the mall's soundtrack loops fairly quickly (usually clocking in at about 1 hour). Eschewing the familiar "canned" elevator music, the tunes emanating from the mall's speakers consisted almost entirely of pop idols you might see during an afternoon spent watching MTV. A sample playlist included: "The Boys of Summer," "Don't Phunk with my Heart" by the Black Eyed Peas, Avril Lavigne, Coldplay, Keane, the Killers, and Kelly Clarkson's "Since You Been Gone."

The exclusivity of Riverwalk was evident in other areas as well. The management constructed a metal fence at the property's border facing the heavily trafficked Tlokweng Road that went past the mall. When I asked about the fence, I was told that it was there to prevent people from walking across the landscaping that the mall had erected at the edge of the development. While this might be true, what also seemed likely was that the landscaping didn't provide enough of a deterrent to the people who might have been coming in from the adjacent combi stop or the hawkers and public cell phone operators who located themselves on Riverwalk's periphery.⁵⁷ Similarly, one might consider the parking lots as another mechanism used to demarcate the ordered and surveilled space of the mall to distinguish itself from the surrounding area. The large parking lot at the "back" of the mall held the majority of the mall's parking spaces, it was rarely ever close to full capacity and therefore, always seemed a bit oversized. However, if you consider the fact that this section of the mall faced the nearby Gaborone garbage dump--and the poor people who scavenged it or made the dump their home—an overly large parking lot that extended the boundaries of the mall outward in order to enlarge the space controlled by the mall and increased the distance from people and places that might infringe on the insulated shopping environment, the design makes more sense. And, when intruders failed to heed the not so subtle physical symbols warning them to stay away, there were always the security people and their guard dogs, along with the undercover mall detectives who patrolled the grounds.

Despite efforts to control the mall's perimeter, as in the case of squatters in Phakalane, the borders were far from impermeable. Due to the proximity of the dump, on hot days—of which there were many in the dry, desert heat of Botswana—the smell, and occasionally, the flies,

⁵⁷ A starker message sent to people who might come to the mall via public transportation appeared at the Game City mall. There, the combi stop was situated across the street from Game City on the busy 4-lane North-South road.

would be more than a nuisance. I have also seen a goat bleed to death in front of Nandos following an attack by stray dogs. Beyond the unavoidable incursions of animals and environment, pick pockets and thieves were a common problem in Riverwalk. Common practice would be for would-be thieves to stake out one of the restaurants, grab a purse and hope they could out-run their pursuers and disappear into the forest across the street in the direction of Tlokweg village. Some did, others would be caught and beaten by customers before the police arrived and the security watched. One disturbing incident I witnessed involved an alleged pickpocket who was caught by the mall's security, beaten, and forced to cower next to a wall as the snarling guard dogs were held close to his face. Retelling the story of his capture, the guards and the gathered crowd laughed until the police arrived. More mundane subversions of the mall's environment occurred as well. Following the closure of a formerly popular pub and restaurant, the outdoor seating area became a "free" place to sit and became a hangout—despite less than enthusiastic warnings from mall security—for teenagers, employees of the mall on break, and guys who would drink beer bought from the mall's Liquorama. This went on for close to a month, until the picnic tables were chained together, turned upside down and placed against the wall. "Problem" solved. What is important to point out here, I think, is that even in well-ordered and controlled space of the mall, heterotopic spaces⁵⁸ and moments that contravened the rules and expectations of the mall-space could flicker into and out of existence.

Even so, the efforts to maintain the sanctified, superficially inviolable, space of Riverwalk as a site reserved for a privileged elite consumer helped preserve the imaginative geographies linking the mall patron to the globalized consumer world, as well as the feeling of differentiation

⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, 'Of other spaces: utopias and heterotopias', in Neil Leach (ed), *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in cultural theory* (Routledge, New York, NY, 1997), pp. 350-356.

from the poor or “backward” residents of Gaborone.⁵⁹ One of the best exemplars of the theatre of display and differentiation was the symbiotic relationship between the parking lot and the outdoor seating area of the food court, particularly the coffee-shop. The section of the parking lot that faced the food court was always full and always hectic with traffic, badly parked cars, taxis dropping off and picking up customers—due in part to the poor design of the area. And even though spots got be easily gotten elsewhere in the mall with far less headaches, the ones closest to the outside seating of the food and an ample supply of watching eyes, were most prized. If you wanted to show off your car, your new duds, or the hot girl or guy you were with, parking in this area was the thing to do.⁶⁰ I remember one especially hot summer day having lunch with a Motswana friend (a university student) at Nandos. Due to the day’s heat, I wanted to sit inside with the air conditioning, rather than bake outside, but my friend refused, arguing that he wanted to look for girls, and anyway, no one could see him eating at Nandos if he sat inside the restaurant.⁶¹ What good, in other words, was it, to spend money—on food, a car, a new outfit—if there were no witnesses to the occasion? The communicative aspects of the performance of consumption in the theatre of display at Riverwalk shouldn’t be understated.

⁵⁹ I want to point out though, that this emphasis on difference didn’t just exist in some ephemeral imaginative realm. Being a patron at Riverwalk did, in very real ways, separate you from most of the other residents of the city. For example, after having dinner and drinks at its most popular restaurant, I noted that I had just spent more than I had paid for a month’s rent for the room I had been renting in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Gaborone. This reflexive moment called into question my own role in perpetuating the lifestyles and inequities about which I am writing. And is, a disjuncture with which I never reconciled.

⁶⁰ This was especially true when the Keg ‘n Zebra—the pub I mentioned that had been “taken over” by “squatters” looking for a free seat following its closure—was *the* place in town to be seen at. Back then, folks would cruise the mall’s parking lot in the luxury cars, windows down, music blaring. If you had a seat outside, you would keep one eye to the street in order to not miss anybody of note who might be passing by.

⁶¹ For anybody who has spent some time in Gaborone, it quickly becomes evident just as “small” the community is—everybody does really seem to know everybody. So, chances are, if you sit outside a Nandos (“throwing away” 30 pula for lunch), someone who knows you, or knows of you, will see you, and perhaps talk about you later.

The mall as a site of distinction not only tied together the elite class of consumers, but also bound the mall and its inhabitants to a region outside of Gaborone. Although physically, it is located in Gaborone, it occupies a time and space decontextualized from the everyday life occurring within it. The food court in Game City, for example, is enclosed under a glass dome and seems to be modeled after a public square that you might find in Spain or South America. The walls surrounding the enclosure are painted to look aged and constructed out of adobe. Open windows with flower pots teetering on the edge of windowsills are also painted onto the imagined space of the “typical” Italian piazza. Some of the restaurants have carried the motif further, having gone so far as to have an “indoor” and “outdoor” seating section, in which the “outdoor” tables are fitted with umbrellas to keep out the wind and the rain, which someone actually sitting outdoors at a café in Italy might encounter.

Riverwalk too, strives to connect their shopping experience to the outside world. Their Christmas displays come complete with a decorated Christmas tree, a sleigh pulled by a plastic zebra and a singing robotic Santa Claus that belts out *Jingle Bells* and the *Yellow Rose of Texas*.⁶² Add to these universalized holiday displays a globalized coffee shop frequented by locals and expatriates from across the world and there is little to remind you that you are sitting at a café, in a mall, in Botswana.⁶³ You could be anywhere. But that, however, is the point. Severed from its local moorings, Riverwalk is an imagined space both nowhere and everywhere. The fluid spatiality of the mall also suggests a privileged temporality: a utopian present and

⁶² Thanks to my friend and fellow researcher, Elise Carpenter, for providing this information.

⁶³ One aspect of the coffee-shop crowd deserving further study is the sub-culture of former Yugoslavian nationals who have moved to Botswana following the war. Friends who spent time in the UN Mission in Kosovo informed me that many customs of behavior, seniority and respect that occur in a coffee shop in Kosovo are replicated in the coffee-shop at Riverwalk.

future in which the elite shopper will be the primary participant.⁶⁴ Rather than recovering the nostalgia for a lost, more like “never-was,” past that retail developers in the US have been trying to replicate in recent years,⁶⁵ the malls in Gaborone have been oriented toward the future. Riverwalk, Game City, and all the rest are the monuments reflecting the final repudiation of where Botswana, to apply the words of their Foreign Minister, “came from.” Questions of citizenship, modernity or inequality are not enacted in the formal arenas of State and laws and policy. But instead, find their fullest realization in the layered terrains of imagination and informal cultural performances. To be a “Riverwalk girl” announces one’s engagement to the world beyond Gaborone, outside Botswana, while simultaneously serving as a subtle renunciation of the world within it.

⁶⁴ The working classes who stock the shelves are largely observers in the pursuit of these aspirations.

⁶⁵ Consider Wal-Mart’s efforts to build fake downtown facades onto the front of its megastores, or the growth in “village” style malls that are no longer enclosed and pedestrian friendly.



Figure 4-1. Riverwalk Shopping Mall from across the Tlokweng Road. Notice the metal fence and hawkers' stalls hovering on the edge of the mall's property (Photograph: Elise Carpenter).



Figure 4-2. Christmas Display at Riverwalk (Photograph: Adrian Wisnicki).



Figure 4-3. Riverwalk Parking Lot and Food Court (Photograph: Adrian Wisnicki).



Figure 4-4. Riverwalk's rear lot with the garbage dump in the background. In the distance, you can make out the smoke from a garbage fire and a bulldozer (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 4-5. Shopping at Riverwalk (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 4-6. Banner at the Entrance of Riverwalk (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 4-7. Botswana's own Elvis impersonator performing at a \$50 a ticket show at the Gaborone Sun Hotel and Casino (Photograph: Steve Marr).

CHAPTER 5
DOWN ON THE CORNER: ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SPACE
ON THE STREETS OF GABORONE, BOTSWANA

Over a fifteen-year period from 1985-2000, Botswana found itself amidst rather dubious company. The southern African nation, along with Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo all doubled (at least) their military spending during this span.¹ And while the latter four were wracked by bouts of state collapse, civil wars, genocides and domestic insurgencies of varying severity, Botswana appeared to lack any obvious foreign-based or homegrown threats. True, Botswana occasionally suffered incursions of South African commandos in pursuit of ANC sympathizers harbored in Gaborone, along with sporadic bursts of artillery-fire carried out under the mantle of apartheid in the 1980s. But yet, as apartheid waned and quietly died—along with the threat posed to Botswana by an aggressive South Africa—military appropriations continued on their upwards trajectory. Spending approximately \$34 million on the military in 1985, expenditures ballooned to \$228 million by 2003.² These trends did not go unnoticed outside Botswana. In response to these increases, Botswana’s ambassador to the United States was called to the State Department to explain what the US government termed Botswana’s “excessive military spending,” including the construction of a military airbase located close to a large village an hour’s drive from the capital, Gaborone.³ Building the Thebephatshwa Airbase was not a matter of State preference, reasoned the Foreign Affairs

¹ Oxfam, ‘Global military spending set to top Cold War high as conflict causes record hunger’, 22 September 2006 <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/press/releases/un_gen_ass220906.htm?searchterm=botswana+military> (2 February 2007).

² Dan Henk, “The Botswana Defence Force: evolution of a professional African military”, *African Security Review*, 13, 4 (2004) <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/13No4/EHenk.htm>> (30 January 2007).

³ Lerato Maleke, ‘Merafhe concerned about Zim allegations’, *Mmegi*, 31 March 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/March/Wednesday31/4493554961732.html>> (1 February 2007).

Minister Mompoti Merafhe, “but a necessity demanded by Batswana for protection against external threats at the time.”⁴

Accompanying the large-scale build-up of military equipment, manpower and infrastructure, is the growing frequency of ominously vague pronouncements regarding the existence of enemies, foes, threats and dangers seeking to undermine and violate the stability of the political and moral communities of Botswana. Perhaps one of the most striking exemplars of the heightened emphasis on security is a bill recently debated in Parliament to establish a security and intelligence bureaucracy under the authority of the President. Long rumored to be in the offing, the bill made its formal unveiling following publication in the Government Gazette in November 2006. Justifying its necessity, the bill in minimal detail reads, “Botswana faces a number of threats or potential threats to its national security, political systems, and its economy, all of which may be destabilised through subversive activities from the country’s detractors.”⁵

One way to view this proposal is to see it as the State’s method of protecting itself from critics at home and abroad. Consider for example, the 2005 deportation of political science professor Kenneth Good following the presentation of a high publicized paper in which the Vice President was criticized or Survival International’s global campaign protesting the removal of the so-called Bushmen from their ancestral homelands in the Kalahari Desert. In these instances, the Attorney General at the time could label Good as an “outlaw”⁶ while the first line of a front-page newspaper article could assert, “It is not in doubt that Stephen Corry, the Survival International

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Gideon Nkala, ‘Intelligence Big Brother is coming’, *Mmegi*, 7 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Tuesday7/437967177180.html>> (7 November 2006).

⁶ Joel Konopo, ‘AG admits error in Good deportation’, *Mmegi*, 12 July 2005
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/July/Tuesday12/295147307293.html>> (25 January 2007).

Executive Director, is one of the leading foreign enemies of the Botswana government.”⁷

Taking the need for protection from critics even further, one of the bill’s supporters, ruling party MP Pono Moatlhodi, argued in Parliament that the proposed law be amended to include provisions enabling the government to spy on domestic political organizations.⁸ Noting the bill’s political overtones, including the suggestion that the newly established security apparatus be overseen by politicians and their appointees rather than be supervised by a staff of non-partisan civil servants, newspaper columnist Michael Dingake observes that the bill “smells more [like] politics than security.”⁹ These speculations, while likely valid to some degree, are set aside for another time.

Instead, what is of interest here is how these official activities and proclamations reflect pervasive, informal attitudes in the media and on the street that describe a nation under threat. But rather than being concerned with critics leveling charges at the government, most of the popular ire appearing in the print media and heard in street-level conversations occurring in places like bars and taxis is directed towards the increasingly visible presence of immigrants. Blamed for taking jobs and resources, crimes committed, and the erosion of Tswana morals and culture, non-citizen populations are said to pose a clear and immediate danger to the viability of Botswana. Emphasizing the fragility and precarious circumstances of Botswana’s politics, economy and society both globally and closer to home in Southern Africa, new security

⁷ Gideon Nkala, ‘Corry finds no lions in the den’, *Mmegi*, 18 March 2004, p. 1.

⁸ *Daily News*, ‘Intelligence bill loose, vague Mabiletsa’, 14 December 2006 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20061214&I=Intelligence_bill_loose_vague_Mabiletsa> (14 December 2006).

⁹ Michael Dingake, ‘The bill smells more politics than security’, *Mmegi*, 14 November 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Tuesday14/4255980721431.html>> (14 November 2006).

measures are needed to counteract Botswana's former international naiveté and "innocence"¹⁰ to "ensure that terrorists do not engulf the country."¹¹

Accordingly, the security bill recently debated in Parliament can be understood as a mechanism Botswana see as protecting their economic interests from unidentified foreign "people in the region and the entire world [who] were [not] happy with Botswana's economic progress."¹² And through the everyday experiences of living in a nation said to be under threat from outside forces, one Motswana could confidently claim that "Islams" were taking over all the businesses in Gaborone, while affixing the corollary point to his grievance that "*Al Qaeda* are everywhere [in Gaborone]." Similarly, another Motswana, a retired civil servant formerly employed in Gaborone's municipal bureaucracy, criticized the influential presence of Muslim expatriates in business and government saying, "if government isn't careful there will be conflict between the Muslims and Black Christians." While Muslims constitute 2% of the population he continues, "You can't leave the 98% [the rest of Botswana's population] out of business. Otherwise there will be a war here. Like in Uganda where they kicked out all the Muslims." Fear and anxiety over the economy is a common condition for many in Botswana. And criticism is becoming more pointed. A third Motswana man suggests that the government is intentionally putting the poor at a perpetual disadvantage, telling me, "The government wants to make us like Zimbabweans. Cheap labor for these companies. How can you work for 2 Pula a day? You can't. I would rather die than work for nothing." Despite living in a country whose economy has experienced enormous growth since independence in 1966, the engines of progress have left

¹⁰ *Daily News*, 'Intelligence and security bill vital', 14 December 2006 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20061214&I=Intelligence_and_Security_Bill_vital> (14 December 2006).

¹¹ *Daily News*, 'Intelligence bill loose, vague Mabiletsa'.

¹² Bame Piet, "Intelligence bill meant to avoid security pitfalls—Skelemani", *Mmegi*, 12 December 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/December/Tuesday12/7334201411167.html>> (12 December 2006).

behind large swaths of the urban and rural population, thus creating the need for scapegoats who can be held accountable for the economy's failings. Economic insecurity though, provides only a partial explanation to the suspicion, and sometimes, outright animosity directed to foreigners.

No discussion of immigration in Botswana is, these days, complete without extensive mention of Zimbabweans. As the disaster in adjacent Zimbabwe worsens and the extent of the damage wrought by an unfolding confluence of famine, political repression, runaway hyperinflation and general economic collapse cuts across the population, more and more people are leaving the country. Particularly popular destinations for Zimbabwean migrants are South Africa and Botswana. Recent reporting, for example, indicates that 140,000 Zimbabweans were deported from Botswana and South Africa in 2006 with roughly 32,000 removed from Botswana.¹³ The numbers however, could be even higher: Botswana's only privately owned daily paper, *Mmegi*, figures that the number of individuals deported from Francistown, the country's second largest city located in close proximity to the border, over a six month period in 2006 is upwards of 30,000.¹⁴ And these figures only document those who have been caught, meaning that the ebb and flow of people moving across the Zimbabwe-Botswana border is far greater.

Zimbabwean immigrants are perceived to be everywhere: vampires on the one hand, siphoning off jobs and resources that should be going to citizens; contagions on the other, infecting Botswana's body politic with a level of crime and immorality not previously present, perhaps further sully Botswana's "innocence." A Gaborone street vendor, a self-proclaimed Rastafarian Bushman who often goes by the moniker "Bantu" to demonstrate his commitment to

¹³ *Sunday Standard*, 'Botswana, South Africa deport 140,000 Zimbabweans in 2006, police', 29 January 2007 <<http://sundaystandard.info/print.php?NewsID=929>> (29 January 2007).

¹⁴ *Mmegi*, 'The neighbourly-burden that is Zimbabwe', 26 October 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/October/Thursday26/9976358061774.html>> (26 October 2006).

a broader African identity, provides a fantastically high estimate of their numbers. “They are 3 million. We are 1.7 million. That is too many.” A few minutes later, to emphasize the everywhere-ness of Zimbabweans, he poses the hypothetical, “If you are with 10 [people], only 2 will be Batswana.” Three million constitutes approximately a quarter of the entire population of Zimbabwe and is, of course, factually inaccurate. But whether the figure is right or wrong is irrelevant. What matters is that Bantu’s statement reflects a widely held perception that the state of Botswana and the Tswana nation, proudly mythologized by most citizens as being ethnically and culturally homogenous, is being overrun, that both the borders delimiting territory and culture are being violated by foreign hordes. There is now, a sort of demographic claustrophobia, where Batswana see themselves as being crowded by outsiders.

A popular undercurrent of worry today in Gaborone and in other parts of the territory is that Batswana are in danger of becoming marginalized in their own country. The hope for regional stability through the presence of “peaceful and prosperous neighbours” has been “dashed” by Zimbabwe.¹⁵ What has happened instead is that Botswana is forced to confront a “neighbourly-burden,” or, put more forcefully, “Neighbours from Hell.”¹⁶ Indeed, in the latter piece, a rambling article touching on slum degeneration and overworked and under-qualified Customary Courts in Gaborone, Zimbabweans are variously charged with causing criminal behavior, urban overcrowding, upsetting local values and turning one nearby village into a “giant brothel.”¹⁷ And while adjudicating a case involving ten Zimbabwean prostitutes, the presiding court official proclaimed that “it was time the courts took serious action against these people

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Sunday Standard*, ‘Neighbours from Hell’, 30 October 2006
<<http://sundaystandard.info/print.php?NewsID=593>> (30 October 2006).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

who are responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS in Botswana.”¹⁸ If Zimbabweans come from Hell, it seems only fitting, then, that they are said to bring with them an apocalyptic brew of crime and danger, sex and drugs, disease and pestilence.

But what do these words and images, depicting the presence of shadowy specters of enemies and foreigners engaged in unsavory behaviors, really signify? Examined in the context of recent debates in Africa on questions of belonging, citizenship and autochthony, along with a broader look at social theory related to questions of national identity, sovereignty, and security, we might see how as the imagery of an ethnically homogenous Botswana comes under fire, national solidarity starts to turn less on tribal or ethnic affiliation and more on identifications of who is from Botswana and who is not. The arenas for this exploration include articles produced by the print media, which will show this nascent national imaginary being carved out in the symbolic spaces occupied by citizens and strangers, while a well-traveled street corner in Gaborone known for attracting Zimbabweans looking for piece-jobs will demonstrate how these struggles are enacted during the performance of everyday life in Botswana’s capital city.

This Land is Our Land. As for the Rest of You . . .

One of the foundational myths long circulated in Botswana tells the story of a tribally and ethnically homogenous population. Birthed even before Botswana’s independence from the British, the desire to portray an image of a unified, non-factionalized state has guided the decision-making of government from the earliest. These practices implemented in support of what Werbner terms the “One-Nation Consensus”¹⁹ ranged from the transfer of land distribution powers previously held by customary authorities to ethnically and tribally neutral State-run land

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Richard Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The public anthropology of Kalanga elites* (University of Indiana Press, Bloomington, IN, 2004), p. 38.

boards to the founding fathers' wish to situate the new capital of Gaborone on non-tribal land, so as not to confer an advantage on one group over the others.²⁰ The persistence of a monolithic Tswana population that has avoided the violent fragmentation that has caused such havoc elsewhere in Africa has been pointed to as a powerful reason for Botswana's success and stability over the past four decades.

Yet, what is often glossed over in discussions regarding Botswana's ethnic make-up is the fact that it is, to a large extent, a fabrication, whatever its usefulness. As Parsons notes, Botswana is "mono-ethnic" only to the degree that the "Tswana minority has successfully imposed its culture on a majority population of extremely diverse ethnic origins."²¹ Similarly, others have used the image of a "Galactic Polity" to describe the assimilationist tendencies of the Tswana, suggesting their ability to absorb other peripheral groups, binding them to a political, economic and administrative center.²² While the fiction of one Tswana nation has been used to solidify the ground on which the state of Botswana rests, in recent years, challenges resisting the minimalization, if not outright erasure, of difference by the construction of a superficially hegemonic Tswana identity have been increasingly vocalized in public. The irony of this newly public debate over the recognition of difference on one hand and the inclusion of minority

²⁰ For a full account of the decision to site the new capital outside areas of tribal influence, see: Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 2): Debates of the Second Meeting of the First Session of the First Legislative Council: Sittings from 26th and 27th September, 1961* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number 328.6883 NAT, Gaborone, 1961). Of particular interest is Seretse Khama's introductory speech on pp. 7-11.

²¹ Q. N. Parsons, "The evolution of modern Botswana: historical revisions," in Louis Picard (ed), *The Evolution of Modern Botswana* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 1985), p. 27.

²² Richard Werbner, "Introduction: challenging minorities, difference and tribal citizenship in Botswana", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 4 (December 2002), p. 675. This issue is devoted entirely to questions of identity, minority rights and citizenship in contemporary Botswana.

participation in the State on the other hand, is that it is precisely the stability and efficacy of the State that has allowed these points of view to come to the fore.²³

Regardless of the cause, these differences, previously concealed under the surface of a dominant Tswana identity have now appeared in a variety of circumstances, including: the controversy over the plan to develop the not-yet assimilated Bushmen, the entrance into the public sphere of ethnically oriented advocacy groups, or the emotional reevaluation of the Constitution and the House of Chiefs (*Ntlo ya Dikgosi*) and their apparent favoritism towards the eight major Tswana tribes.²⁴ Because of the struggles occurring over now contestable symbolic terrain, the cohesiveness of a Tswana identity adopted in support of the “One-Nation Consensus” has lost some of its potency. The fractures exhibited by the Tswana national identity, have been met by trepidation and anxiety, by many individuals in government and the population at large. Testifying before a Presidential Commission charged with investigating whether the Constitution of Botswana discriminated against minority groups, a former President suggested that even raising questions about these issues might set loose the “Tiger” of ethnic conflict.²⁵ And even as Botswana has broadened the tribal membership of the *Ntlo ya Dikgosi*, the current President of Botswana cautioned against distinguishing between “lesser” and greater tribes, as these distinctions threatened the unity of the nation.²⁶ Apart from official statements calling for

²³ Jacqueline S. Solway, ‘Navigating the ‘neutral’ state: ‘minority’ rights in Botswana’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28, 4 (December 2002), p. 713.

²⁴ See pp. 43-47 of Werbner’s *Reasonable Radicals* for a brief account of the controversy surrounding Botswana’s Constitution and the *Ntlo ya Dikgosi*.

²⁵ Werbner, “Introduction”, p. 681.

²⁶ *Daily News*, ‘National unity, respect vital’, 2 February 2007 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20070202&i=National_unity_respect_vital> (2 February 2007). See also: Bame Piet, ‘Mogae wants modern chiefs’, *Mmegi*, 2 February 2007 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2007/February/Friday2/83.php>> (2 February 2007).

caution and calm, “pressure groups” composed of private citizens, such as *Pitso ya Batswana*, have formed to defend the status quo from an increasingly influential minority presence.²⁷

For those groups who continue to resist being subsumed under the “Tswana” label, they become targets of rumors and belittlement. For example, on one end of the spectrum, there are conspiracy theories warning of one influential minority group’s desire to dominate the government.²⁸ Conversely, at the level of the economically and socially marginalized Bushmen populations, they are ostracized as backward primitives. Statements that both denigrate the Bushmen’s lifestyle, while simultaneously argue for their need to assimilate into a more appropriate lifestyle are abundant. The words of one columnist encapsulates the flavor of much of this discourse: the Basarwa must “join the rest of the nation in the 21st century of cars, education, decent houses, running water, computing, designer clothing . . .” and to even “suggest that there is another ‘way of life’ devoid of these things is plain wrong. It is disingenuous to think it is a pleasant way of life.”²⁹ Or to take another example, when a member of the Basarwa community transgresses the behavioral boundaries of what is deemed to be an authentic Sarwa hunter-gatherer lifestyle, he is criticized as being a “Tastic Rice”³⁰ Mosarwa who ought to keep to his properly subordinate minority-space. I quote at length from the following newspaper article to demonstrate the voracity of attacks on a leader of the Basarwa community opposing their removal from their traditional homelands, along with the intensity of feeling related to discussions over who legitimately belongs to the Tswana identity and those who do not. As a “Tastic Rice” Mosarwa with an

²⁷ Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals*, pp. 52-57.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

²⁹ Dichaba Molabe, ‘Government could brush communications 101 on CKGR’, *Mmegi*, 19 March 2004, p. 10.

³⁰ Tastic sells food products, including white rice, across Southern Africa.

English first name [Roy Sesana], well-preserved skin, western clothes, frequent foreign trips, hi-tech telecommunications equipment at the home base, cameo roles at international sob-fests and, audience with gullible white career activists to wax melancholic . . . about the government's resettlement programme.

To celebrate a court of appeal victory earlier this year—Sesana stopped over at an air-conditioned bar at the Pop-Inn mall in Gaborone, knocked back a couple of ice-cold Castle beers, shot a round or two of pool and nonchalantly swayed to the latest Eminem chart-topper blaring from the wall mounted jukebox. Later, as he sucked on a filter cigarette and vociferously pumped clicks into his Nokia cellphone, he was chauffeured away to a city hotel in a gleaming 4x4 Toyota van.³¹

Among the many implications carried by the above statement, which palpably seeps disdain, one of the more striking is the assumption that on some level, the boundaries delineating the Tswana identity are starkly drawn, as the reporter caricatures Sesana as some sort of poser or fraud living an inauthentic “Bushman” life. Meaning that you're not a real Bushmen unless you're fulfilling the typical Batswana fantasy, where the Basarwa run around the Kalahari Desert in animal skins shooting game with poison-tipped arrows. The failure to perform or conform to the stereotype suggests fluidity, and even worse, ambiguity, representing a potentially dangerous source of uncertainty. The mere idea that a member of a minority group maintains contact between two potentially explosive worlds, is a threat to the purity of the processes of Tswanafication that have up until now maintained the image of Botswana's tripartite national community of morality, politics and ethnicity.

As the notion of a monolithic Tswana nation frays, appeals to unity and solidarity have shifted their focus. The geography of national unity seems to have been redrawn to emphasize Insider-Outsider, Citizen-Stranger distinctions. Nyamnjoh observed these tendencies back in 2002, identifying the struggle to explicitly define citizens from foreigners as reflecting broader

³¹ Lesego Mabiletsa, 'CKGR row pits uncle against nephew', *The Botswana Guardian*, 19 March 2004.

conflicts over the allocation of economic resources and employment opportunities.³² As the writer of a letter to the *Mmegi* editor complains, “We are tired of being economic spectators in our own country. When will we ever transform this economy so that it is in the right hands, our hands and not foreigners?”³³ Protestations revolving around land, around laying claim to “our own country,” suggest a particularly important current in the creation of distinctions between those from Botswana and those from outside. During the period of my fieldwork too, the issue of access to resources and property was a dominant topic of conversation in Gaborone as the Lesetedi Commission investigated whether land was being unfairly distributed to foreign investors at the expense of Botswana citizens.³⁴ In this context, Nyamnjoh rightly raises the question of whether citizen empowerment initiatives are now indistinguishable when compared to a more general feeling of xenophobia against foreigners.³⁵

I think though, it is worth considering the question of xenophobia, of a country in a state of siege, outside the realm of the purely economic. Speaking out against the growing number of naturalized citizens in Botswana, the chair of the Kgatleng District Council says that the government needs to be more judicious in granting these applications in order to “guard against the possibility of indigenous citizens being overwhelmed by naturalised Botswana so as to

³² Francis B. Nyamnjoh, “Local attitudes towards citizenship and foreigners in Botswana: an appraisal of recent press stories”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 4 (December 2002), pp. 755-775.

³³ *Mmegi*, ‘What’s good for them is also good for us’, 6 February 2007
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2007/February/Tuesday6/157.php>> (6 February 2007).

³⁴ The Lesetedi Commission, appointed by President Mogae, took evidence and heard testimony during June and July of 2004. While it investigated examples of favoritism extended to expatriates with regards to land allocation, the Commission carried the broad mandate to examine possible corruption and procedural irregularities related to land distribution in Gaborone, including very public scrutiny of the behavior and decisions of a number of current government Ministers. See: Republic of Botswana, ‘Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Land Allocations in Gaborone’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2004).

³⁵ Nyamnjoh, “Local attitudes towards citizenship and foreigners in Botswana”, p. 772.

preserve the homogeneity and cultural norms of the indigenous population.”³⁶ While appeals to roots and homeland framed in terms of the purity of one’s indigenusness are made, the construction of foreign dangers takes a variety of forms. As noted above, and will be elaborated on below, in recent years the “Zimbabwean immigrant” as a general trope has been framed as an ideal-type foreigner, a faceless figure upon which a multitude of offenses and evils can be attributed. Yet, it is worth noting that the shadow, the specter of threat, extends beyond the realm of the human to include even the non-sentient: microbes and livestock.

Alarm over both infectious disease and the presence of foreigners in Botswana briefly merged in 2004, as members of a Christian church, whose beliefs lead them to reject modern medicine, refused to allow their children to be inoculated against polio. Putting the very real public health concerns aside, following a brief polio scare in the Ngamiland District, the reemergence of the disease within Botswana’s borders allowed for the discussion to be framed around foreigners who could literally make the nation sick. As a well-known lawyer in Botswana put it, “the parents’ rights should be abridged in order to protect the children and the nation at large.”³⁷ Another headline captures the more virulent edge of the public debate, announcing, “Gaborone [Councilors] Condemn Anti-Immunisation Foreigners.” In the article, Gaborone city officials reportedly broadened the discussion by moving beyond the narrow focus of immunization by suggesting that outsiders are “flooding the country in huge numbers” and that if the trend continues “they would take over the country and assume positions of responsibility such as being the mayor of Gaborone.”³⁸ Disease, in other words, provided

³⁶ Chippa Legodimo, ‘KDC boss wants to change citizenship laws’, *Mmegi*, 10 March 2004, p. 4.

³⁷ Shirley Nkepe, ‘Human rights campaigners support children in anti-Polio drive’, *Mmegi*, 27 May 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/May/Thursday27/677378399130.html>> (26 January 2007).

³⁸ Donny Dithato, ‘Gaborone Cllrs condemn anti-immunisation foreigners’, *Mmegi*, 26 May 2004.

another avenue to construct foreigners as an immediate threat to the politics and people of Botswana. More than that though, as a danger to the well-being of “the children,” these people represented a direct threat to the future, the very survival of the country.

Similarly, the virus causing HIV/AIDS is anthropomorphized into an intruding enemy crossing the borders into Botswana. In an innovative research project, Lisa Brooks uses pop music lyrics in Botswana to trace the evolution of the AIDS virus from terrible disease to something seen as almost engaged in the willful destruction of the citizens and sovereignty of Botswana.³⁹ A song by Mr. Tagg urges citizens to fight back before it is too late: “This is the time to fight it/you and I could become conquerors . . . It is time to fight this enemy . . . It is time to sharpen swords/its time to fight the war/to conquer this enemy.”⁴⁰ Others suggest that the fight against outsiders has already been lost. Lyrics by local pop star Franco, warn that because of HIV/AIDS invaders, Botswana have lost control of their country. He sings, “It governs the country, our country/It governs the country, the country Botswana.”⁴¹ The symbolic parallels between the above song lyric and one official’s speculation that foreigners will perhaps one day become “mayor of Gaborone” are striking, hinting at a widely available collection of words and images, fears and anxieties, all of which call attention to the need for the citizens of Botswana to band together in order to regain control from these foreign marauders.

The power and effectiveness of these articulations is underscored in their usage by Roy Sesana, the public face of the Basarwa in his fight against the government’s relocation efforts. Warning the people and government of Botswana of the dire consequences caused by a failure to

³⁹ Lisa Allette Brooks, *Music and HIV/AIDS in Botswana: Rearticulating relationships through song* (Yale University, unpublished MA thesis, 2006), p. 44.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48. The translations from the original Setswana song lyrics are Lisa Brooks’.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

accede to Basarwa demands, Sesana says, “If the issue of the resettlement of the Basarwa is not resolved, Survival International [the British-based advocacy group] is going to plague this country like AIDS.”⁴² An analogy linking Survival International and AIDS seems a potent tactic when used by a minority group long oppressed by the majority, whose only hope for accommodation might rely on the utilization of the very outside forces the rest of the population understands as threats.

In a different context, this time with specific reference to the porousness of Botswana’s border with Zimbabwe, we can observe apprehensions over the appearance of diseased Zimbabwean cattle. Cattle hold a position of long-standing cultural, political and economic importance in Botswana. Not only is the export of cattle a large source of revenue for the economy, cattle are also traditional indicators of wealth, status and power. Therefore, to protect the national herds as a financial resource and exemplar of national pride, in 2003 the government began building an electrified fence across the 300 mile long Zimbabwe-Botswana border, in order to exert some control over crossings by people and animals alike.⁴³ As possible carriers of Foot and Mouth Disease, Zimbabwean cattle threatened not only a significant portion of the nation’s livelihood, but also the Botswana government’s ability to effectively manage its livestock resources or borders. The unimpeded movement of alien cattle into Botswana prompted the police to request the vigilance of the Botswana’s citizenry, as they were asked to “report any suspicious cattle movement” to the authorities.⁴⁴ Across the country, but particularly

⁴² Bashi Letsididi, ‘Corry—wrong caste, right script’, *The Botswana Guardian*, 19 March 2004.

⁴³ Rory Carroll, ‘Botswana erects 300-mile electrified fence to keep cattle (and Zimbabweans) out’, *Guardian Unlimited*, 10 September 2003 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article/0,2763,1039033,00.html>> (27 January 2007).

⁴⁴ Ryder Gabathuse, ‘Zim rustlers threaten Botswana cattle industry’, *Mmegi*, 13 April 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Tuesday13/2090817271129.html>> (27 January 2007); Ryder Gabathuse, ‘Zim cattle spread FMD in Botswana’, *Mmegi*, 19 May 2004, p. 2.

along the border, Zimbabwean beasts and people posed severe problems for citizens of Botswana.

It is perhaps not surprising then, that concerns about outside livestock were incorporated into a wider debate about borders and foreigners. Writing of the invasion of alien species in South Africa, the Comaroffs observe, “the anxiety over foreign flora gesture[s] toward a submerged landscape of civic terror and moral alarm.”⁴⁵ Mike Davis too, in his analysis of the construction of environmental catastrophe and conflict in Los Angeles suggests that discussions of nature and animals reveal “class or ethnic conflict refracted through the symbolic role of wildlife in distinguishing the ethical universes of competing social groups.”⁴⁶ In this case, worry over Zimbabwean cattle becomes merely another way to express anxiety over insecure territorial borders and the “suspicious movement[s]” of unauthorized foreign bugs, livestock and people into Botswana.

To better convey the processes guiding the very public discussions of foreigners in Botswana, I must situate the above discussion in a wider geographic and theoretical framework. Questions of threat, invasion, security and the maintenance of a population’s internal coherence and purity are themes that have been raised with an increasing frequency in recent years. Foucault observed two decades ago that the object of State power had shifted, emphasizing the control, organization and regularization of the people living within the territorial boundaries of the state.⁴⁷ The dictates of bio-power suggest that the security apparatus of the State—

⁴⁵ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Naturing the nation: aliens, apocalypse and the postcolonial state”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 3 (September 2001), p. 630.

⁴⁶ Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the imagination of disaster* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1999), p. 208.

⁴⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: an introduction* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1990), p. 136.

Foucault's "police"—exerts a positive, corrective influence on the masses.⁴⁸ Accomplishing this task requires the presence of an ordered and undifferentiated population readily made knowable to the authorities. As the population's security and well-being, indeed their very lives, forms the impetus for State intervention, there becomes a heightened awareness of dangers to the social health of the population's body. The existence of an undeclared war on behalf of public hygiene, in order to cleanse the social body of impurities, human or otherwise, is understood as being part of continual effort to improve society,⁴⁹ a continual, occasionally violent, self-help project conducted on a mass-scale. And whereas Foucault is more focused on the presence of internal dangers, it is not a large leap to extrapolate his point to include foreigners and immigrants. Criminality, immorality and other instigators of social imperfection, wherever their origin, lead to State policing.⁵⁰ These processes however, are not simply limited to domestic forces, but are often, and certainly in the case under discussion here, attributed to the supposedly noxious presence of outsiders. Framed this way, human-aliens infect the domestic social body, prompting the security machinery of the State to action. Protection against, culminating in the removal of, foreign interlopers present in the social body casts the police in the technical role of doctors and surgeons, excising human tumors from the population.

Working off Foucault's theoretical presumptions, Agamben observes that from the late 1970s onwards, the point of interest became the transformation of the "territorial state" to that of the "State of population."⁵¹ Under these circumstances, "The *police* now becomes *politics*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁴⁹ Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* (Allen Lane, London, 2003), pp. 255-257.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

⁵¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998), p. 3.

[italics in original], and the care of life coincides with the fight against the enemy.”⁵² As a point of departure, distinctions between inclusion and exclusion, friend and foe, citizen and stranger, the formal authority of the state becomes occupied with “situations,” rather than laws and rules.⁵³ Order, health, public morality, life lived under permanent state of siege, these are the focuses of the day, of which, the immigrant is seen as a preeminent obstacle to the alleviating of these situations. If the foreigners, weren’t around, in other words, life would improve, anxieties would dissipate. One observer goes so far as to suggest that in the extreme, refugees present a danger to everything, the consequence of which is that society adopts a defensive posture to fend off the external threat.⁵⁴ Even in a less restricted sense, considering the broader category of “foreigners,” determinations of who belongs, as opposed to those who don’t, composes the fundamental activity of a society that must be defended.

But why, it remains to be asked, are immigrants such a source of worry? Bauman, taking Agamben and Foucault’s concern with borders, security, enemies and social health in a different direction, presents a possible explanation. “Our world,” he states, “is full.”⁵⁵ Pushed to the periphery by an economic system no longer in need of their productive services, socially marginalized, economically destitute immigrants—of the sort, for example, who daily stand on prominent Gaborone street corners in hope of landing a construction, washing or cleaning piece job—represent a terrifyingly visible reminder of our own precarious economic and social position.⁵⁶ Unemployed foreigners on a street corner are the funhouse image of employed

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁵⁴ Nikos Papastergiadis, “The invasion complex: the abject other and spaces of violence”, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, **88**, (December 2006), p. 433.

⁵⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its outcasts* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004), p. 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

citizens barely scraping by. As violators of the illusion of social and political stability, foreigners are recast as dastardly malingerers “feeding parasitically on the social body;”⁵⁷ committing crimes, stealing the local women, taking jobs rightfully belonging to citizens.

It is at the border where the first battles between order and chaos, between perhaps, good and evil, are waged. State geography ordered by solid black lines on a map assists in the creation of the simplified, yet dialectically interacting, categories of citizen-stranger. Questions of location, birth and land are inescapable in discussions of these binaries. Agamben, for example posits a trinity of land-order-birth⁵⁸ while Foucault emphasizes the integral place of “blood” in bio-power’s politics, which require a panoply of everyday interventions to regulate a whole range of processes, including the making of citizens and the overall well-being of the indigenous social body.⁵⁹ The occasional appearance of land, blood and citizenship in the above writings provides a segue to a more focused examination of these issues in an African context, where the citizen-stranger framework has become a key pivot point in writing about the politics and economics of an increasingly globalized post-colonial Africa.

In their discussion of invasive species in South Africa, the Comaroffs pose the question as to why issues of transgressed borders and the corollary dilemmas of belonging and citizenship have become politically explosive issues in not just South Africa, but elsewhere as well.⁶⁰ One possible explanation fuses the society-under-siege mentality and the uncertainty wrought by the ebbs and flows of globalization to the issue of autochthony or belonging and the forging of a new national identity to ward off these invaders. As Geschiere and Nyamnjoh note,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁸ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 175.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 149.

⁶⁰ Comaroff and Comaroff, “Naturing the nation”, p. 631.

“Everywhere in our globalized world the increasing intensity of global flows seems to be accompanied by an affirmation of cultural differences and belonging.”⁶¹ The emphasis on membership or belonging is not, in other words, evidence of the reemergence of traditionalism in disguise, but rather is a direct consequence of contemporary political, demographic and economic processes. Reflecting current concerns, an observer can broadly assert the existence of overwhelming insecurity and uncertainty facing today’s inhabitants of African cities.⁶² A readily identifiable source of problems, from the perspective of citizens, is the growing presence of migrant workers or immigrants. Equated to the supernatural figure of zombies, immigrants “are nightmare citizens, their rootlessness threatening to siphon off the remaining, rapidly diminishing prosperity of the indigenous population.”⁶³ The response by populations under attack, whether in Europe or Africa, has been to emphasize the nativeness of the people already living within a particular territory.

Achieving solidarity through the creation of a collective sense of national autochthony echoes Anderson’s notion of the construction of imagined political communities.⁶⁴ Yet inasmuch as the discourse of autochthony is about binding citizens together, just as important is starkly differentiating those who belong to those who do not. Facilitating the hardened categories is the malleability of the language of autochthony. Both adaptable and mutable, theorists of autochthony have gone so far as to suggest that it is an empty concept, to be filled

⁶¹ Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, “Capitalism and autochthony: the seesaw of mobility and belonging”, *Public Culture*, **12**, 2 (2000), p. 424.

⁶² AbdouMaliq Simone, “On the worlding of African cities”, *African Studies Review*, **44**, 2 (September 2001), p. 17.

⁶³ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Alien-nation: zombies, immigrants, and millennial capitalism”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, **101**, 4 (Fall 2002), p. 789.

⁶⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Verso, New York, NY, 1991), p. 6.

with whatever the circumstances require.⁶⁵ Because of its lack of concrete substance, the creation of hard categorizations distinguishing between citizens and strangers is more readily accomplished.⁶⁶ Indeed, in a world where starkly drawn categories matter, much of the language and imagery used in support of autochthony is founded on symbols of hygiene and purity, of cleaning the population of foreign impurities. Like the nervous addict who experiences imaginary bugs crawling along the skin, so to the language of autochthony is inherently anxious, restless, even paranoid, keeping autochthons vigilant against the arrival of a “creeping impurity” into the population.⁶⁷

From broadly framed worries about foreigners transgressing borders, living among the population, and even permanently embedding themselves in the nation’s territory, it is an easy leap to the invention of specific character flaws or racial traits generalized about the foreign masses. Criminal tendencies, penchants for sexual deviancy, and other negative personality characteristics attributed to outsider populations are the things from which an innocent and pure citizenry must be protected against. In the need to defend an indigenous population from potentially dangerous and destabilizing external forces, melds the concerns of bio-politics and the language of autochthony.

What follows in the upcoming section is a snapshot of these discursive devices, symbols and images being put into action. Dwelling on details--sometimes banal, sometimes salacious, almost always referencing the ever-present threat of foreigners generally, and Zimbabweans

⁶⁵ Peter Geschiere and Stephen Jackson, “Autochthony and the crisis of citizenship: democratization, decentralization, and the politics of belonging”, *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), p. 6.

⁶⁶ For a recent in-depth case study of these processes see: Ruth Marshall-Fratani, “The war of “who is who”: autochthony, nationalism, and citizenship in the Ivoirian crisis”, *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), pp. 9-43.

⁶⁷ Stephen Jackson, “Sons of which soil? The language and politics of autochthony in Eastern D.R. Congo”, *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), p. 114.

specifically—the methodical daily drum beat framing “Zimbabweans” in Botswana’s newspapers followed two general trajectories. On the one hand, the papers portrayed a people largely objectified as criminals and sexual objects from whom the citizens of Botswana needed to be insulated. At the other end of the spectrum, Zimbabweans, here lumped into a broader category of “foreigners” also occupied by Asians, Indians and whites, are seen as usurpers of Botswana’s economic livelihood, depriving citizens of economic benefits rightfully belonging to them. The portrait painted in print, it is worth noting, often reflected the on-the-street feelings of many Batswana. The confrontation of citizens and “strangers,” is, perhaps, the furnace in which a new, more potent, national identity is being forged.

“Zim Women Admit Stealing Underpants”: the Making of Perfect Strangers

In his *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson wrote persuasively of newspapers’ ability to bind discrete segments of a nation, separated by space and circumstance, into a more unified whole. Through the use of standardized “fields of exchange and communication” print media has the capacity to create a broadly held sense of community and belonging.⁶⁸ The narratives disseminated by the media however, cut two ways. The underbelly of unification processes, are those of differentiation. Not only can newspapers help establish the community membership, they can likewise determine those who did not belong. It might, therefore, be worthwhile to read articles published in the press as a literary device in which foreigners, Zimbabweans as faceless Other, are characters in an unfolding plot detailing crime or sex or the economic victimization of Batswana citizens. In the same way Davis explores race and class tensions in Los Angeles through an examination of the city’s repeated apocalyptic destruction in

⁶⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 44.

20th century pulp fiction,⁶⁹ the “real” stories carried in Botswana’s newspapers reveals similar sorts of thematic concerns about a society in flux, beset by circumstances outside its best efforts at control. Told in sometimes dramatic and lurid detail, while at other times, mentioned in vague, general, almost throwaway statements, the articles depict the shared experience of an anxious citizenry living in a state of crisis, where even the mundane and everyday seem under threat of annihilation.

Longtime residents of Gaborone fondly romanticize the city as a safe place, largely devoid of crime. In recent years however, there is a palpable shift in the way people feel about the city. Window bars, electrified razor-wire fences and private security are near ubiquitous across Botswana’s capital. With an unsettled population, the city, it seems, is no longer deemed secure, instead safety is sought behind wrought iron bars. Lamenting Gaborone’s pervasive security culture, which now includes the breeding of Pit Bulls, an editorial states,

It is now becoming normal to see high perimeter walls, electric fences, and expensive electronic gadgets. We are slowly becoming a security-craze (sic) society thanks to the brutish beasts that have taken over our streets and alleys. Because of this circumstance-forced obsession with security-our society is losing the rapport and closeness it is known for.⁷⁰

Confirming the feeling of transformation, where “beasts” are offenders and defenders of individual security, a few days later, local newspapers publicized a UNDP report that states Gaborone is dangerous, on par with some of “the world’s crime infested cities such as South Africa’s Johannesburg.”⁷¹ Contradicting the notion that the city was safe in the past, the report that even in 1996, nearly 32% of the city’s population had experienced crime of one type or

⁶⁹ See Chapter 6, “The Literary Destruction of Los Angeles,” in Mike Davis’ *Ecology of Fear*.

⁷⁰ *Mmegi*, ‘We should act now’, 24 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday24/58361142723>> (24 November 2006).

⁷¹ *Mmegi*, ‘UNDP crime report shocking’, 28 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Tuesday28/5836116621297.html>> (28 November 2006).

another.⁷² Much of the increase in crime is blamed on the increased number of foreigners, particularly Zimbabweans. Even the images of “infest[ation]” and “taken over” streets and alleys used in the newspaper reports suggests that perpetrators of crime have invaded from the outside, disrupting the social health of a previously safe urban population.

Within the stories about crime, two trends are evident. On the one hand, are those that vaguely mention the criminal habits of illegal immigrants, while on the other, are those that specifically mark Zimbabweans as habitual lawbreakers. Examples of the former include: the opening of a police station in the Northeast District being hailed by residents as a “symbol of hope and salvation” due to their being “terrorised by illegal immigrants squatting in the area.”⁷³ A Chief in the village of Kanye says that Batswana must not shelter illegal immigrants because “by living with these people, we become our own enemies because they will come back and steal from us. . . .”⁷⁴ Another writer tells of Serowe, “once a peaceful village [that] is now turning into the lawless Wild West,” a situation exacerbated by “illegal immigrants who are said to be stealing anything they can lay their hands on.”⁷⁵

Hearsay and generalized denunciations of foreigner-thieves persist as a regular feature of the press reports. The focus however, is often narrowed, directly accusing Zimbabweans living in Botswana of being the source of criminal behavior. Headlines from *Mmegi* give some hint of the general characterization of Zimbabweans as criminals: “Zim Criminals Give Police Tough

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Alice Banda, ‘New police station offers hope to Tshesebe residents’, *Mmegi*, 27 April 2004, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Chippa Legodimo, ‘Kanye residents warned against harbouring illegal immigrants’, *Mmegi Monitor*, 15 March 2004, p. 4.

⁷⁵ Meekael M. Siphambili, ‘Alarm as Serowe crime wave soars’, *Mmegi*, 10 March 2004, p. 6.

Time”⁷⁶ to “Suspected Zim Trickster on the Prowl.”⁷⁷ Beyond the language of petty crime, the headlines proclaim even more imminent dangers, seemingly latching on to the post-September 11 imagery of global terrorism. Stories related to Zimbabwean cattle thieves in the Northeast part of Botswana, slide from an uncertain “Zimbabweans Terrorise Babirwa?”⁷⁸ to, 6 months later, a more assured pronouncement that “Zim Cattle Rustlers Terrorise Bobirwa Residents.”⁷⁹ Increased episodes of burglary in a Francistown slum are caused by an “influx” of illegal Zimbabweans⁸⁰ while the murder of one Zimbabwean man is partially blamed on the presence of illegal Zimbabweans arriving into Botswana, since the police are overburdened in their combat against illegal immigration.⁸¹

On the street, similar attitudes prevail. Evoking the cinematic image of medieval villagers storming Dr. Frankenstein’s castle, a Motswana cab driver explains to me on one trip across Gaborone, that along with residents of a local slum, Zimbabweans are also dangerous. One must be fearful of being robbed by them as groups patrol the city under cover of dark. He explains, “They go out at night with torches, sticks and knives” looking for unsuspecting Batswana victims, rather than a mutated product of an abominable form of science.

Crimes committed by Zimbabweans however, are not simply offenses against individuals or personal property. The perpetration of crime is taken as a broad assault on the nation of

⁷⁶ Ryder Gabathuse, ‘Zim criminals give police tough time’, *Mmegi*, 7 April 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Wednesday7/238845680850.html>> (24 January 2007).

⁷⁷ Chandapiwa Baputaki, ‘Suspected Zim trickster on the prowl’, *Mmegi*, 22 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Wednesday22/583611235294.html>> (22 November 2006).

⁷⁸ Ryder Gabathuse, ‘Zimbabweans terrorise Babirwa?’, *Mmegi*, 6 June 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/June/Tuesday6/746019155871.html>> (6 June 2006).

⁷⁹ Ryder Gabathuse, ‘Zim cattle rustlers terrorise Bobirwa residents’, *Mmegi*, 22 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Wednesday22/2479209671554.html>> (22 November 2006).

⁸⁰ Tomeletso Sereetsi, ‘F/town police make appeal on rising crime’, *Mmegi*, 14 July 2004, p. 5.

⁸¹ *Botswana Gazette*, ‘Man cut into pieces over a toy’, 28 April 2004, p. 6.

Botswana. One letter writer condemns Zimbabweans who “now squatter (sic) in all villages and settlements where they rape, maim, and murder.” Consequently, “illegal immigrants threaten the safety and security of the nation.”⁸² In a similar vein, a letter to the editor tries to draw a line between peaceful Zimbabweans and a “marauding mob of gangsters” originating from Zimbabwe. Further echoing the discursive trope of terrorists who “hate freedom,” a letter writer argues that Botswana’s future survival hinges on the outcome of the struggle against these foreign criminals. The author writes, “People all over the world have fought for freedom: freedom from domination by any evil force. Are we not being patriotic by defending our freedom?”⁸³ The headline of another editorial letter draws the defensive posture of the Citizen-Stranger distinction more plainly, telling problem Zimbabweans to: “Crawl back to your mother’s land.”⁸⁴ Framed this way, fighting crime becomes more than a matter of law and order; it is a patriotic duty in which all responsible citizens of Botswana must participate.

Metaphors of infestation and infection to describe the onslaught of foreign criminal behavior provide an apt appraisal of current circumstances. The notion of a nation poisoned from foreign wells carries a popular traction, as many residents of Botswana indicated that Batswana were “learning” criminal behavior from outsiders. Although as a well-respected, now retired, government official suggested, the collective fantasy of a pure Batswana nation under attack from foreign criminal elements is becoming increasingly untenable. He gave the example that in his neighborhood, the section of town known as Gaborone West, approximately 100 crimes are reported to the police per day. Now, can all of these, he asked with a skeptic’s raised eyebrow, be attributed to immigrants?

⁸² *Mmegi*, ‘Police ill-equipped to win war on crime’, 19 May 2004, p. 7.

⁸³ *Mmegi*, ‘Is this xenophobic behaviour?’, 13 May 2004, p. 10.

⁸⁴ *Botswana Gazette*, ‘Crawl back to your mother’s land’, 28 April 2004, p. 11.

One man's doubts aside, the public narrative detailing a nation's possible ruination by foreign elements is particularly salient in today's Botswana. While there is, no doubt, a certain tabloid mentality apparent in much of the private press, it seems also true that crimes, both big and small, committed by Zimbabweans are an important subject of writing over the past few years. Detailing criminal offenses, either in terms of specific cases or generalized implications about the bad behavior of foreigners, is a way to suggest that the criminal element has nowadays permeated, infiltrated all parts of society. As a shadow cast across the country, no stories are too small to report. No reporting better illustrates this than a piece appearing on page 2 of *Mmegi*, "Zim Women Admit Stealing Underpants."⁸⁵ Detailing the capture and appearance before the Francistown Customary Court of two Zimbabwean women, the story seems particularly petty and of not much interest to a national readership, especially considering its page 2 placement. Yet considered in the context of the ongoing creation of a "Zimbabwean," its appearance makes more sense. The story's newsworthiness is not what is at issue here, but rather, this article might be read as the culmination of the process of founding a new Zimbabwean imaginary for Botswana's citizens. Not only are Zimbabweans reduced to committing the most minor crimes, they are infantilized, portrayed as silly people fit for a blooper reel ("Zimbabweans Do the Darndest Things"?). Zimbabweans as threat to the nation, Zimbabweans as faceless criminals, Zimbabweans as children: these sets of words and images all help reproduce Zimbabweans as an anonymous horde of sentient locusts, distinguishable from the rest of the Botswana citizenry. It is, in other words, a far simpler task to draw out a foreign poison if it is located in rigid and easily identifiable categories.

⁸⁵ Chenjelani Baraedi, 'Zim women admit stealing underpants', *Mmegi*, 14 April 2004, p. 2.

A further dimension of the objectification of Zimbabweans marks their presence as a dirty pox on Botswana. Zimbabweans are equated with a lack of cleanliness across the country. Complaining of the Gaborone bus station's state of disrepair, the *Daily News* writes, "The influx of illegal immigrants into the city has also contributed to the bus rank degenerating into an eyesore."⁸⁶ Worse conditions prevail at the Francistown bus and train station. Awash with trash and raw sewage, the grounds of the bus station also provide a haven for nightly "acts of public indecency" committed by an "influx of illegal immigrants who have no accommodation and money."⁸⁷ Complementing the notion that Zimbabweans in Botswana is as much a health problem, as it is anything else, authorities routinely embark on "clean-up"⁸⁸ operations where illegal Zimbabweans are "rounded up," given four lashes and subsequently deported.⁸⁹

Disinfecting Botswana from Zimbabwean germs is also important for the country's moral health. An opponent of the ruling BDP (Botswana Democratic Party) government catalogues the government's perceived policy failures, one of the more important being the inability to combat the "frightful influx of immigrants into the country [so] that our children and fellowmen are being completely overrun."⁹⁰ Contributing to the eroding morality of Botswana, "Zimbabweans who are mostly illegal immigrants have declared a late evening to dawn curfew in all our towns and villages."⁹¹ Where the author of this particular letter leaves the nighttime activities pursued

⁸⁶ *Daily News*, 'Gaborone bus ranks eyesore', 4 April 2006 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20060404&I=Gaborone_bus_ranks_eyesore> (4 April 2006).

⁸⁷ Tomeletso Sereetsi, 'The filth of Francistown', *Mmegi*, 7 July 2004, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Ryder Gabathuse, 'Illegal immigrants campaign launched', *Mmegi*, 26 October 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/October/Thursday26/997635794793.html>> (26 October 2006).

⁸⁹ Onalenna Modikwa, 'Anti-illegal immigrant operation starts', *Mmegi*, 6 July 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/July/Thursday6/32695696961777.html>> (6 July 2006).

⁹⁰ *Mmegi Monitor*, 'There is so much intrigue', 11 July 2005, p. 16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

by these folks unstated, another writer fills in the blanks. Nighttime at one Gaborone shopping center is the home to all manner of drunkenness and prurient sexual deviancy. Depicting an X-rated bacchanal,

Local ladies of the night and their Zimbabwean compatriots assemble along the road, selling sex like hot cakes. For a quickie, they just do it by the side of the road next to the screen walls of the nearby residential houses. When they are through, they just flip the condom over the screen wall for the kids residing here to use as balloons in the morning.⁹²

In this instance, both Batswana and Zimbabwean prostitutes are mentioned together in the above letter. Other times however, Zimbabwean prostitutes are treated separately, fantasized in public as a boon to the libidos of Batswana men. When it comes to the sexuality of Zimbabwean women therefore, there is a bit of a contradiction in how it is treated in print and on the street.

Sometimes, Zimbabwean prostitutes are treated as criminal offenders worthy of police interest. Seemingly in response to the previously mentioned letter to the editor, the following week, at the same shopping complex, the police “declared war on Zimbabwean commercial sex workers who operate at the mall.”⁹³ Yet, at the same time, the usually maligned influx of illegal Zimbabweans into Botswana is treated as a gift that has fallen into the laps of Botswana’s men. “Window Shopping” is the term used in Francistown to describe men looking for foreign prostitutes, where sex is available for as little as 5 pula (approximately \$1).⁹⁴ Another headline announces, “Zim Prostitutes: Blessing for Hot-Blooded Men in Botswana,” followed by instructions where to find the “Zimbabwe (sic) women [who] come out in hordes” after dark.⁹⁵

⁹² *Mmegi*, ‘Gaborone West police station—a disgrace’, 29 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Wednesday29/5836117951446.html>> (29 November 2006).

⁹³ Lekopanye Mooketsi, ‘Police nab food vendors in G-West blitz’, *Mmegi*, 8 December 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/December/Friday8/733419847722.html>> (8 December 2006).

⁹⁴ Ryder Gabathuse, ‘The new meaning of window-shopping’, *Mmegi*, 13 July 2004, p. 5.

⁹⁵ Meekaeel M. Siphambili, ‘Zim prostitutes: blessing for hot-blooded men in Botswana’, *Mmegi*, 15 April 2004, p. 6.

A similar scene unfolds in a village adjacent to Gaborone. The word-on-the-street in Botswana's capital describes large brothels, employing Zimbabwean prostitutes, where sex is cheaply available for those who know where to look. One well-respected public figure explained to me during a long interview over a few afternoon beers at Gaborone's only faux Irish pub the benefits of seeking out these locations: "you can talk [expletive] down to 5 pula" but also, because of their desperate economic situation, the wearing of condoms is not required—if they object, the man will search for someone else who won't. In a country where HIV infection is rampant, it was disturbing to hear a community leader talk so casually, with such disregard, about putting somebody's health at such tremendous risk just because they could. The cavalier attitude though, makes sense when again considered in the context of the broader discourse about Zimbabweans, imagining them as anonymous members of a faceless blob to be used however is seen fit.

Perhaps the apex of humiliation was reached towards the end of 2005, following the police and army's apprehension of some Zimbabwean men and women during patrols of a village a short drive away from Gaborone. Following their detainment, the supervising police and soldiers forced the detainees to strip, ordering two to have sex while the others watched and masturbated. Reporting the incident in rather lurid detail, the headline of one article captures a revealing dimension of the offense and the subsequent investigation, calling it "the sex that could divide nations."⁹⁶ Even the allegations of a severe crime are framed in a way so as to pit one country's citizens against another. It is not, in other words, a simple matter of criminals and victims, but of Botswana and Zimbabweans. Why talk about a sadistic abuse of authority in this

⁹⁶ Francinah Baaitse, 'The sex that could divide nations', *Mmegi*, 6 December 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/December/Tuesday6/7066970501838.html>> (6 December 2006); Bame Piet, 'I was forced to have sex—witness', *Mmegi*, 13 November 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Monday13/42559793521.html>> (13 November 2006).

way? Why retreat behind the mantle of national identity? Without reading too much into this single occurrence, maybe there is a cathartic process of retribution under way. As many Batswana experience economic and social insecurity, reflecting a lessening amount of control over the outcomes of their lives, much of the blame for the precariousness is directed towards outsiders coming into Botswana. Exacting some form of collective revenge on the most easily identifiable outsider-targets might be a way of reclaiming some measure of power, however tenuous or ephemeral or inconsequential, over seemingly indecipherable global flows of jobs and people, of ideas and information. The powerlessness and animosity felt towards foreigners likely says as much about current living conditions in Botswana as it does about real feelings people have about foreigners. In a society where criticism of authority is frowned upon, maybe a submerged discourse attacking foreigners rather than the domestic status quo is a safer, more acceptable, way to spread a message of discontent.

Indeed, economic insecurity wrought by outside global forces is a prominent theme in Botswana. One of the most notorious examples being the arrival and shocking closure of the assembly plant built by Hyundai in the 1990s.⁹⁷ More recently though, there has been a more generalized discourse suggesting that foreigners are taking opportunities that rightfully belong to Botswana. The picture painted by Botswana regarding their own economic prospects is grim: the towns are being flooded with cheaply made Chinese goods, all the shops are owned by Arabs and Indians, Whites have cornered the lucrative tourism market in the Okavango Delta, Zimbabweans provide low paid manual labor and domestic help. In the more dire depictions, it is not only jobs that are lost, but Botswana's lands and homes, as ownership of the country has been increasingly ceded into foreign hands. Referring to the consolidation of land into the hands

⁹⁷ For a fuller account of these events, see: Kenneth Good, and Skye Hughes, "Globalization and diversification: two cases in southern Africa", *African Affairs*, **101**, 402 (2002), pp. 39-59.

of a few influential interests, Kgosi Gaborone, Deputy Chief of the Gaborone, asks about the future, “Where should our children live if outsiders take their land?”⁹⁸ One day, he predicts, the people of Botswana will have to fight “for their birthright. If we let foreigners and a minority of Batswana take all the land, then future generations will revolt.”⁹⁹ One woman writes of her frustration, “All my dreams, hopes and aspirations for this country have crashed. How could our “parents” sell us out like this? How could they allow foreigners to parcel out our land to other foreigners, while we—the citizens—have no land . . . We are sitting on a time bomb.”¹⁰⁰

Down on the Corner: An Eye-Level View

Peering underneath the public discussions of foreigners and Zimbabweans appearing in print, it is important to examine how the citizen-stranger dynamic play out on Gaborone’s streets. Occasionally, these tensions crescendo into violent outbursts, as happened during a brief riot, labeled a “war” in the local media, at the Gaborone bus station between Batswana and Zimbabweans.¹⁰¹ More often though, the struggles are far less dramatic, played out in the more mundane theatre of the everyday. One of the primary sites for interaction between Batswana citizens, Zimbabweans, and the police is found on the street corners of the Gaborone neighborhood known as White City. The neighborhood, named for the small low-cost houses hastily painted white in the final days of Gaborone’s construction in the mid 1960s, is now well-known in Gaborone and Zimbabwe as a site where Zimbabwean immigrants—along with a smattering of individuals from other countries in the region—daily come to look for work, hired

⁹⁸ Batlhalefi Leagajang, ‘Botswana’s Roots are Embedded in Land’, *Botswana Gazette*, 23 June 2004, p. 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Mmegi*, ‘Learn from the Lesetedi Commission’, 29 June 2004, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Bester Gabotlale, ‘Bus rank business counts losses after ‘war’’, *Mmegi*, 6 May 2004, p. 9; *Mmegi*, ‘This xenophobic behavior must stop’, 5 May 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/May/Wednesday5/10680060701279.html>> (24 January 2006).

to do short-term “piece jobs” such as washing, gardening or construction. For those familiar with the area, the neighborhood has acquired new names, such as “Bulawayo” or “Little Zimbabwe,” reflecting its current demographic notoriety.

For many of the Zimbabweans seeking work in White City, Botswana was seen as their best hope, in the short-term, for escaping Zimbabwe’s crushing inflation and unemployment and raising some money for their families who remained behind. As one job seeker described the situation back in Zimbabwe, “It is not a country now. It is like a game park. It is not a suitable place for people to live.” Another said of President Mugabe’s disastrous regime: Mugabe “is like a plane with no fuel and with no place to land. The options are to jump out and die, or glide and see what happens. You will crash eventually, [but] we are now just seeing how long he will glide.” People formerly employed as skilled workers, teachers and nurses in Zimbabwe, in Botswana subsisted on far less as day laborers or domestic help, assuming they were paid at all. For some Zimbabweans, such as my research assistant Ruth, who could rely on a long established network of friends and family while in Gaborone, standing on the street corner represented a low form of behavior. Speaking of the White City locales frequented by Zimbabweans, “This is an ugly place. It has a bad name. I wouldn’t even want to walk by this place. To sit here all day, I don’t like what they are doing. But people know I am here on research so it is okay.”

For many new arrivals, who’ve heard about this place from people they knew back home however, the White City is a place of last resort. One Zimbabwean male who had been coming to White City to look for work emphasized the desperation, the pure randomness inherent in their day-to-day predicament. Responding to a question about how things are going, he told me,

Things are not okay. As you can see. We come here at the earliest, 6[am], when it is dark and very cold. To stand here and wait. And for what? . . . We get here at the earliest, at 6

and we don't know what is going to happen. Some, they get here at 10 and they get jobs. And we are here all day and have nothing.

Much of the activity occurs on the street corner entrances leading into White City's residential interior, where the car traffic is heaviest, visibility is highest, and the odds that the occupant of a passing car might stop are most increased. Conversely, areas of increased car traffic, also means there is greater density of job seekers. One of the busiest locations is situated along a busy road dividing White City from the Government Enclave. Cast in the shadow of the Orapa House complex, the collection point for most of the diamonds mined in Botswana before they are shipped off to South Africa for further processing, Zimbabweans wait for hours in a dusty open space alternately used as a public lot or informal driving school, on the off chance that a car will stop and a job will be offered. Deeper into the White City groups of Zimbabweans also congregate in less-traveled residential areas. In these areas adjacent to the property lines of private houses, the competition for jobs is less, but so is the number of opportunities.

The rhythms of waiting for work on the street corner don't deviate much, day after day. Starting early in the morning and lasting into the late afternoon, the day's activities variously involve periods of sitting, standing, avoiding the afternoon sun, seeking out the morning sun during Botswana's chilly winter mornings, shielding your eyes from dust and discarded plastic bags kicked up by the wind, chatting, laughing, arguing, gossiping and debating current events from China's increasing involvement in Africa to detailed accounts of the Michael Jackson molestation trial. For the more assertive, each day involves hustling for a few Pula to buy a bit of food or a carton of "Shake Shake"/Chibuku sorghum beer.

Occasionally interrupting the flow of the day, a car would pause on the side of the road, sometimes the vehicle would only slow down, prompting running negotiations between the car's occupants and the people trying to keep up. The appearance of a stopping car caused most

Zimbabweans in the vicinity to crowd around the open window announcing often exaggerated (if not outright falsified) qualifications. Competition for employment could be fierce, but never, as far as I was able to tell, did it turn aggressive or violent; immediately after a car departed the jokes and laughter tended to return. Most times cars would pass by with no jobs in the offing, though the more courteous drivers would place their arm out the window, palm up, and shake it back and forth to indicate “no job.”

Weighing opportunities against competition however, is not the only criteria determining where people decide to stand the day away. One must also select a spot with enough avenues for escape to avoid the constant police presence, or more infrequently, a large-scale round-up of Zimbabweans. The area across from the Orapa House offers many possibilities for escape, while street corners in the interior present more limited options due to the walls of private houses. As someone who chose a more risky spot simply put it, there is “no reward with no risk.” Being-on-the-corner for a Zimbabwean job-seeker requires a balance between visibility to potential employers and the need to maintain a low profile in order to evade the police presence frequently patrolling the area. The most common form of patrol occurs on foot, policemen in twos or threes walking the beat, appearing as often as a few times an hour or as little as once or twice a day. A slow day on the corner is, therefore, periodically punctuated by bursts of activity as people move to hide from the local police.

In the open spaces of the Orapa House corner, the uniformed police in their deep blue uniforms are often visible from distances of hundreds of yards.¹⁰² In those rare instances where the police weren't immediately visible, loud whistling heard in the distance or the sight of some people running towards your position with their wrists crossed (evoking a policeman's

¹⁰² Undercover officers are usually floating around too, but their presence is a poorly kept secret among most Zimbabweans. As were the Batswana residents of the neighborhood who acted as citizen informers for the police.

handcuffs) were enough to indicate that it was probably a good time to move. Indeed, one of the common practical jokes pranksters would play on newcomers to the corner was to begin running away in a panic, setting off the newbies. The guys who initiated the joke would stop running after a short distance and burst out laughing, along with all the folks who knew better.

Apart from jokes intentionally made, there was also a joke like quality to the interaction of the police and the Zimbabweans. One long-time resident of Gaborone dismissed the raids as a “joke everybody is in on.” And really, there was a dimension of phoniness, of going through the motions merely for the sake of appearances. A typical episode would begin with the police appearing in the distance, proceeding to casually walk toward a large group of Zimbabweans. A group of Zimbabweans I had been talking to for example, having seen the approaching authorities, would bid me a “so long” and then slowly move off a variety of directions—some melting away into the neighborhood, others ducking into one of the front-yard Chibuku bars, others heading toward the crowds of the nearby bus-station, the bravest wading into the street’s busy traffic, dodging combis and private taxis.¹⁰³ The police would pass through and disappear around a corner to reappear later in the day. Usually within a minute or two of their passing, most everybody would be heading back to retake their street corner positions.

There was little drama in these small displays of authority and evasion, rather, most seemed rather disinterested, playing long familiar roles in a bit of public theater. But has been noted elsewhere, when dealing with the most marginal of undocumented immigrants, the authorities will make a show—even if it is half-hearted as in this instance—of force if only to enforce the “illusion” of the State’s ability to perform effectively.¹⁰⁴ The Zimbabweans

¹⁰³ Walking into traffic is made even more dangerous by the fact that combi drivers will sometimes attempt to run over suspected Zimbabweans running away from the police.

¹⁰⁴ Comaroff and Comaroff, “Naturing the nation”, p. 648.

recognize the underlying superficiality of the displays of most police patrols. One man tells me that for the police walking the street, they aren't really interested in making arrests, rather they "just want to see how we react. Whether we fear them or not."

Describing Thai policing efforts, raids on immigrants becomes a superficial way to "cleanse" society.¹⁰⁵ In a similar way, the crime being policed in the streets of White City by Zimbabwean immigrants is that of loitering or "idling," so the visibility of the Zimbabwean in Gaborone was effaced, along with the very public reminder of the government's impotence in dealing with the problem. One police officer resting on a concrete slab on the Orapa House corner, taking a break from his foot patrol, warns me to be wary of the Zimbabwean "rude boys" who will rob me of my money and cell phone. Furthermore, he informs me that this area must be kept clear of people, since Zimbabweans will commit crimes during the day and engage in "immoral activities" once the sun goes down. Another officer talking of Zimbabweans in White City, "These people are causing us big problems. . . . They are like wild animals. They don't behave sharp." For thieves in Gaborone, "the people who are ruling Botswana," White City is "their office," says a Motswana woman who works as a clerk in a neighborhood shop. A police officer accosting a group of Zimbabweans tells them, "This is not a hotel. You cannot stay here." Pointing to me though, I was allowed to remain in the same spot, continuing to "idle." The Zimbabweans I encountered recognized that the authorities were trying to control their movements on Gaborone's streets. The police would tell them that White City was a no go area for Zimbabweans, but, they would ask, "Where are the signs?"

The fact that I was, time and time again, allowed to remain in the same place, calls into the question the claim that the police are concerned mostly with disrupting criminal behavior by

¹⁰⁵ Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, "The irregular migrant as homo sacer: migration and detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand", *International Migration*, **42**, 1 (2004), p. 56.

breaking up congregations of loiterers. It became clear, in other words, that loitering was not the so-called crime with which the authorities were worried. In her ethnography of Costa Rican plazas, Low describes how the same behaviors are given different meaning depending on the people performing them.¹⁰⁶ On White City streets, this was especially true of sitting and standing, the crime of idling. A long exchange with a Zimbabwean job-seeker about life in Gaborone was summed up with the statement: “It is a crime to be a Zimbabwean.” Sitting, standing, walking; it didn’t really matter, being Zimbabwean made you fair game to the police. Zimbabweans pointed to the fact that Batswana criminals in White City were left alone by the police while Zimbabweans were, in their opinion, unfairly singled out. On the White City locations I frequented, Batswana were perceived to be selling stolen goods to Zimbabweans. The buyers of stolen merchandise, especially cell phones, were often the focus of police attention. “These [thieves] are Batswana,” I was told, “In fact, if the police catch them, they will take the police back to the people they sold [stolen goods] to and then the police will let the thieves go and arrest the person who bought the stolen goods. Asking ‘how can you buy without seeing a receipt?’” I witnessed this bias firsthand as well. As a small skirmish between some Batswana and Zimbabweans, in which rocks and pipes were displayed as weapons, ended and the police arrived, the Batswana were told to go while the Zimbabweans involved were arrested and taken to jail.

In terms of the everyday street corner experience, I asked some of my Zimbabwean informants why I was allowed to remain loitering in the streets while they were made to leave, or worse. I was told that was an easy question to answer; they were almost surprised that I needed to ask. “Ah, they respect your skin color.” As time went on though, and I spent increasing

¹⁰⁶ Seta Low, *On the Plaza: The politics of public space and culture* (University of Texas Press, Austin, TX, 2000), pp. 174-175.

amounts of time hanging out in the same places as the Zimbabweans, my skin color began to matter less and less. Sitting for hours with a pen and notebook talking with whoever happened to be around, in the eyes of the police, I began to be more closely associated with the “problem” of Zimbabweans, worthy of suspicion to some authorities. Towards the end of my time working this area, I was just as likely to be hassled—even coming close to being arrested and my research confiscated one afternoon—as were the Zimbabweans who frequented the White City street corners.

While cops on the beat created some problems, more worrisome for Zimbabweans, were patrols carried out by the SSG (Special Support Guard) who are spoken of by Zimbabweans as an especially brutal paramilitary arm of Botswana’s security apparatus. Existing in a gray area between the police and the military, the SSG are employed for more difficult or dangerous policing operations. Around with much less frequency than the regular police, an appearance by the SSG immediately dissipated any possible levity in the usual cat and mouse game occurring in White City. Typical of an SSG sweep, a large open air truck—nicknamed a “6-Pack”—capable of disgorging a contingent of officers, would converge on an area, rounding up any folks unlucky enough to be in the vicinity. Rumors abound detailing the violence perpetrated by the SSG. One Zimbabwean relayed a story about what happened to one individual caught without a passport. The regular police will take you to the police station, he explained, but the SSG prefers to just beat you. This particular boy, “They [SSG officers] hit and hit, until he couldn’t speak or eat. All he could do is open his eyes and bleed. He died yesterday. . . . The Botswana Government must teach the SSGs not to beat people.”

More often than not though, once caught, immigrants are given the option of receiving a small number of lashes (anywhere from 3 to 5) from the customary court, a short jail sentence

(up to 3 months), or payment of a P100 fine. Since a P100 fine remains outside the financial reach of most Zimbabweans immigrants in Gaborone, most opt for the lashes or a jail sentence. At other times, when larger numbers of individuals have been caught by the police, the authorities will conduct mass deportations. A day long trip to the border on the “gumbakumba,”¹⁰⁷ the large armored truck capable of legally carrying 150 standing Zimbabweans, but known to carry up to twice as many bodies, is seen by most people I talked to as the least bad option. For those who want to remain in Botswana after being deposited back in Zimbabwe, re-jumping the border is easily accomplished, “If you get deported at 2:00 you can be back across the border at half 2,” one Zimbabwean who frequently moves between the countries told me. Even if the trip on the gumbakumba requires a stopover at a Francistown prison facility known for housing illegal immigrants, that isn’t necessarily a bad thing. One woman describes the prison’s environment as “being better than a cell here in town. It is just like [a] house: there is food, a bed, water to bathe with. The only difference is that you are not free to go, there is a big fence and the police.” A Zambian male illegally in Botswana, caught in the White City, threw away his passport in order to continue to claim he was from Zimbabwe, knowing that if he could successfully argue he was a Zimbabwean, his deportation would be expedited through the bureaucratic machinery. There are, on occasion, some advantages to being a “Zimbabwean” in White City during interactions with the authorities.

Apart from looking for employment and evading the ever-lurking beat cops and SSG “6-packs” rumbling across White City’s dusty interior streets, much of the activity occurring on the neighborhood’s corners revolved around talking, debating, and gossiping. For many, their treatment in Botswana is seen as “humiliating” because Zimbabweans are caricatured as

¹⁰⁷ This term was explained to me to be an Ndebele word meaning “big thing.”

“animals” or as “children.” Criticizing their coverage in the media, a Zimbabwean man says they are treated unfairly, telling me that photographers will come and take pictures of them running from the police, and the next day, the headline will say something like, “Illegal Immigrants out of Control.” Another complains, “I am not a criminal, but they treat me like one.” Indeed, many scoff at the popular contention that Zimbabweans are bringing crime into the country, thereby teaching Batswana how to become criminals. Batswana often steal, but when caught, a Zimbabwean woman sitting next to me on a White City street corner explains, “They will say that a Zimbabwean taught them.” Dismissing the blame, she continues, “Before we came here there were big jails in Botswana: *mo* Mahalapye, *mo* Francistown. Who are these jails for? They say Zimbabweans are stealing, but it’s all lies. . . . You can’t teach people things if they don’t want to learn them.”

Aware of their unflattering portrayal in public discourse, Zimbabweans eking out a living on White City streets—and no doubt elsewhere too—circulate their own counter-narrative about the perceived failings and character flaws of Botswana citizens.¹⁰⁸ The general consensus seems to be that while they are willing to work for Batswana they don’t have to like them. Some of the stories told about Batswana suggest they are predisposed to immoral behavior. If the police arrest Zimbabwean women, they will be “touching their private parts, abusing them.” Going even further, others describe Zimbabwean job-seekers who are murdered and mutilated by their Batswana employers.

Some of the people who are taken [for piece-jobs], especially the women, will be abused. They will be killed for business: they will take their heads and their hearts. The heads are used for fishing in South Africa. The hearts are used for medicine. This is happening here [in Gaborone]. Some of the women are raped. They risk their lives because they need

¹⁰⁸ For another example in a South African context, see: Loren B. Landau, “Transplants and transients: idioms of belonging and dislocation in inner-city Johannesburg”, *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), p. 139.

money. . . . Sometimes you are paid an amount less than what we agreed on. And if you complain they will take you to the police. We are lacking civil rights. We need civil rights.

However extreme, and unlikely, the beginning portion of the above scenario seems, it speaks to the frustration and feeling of helplessness experienced by many Zimbabweans looking for work in White City. People on the street are perplexed at the amount of energy expended pursuing Zimbabweans: “They spend all their time chasing Zimbabweans for nothing,” when “we have to eat, to get bus fare, to pay rent.”

They feel as if they are being taken advantage of: economically, morally, physically. For many, their marginal status in Gaborone is seen as especially degrading because they see Batswana as inferior. A common refrain amongst the Zimbabweans is that Batswana are an unintelligent people. Speaking of Batswana, a man from Harare says that their lack of education might explain the poor relations between citizens of the two countries, “They are not educated. They don’t know how to interact with other people. . . . They might not talk to you, but not because they don’t want to talk to you but because they don’t know how to speak English.” Another man says that in comparison to Zimbabwe’s cities, Gaborone’s town plan is totally disorganized: “if you don’t have a phone number, you will get lost.” He continues, “In Zimbabwe, people are much more civilized. Here you can find someone from the young generation, 15, 16, years old and they can’t speak a word of English.”

Many people tell stories about having outwitted Batswana, especially their immigration and police officers. One woman says while waiting for a washing job, “These Batswana are stupid.” She elaborates by describing easily tricked, illiterate immigration officials who need Zimbabweans to read their passports or point out the appropriate stamps. On a different occasion, I observed my research assistant get away with showing the police illegitimate documentation. While taking notes one morning, two police officers came to where we were

sitting to ask what we were doing. After questioning me about what I doing and writing in my notebook, they turned their attention to Ruth and demanded to see her papers. Reaching into her handbag, she gave one of the officers a tattered sheet of paper, which he studied for a minute, handed it back to her, and told her she needed to get the document laminated. With that, the pair walked off. Once they were a safe distance away, Ruth showed me the paper she gave to the cops. Printed on the top of the sheet in bold blacks letters, was the phrase “Emergency Travel Document.” Issued by the Zimbabwean government, it granted her permission to travel to Botswana (and South Africa). Laughing at the policeman’s inability to distinguish between documentation from Botswana and Zimbabwe she tells me, “These are so stupid. They are fooled by the picture [the seal of the Zimbabwean government] and stamps.”

Though this is perhaps more evidence of shoddy police work rather than proof of an innate lack of mental capacity, it is likely that these stories and episodes provide a way for Zimbabweans to subvert the authority, recapturing some control over their circumstances while reclaiming a personal pride. In the same way, fantasies get created stating that people are more compassionate and caring than those in Botswana. One woman tells a sympathetic crowd that her Batswana employers would eat in front of her without offering her anything. Confirming this point of view, “Batswana think Zimbabweans are not human beings. . . . Even a security guard will ask you for your passport.” He continues, concluding with what he suggests to be the ultimate condemnation of Batswana, “In Zimbabwe, if you ask for water, they will give you water.” On a different day, the typical Zimbabwean experience in Gaborone was thusly summed up, “Batswana? They don’t want us here. They hate us. They treat us like dogs.”

Citizen v. Stranger Struggles, White City and Beyond

As Batswana have tried to circle the wagons to defend their homeland in the face of what many perceive to be an inexorable march of Zimbabweans (and foreigners more generally) into

Botswana, Zimbabweans have complained that they are not being aided as their country implodes. There is a mix of befuddlement and resentment amongst Zimbabweans frequenting the White City streets. They understand themselves as being kept underfoot in a subordinate position. Tolerated to the extent that their cheaply available labor facilitated Gaborone's construction boom over the past few years and allowed even poor Botswana to employ domestic help. Because of their relatively high standard of living, Botswana, one Zimbabwean man told me are "like spoiled children" who don't behave in a properly "African way." Considering his own daily struggle for subsistence, the failure of Botswana to help, seemed particularly inexcusable to him. For many Zimbabweans who hang out daily on White City streets, an "African way" hints at set of moral precepts requiring a particular course of action. The ethical calculus formulated on the street corner says that rather than insulating themselves behind a new conception of Botswana citizenship, citizens of Botswana should be opening up their national community, embracing their Zimbabwean brothers in their time of trouble. In other words, Botswana should aid Zimbabweans today because no one can predict the future: their positions might one day be reversed.

Botswana's refusal to adhere to the Zimbabwean fantasy of an "African way" suggests two alternate responses to regional or global flows of capital, work, or, in this case, people. For the immigrants moving into Botswana, their precarious economic and social position is a signal that they need to be helped and welcomed. From the perspective of Botswana citizens however, these same flows are portents of a crisis of domestic economic, moral and social insecurity. To stave off catastrophe a wall must be built, constructed from sturdy and strictly defined notions of citizenship and belonging. Citizenship becomes a bunker of last resort, to be retreated to in the potentially cataclysmic national encounter with indecipherable global processes. There is, it

seems, an intractable tension between being citizens of Botswana and being citizens who adhere to a larger pan-African identity, as the Zimbabweans migrants living in Gaborone would have it.

Discourses of autochthony seem an inevitable response to uncontainable processes such as transgressed borders, regional transformations or populations teetering on the brink of an economic and cultural abyss. Perhaps then, under girded with at least a small dose of collectively experienced paranoia, it ought not be surprising that Botswana's people and government see a nation under threat. Symptoms of a siege mentality include: statements suggesting that Zimbabweans outnumber Botswana 2 to 1, observations that foreigners are taking Botswana's land out from under its citizens' feet, a military that continues to grow and grow despite the absence of any obvious formal threat. As the borders leak people inward and funnel jobs and capital outwards, defending against an external menace makes the experience of threat to Botswana and its people part of the fabric of everyday life. More than being daily-occurring phenomena, threats have seemingly permeated everywhere, down to the smallest capillaries of urban life in Gaborone, observable in the struggles between citizens and strangers routinely performed on the dusty street corners of White City, a large, centrally located, Gaborone neighborhood. Under assault from flows and processes outside their control, citizens of Botswana unify, finding virtue in their Botswanan birth, steeling themselves against who and what comes next.

Some White City Scenes



Figure 5-1. The Orapa House looms over White City (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 5-2. The Orapa House street corner (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 5-3. Three police officers on patrol. The traffic cones stake out an informal driving school (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 5-4. Two gumbakumba parked at a Gaborone immigration office (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 5-5. Sharing breakfast while waiting for work (Photograph: Steve Marr).



Figure 5-6. Hustling for a job on the Orapa House corner. The parked automobile is owned by a government agency. The government both hires and chases away Zimbabweans from the White City (Photograph: Steve Marr).

CHAPTER 6
FROM FILTH TO FEAR: SEQUESTERING POVERTY IN BOTSWANA'S CAPITAL CITY

Narratives depicting rickety tenements, disordered slums and shantytown urban wildernesses have been regularly put to print for well over 150 years. Various sensational, foreboding, scientific, moralistic, or descriptive, these stories—which first seemed to gain traction during the Victorian period in England—tend to share common themes and images, as if authors all borrowed from the same storehouse of literary or journalistic stock footage. No description of slums seems complete unless it mentions dirt or filth, stench or sewage, crime or vice; and preferably, some combination of the preceding elements. The people and places occupying these urban terrains—the vagrants, open sewers, petty thieves, prostitutes, ramshackle dwellings, and flophouse drunks—have become familiar characters and settings, tropes replete with their own generic backgrounds and histories.

One of the most potent and detailed explorations of slum life in the mid 19th century is Friedrich Engels' look at working class existence in Manchester. His chapter, "The Great Towns," reads like a travelogue, transporting the reader to the underbelly of urban and industrial centers across the UK. The journey concludes with an examination of Manchester's working class living arrangements. While ostensibly cast with a sympathetic eye, the quick, rat-a-tat survey of slum life teeters on the verge of a pornography of squalor and degradation, as the prose flits from one putrid garbage heap to the next, recycling adjectives like "filthy," "repulsive," or "foul." To cite one particularly colorful example, Engels writes of the community occupying a riverbank under Manchester's Ducie Bridge. An observer, presumably Engels, walking the neighborhood encounters the following:

[H]e wanders from one court to another, turns countless corners, passes nothing but narrow, filthy nooks and alleys, until after a few minutes he has lost all clue, and knows not whither to turn. Everywhere half or wholly ruined buildings, some of them actually uninhabited, which means a great deal here; rarely a wooden or stone floor to be seen in

the houses, almost uniformly broken, ill-fitting windows and doors, and a state of filth! Everywhere heaps of debris, refuse, and offal; standing pools for gutters, and a stench which alone would make it impossible for a human being in any degree civilized to live in such a district.¹

An indecipherable geography of pathways and alleys on one hand, a stifling atmosphere of unbreathable smells on the other; these characteristics encapsulate the outsiders' typically visceral and bewildered point of view on slum life.

Following Engels, other European writers extended the lineage of slum writing that emphasized the worst, most shocking aspects. Céline, in his angry and violent semi-autobiography *Journey to the End of the Night*, contrasts the wealthy parts of Paris—"the good part of the city"—with the parts falling outside the urban core. "All the rest," he says, "is shit and misery."² In keeping with his pessimistic account, elsewhere Céline describes "the crowds of dirty feet" that the "city does a good job of hiding" in the subterranean public transportation system where the poor are "compressed like garbage in [a] tin box."³ These are the residents of what he terms the "Fortified Zone."⁴ Unlike Engels, who lamented the social and economic injustice of slum occupants, reading Céline, one gets the feeling that he thinks the poor are a failed, deprived lot who are only receiving what they deserve. He further writes,

[T]he zone, that village of sorts, which never succeeds in picking itself entirely out of the mud and garbage, bordered by paths where precocious snotnosed little girls play hookey under the fences to garner a franc, a handful of French fries, and a dose of gonorrhea from some sex fiend. A setting for avante-garde films where the trees are poisoned with laundry and lettuces drip with urine on Saturday night.⁵

¹ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999), p. 63.

² Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night* (New Directions Books, New York, NY, 1983), p. 61.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288.

Despite their differing perspectives, both writers rely on similar images and themes to convey their points. Author orientations or biases are explicitly stated as slum-talk becomes universalized: slums are dirty, garbage-strewn, made impenetrable to external examination because of a confusing internal geography or expediently hidden from sight to tamp down the potentially combustible encounter between the civilized and the slum.

Writing during this period helped consolidate a durable discursive edifice that seeped into popular use, comprehension and imagination. Foucault, writing generally of the delinquent behavior that filled the pages of crime novels, suggests that the stories told had a lesson to impart to the reading public, “to show that the delinquent belonged to an entirely different world, unrelated to familiar everyday life,” while also demonstrating through crime novels that “delinquency appears both as very close and quite alien, a perpetual threat to everyday life, but extremely distant in its origins and motives, both everyday and exotic in the milieu in which it takes place.”⁶ George Orwell too, also recognized the tension between the quotidian and strange in stories about crime, slums and the marginal, as well as their enduring power. Orwell, for example, towards the conclusion of his ethnography on poverty and pauperism in Paris and London described the boogeyman-esque fantasy of what he deemed the “tramp-monster,” about whom English children had long been warned. While the physical spaces of slums seem beyond understanding, vagrants too—mobile, unpredictable, delinquent, a spectral presence on the fringes of the formal economy and respectable society—were equally unknowable and potentially dangerous. Summing up his undercover experiences on the streets of the two great capitals, Orwell says that by equating the poor to something monstrous, we thus permanently obfuscate the structures and origins of poverty, creating a distorted caricature instead. He writes:

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1977), p. 286.

In childhood we have been taught that tramps are blackguards, and consequently there exists in our minds a sort of ideal or typical tramp—a repulsive, rather dangerous creature, who would die rather than work or wash, and wants nothing but to beg, drink and rob hen-houses. This tramp-monster is no truer to life than the sinister Chinaman of the magazine stories, but he is very hard to get rid of. The very word ‘tramp’ evokes his image. And the belief in him obscures the real questions of vagrancy.⁷

These iconographies of deviance, danger or dirt set against the ordered, clean or secure bodies and spaces of Victorian-era urban modernity were, of course, not bound to the geographies of Europe, but were also applied elsewhere.

Writing in a different context, Sander Gilman links the symbols and fantasies of white prostitutes and African women. He finds that although there is no obvious, discernible connection between the two groups, talk and imagery about both is surprisingly similar. In explaining the similarities, Gilman argues that the “myths are so powerful . . . that they are able to move from class to class without substantial alteration.”⁸ Being transferable to a variety of circumstances and locations allows these patterns to support particular ideologies or configurations of power. This was certainly true of the colonial project, in which invocations of the dirty or filthy native could simultaneously legitimate the civilizing mission of colonialism while also demonstrating the inherent superiority of the white colonizer. Suggestive of the former, Warwick Anderson frames a critical component of the American colonial endeavor in the Philippines as an effort to cleanse the region colonial officials viewed as a “desolate human-waste land . . . [that was] ‘brownwashed’ with a thin film of germs” through an ongoing process of “massive, ceaseless disinfection.”⁹ While of the latter, writer of Empire Rudyard Kipling,

⁷ George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (Harcourt, New York, NY, 1933), pp. 200-201.

⁸ Sander L. Gilman, “Black bodies, white bodies: toward an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine, and literature”, *Critical Inquiry*, **12**, 1 (Autumn 1985), p. 205.

⁹ Warwick Anderson, “Excremental colonialism: public health and the poetics of pollution”, *Critical Inquiry*, **21**, 3 (Spring 1995), p. 641.

spends a good portion of his short novella *The City of Dreadful Night* decrying, not to mention, describing the various bad smells of Calcutta. Deeming it the “Big Calcutta Stink” that “resembles the essence of corruption that has rotted for the second time,” he concludes the first chapter with the following observation: “Let us sleep, let us sleep, and pray that Calcutta may be better to-morrow. At present it is remarkably like sleeping with a corpse.”¹⁰

African authors too, in writing about slums, seem to faintly echo the examples and characterizations described above. Sensitive to the circumstances on the ground, they attempt to humanize occupants of slums, make some sense of the everyday lives of the urban poor, or criticize the economic injustices prevalent in African cities. Yet, at the same time, the words used to illustrate the settings or characters convey the same basic slum typology employed by their European counterparts; variously describing the inscrutability of slum residents, dirt and disorder, or accentuating the scatological. Fugard’s story of the brutal(ized) township gangster *Tsotsi* says that his daily survival depends not only on remaining indecipherable to outside observers, but also to himself as he sought “never to disturb his inward darkness.”¹¹ Meja Mwangi’s take on post-colonial urban poverty in Kenya describes the local “Shanty Land” as being “built of paper, tin, mud and anything that could keep out the rain, thrown together in no particular pattern. The shacks were so closely built that . . . they looked like a rubbish dump full of paper and shining tin.”¹² Or consider Chris Abani’s exceptional portrait of life in an early 1980s Lagos ghetto. In contrast to the wealth and opulence of some parts of Lagos, much of the novel’s action occurs in the various slums throughout the city. The main character, the teenager

¹⁰ Rudyard Kipling, *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Stories* (Books Inc., New York, NY, n.d.), pp. 14; 18.

¹¹ Athol Fugard, *Tsotsi* (Grove Press, New York, NY, 1980), p. 36.

¹² Meja Mwangi, *Kill Me Quick* (Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1973), p. 50.

Elvis, surveys his home neighborhood of Maroko, describing a nightmarish scene practically identical to Engels' bleak evocation of 1840s Manchester:

Half the town was built of a confused mix of clapboard, wood, cement and zinc sheets, raised above a swamp by means of stilts and wooden walkways. . . . As [Elvis] looked, a child, a little boy, sank into the black filth under one [of] the houses, rooting like a pig. Elvis guessed it was some form of play. To his left, a man squatted on a plank walkway outside his house, defecating into the swamp below, where a dog lapped up the feces before they hit the ground. Elvis looked away in disgust and saw another young boy sitting on an outcrop of planking, dangling a rod in the water.¹³

The horrific imagery of one young boy playing in the brackish muck, while another fishes in a water source whose boundaries are indistinguishable from an open sewer builds on a long established tradition of slum portrayals. Again, these places are depicted as filthy, residents' behaviors are degraded or seemingly sub-human and so on. Whether speaking of Lagos or Paris or Manchester, slums retain universal, familiar traits.

But to ask the "so what" question: what, in the end, can we glean from this cursory overview of the preceding discursive composite? Perhaps not much if these words and images had an exclusively Western origin or were limited to a single geographic region or a particular moment in time. By taking a more expansive view though, what is revealed as we widen the focus to Africa, and even wider still to the capital city of Botswana, the pattern resurfaces and is almost replicated verbatim. The continued functioning of slum-talk into the present, and into Botswana, hints at the power and utility of this discursive complex.

Power directed toward what objective? Implied in the persistence of these communicative forms is the possibility that rather than being perpetuated in order to identify the problems faced by residents of slums for the purpose of bettering their lives, the continued usage of slum descriptions in Botswana, which originate from a source across a large temporal and spatial

¹³ Chris Abani, *Graceland* (Picador, New York, NY, 2004), p. 48.

distance, serves to create a mutable catalog of deviance and difference. In turn, these processes work to disconnect, if not isolate, the urban poor from the greater urban communities, which they, at least geographically, inhabit. Words, rumors, spatial markers such as maps and signposts, official communications and statistics—subsumed under a broad category of slum-talk—like the residents who themselves live on the urban periphery, assume a spectral presence in the discursive vernacular, seep into common usage, and work to compartmentalize the physical geography, in this case, in the capital of Botswana: Gaborone. Whether intentional or not is perhaps irrelevant, at least for what is to follow. Instead, the consequences—the separation of the respectable places and people of Gaborone from the backwards, dirty, or dangerous occupants of the largest slum in the city who might pose a threat to those practicing modern, urban living—are more important.

To hint at what is to follow, let me provide a few basic details. Old Naledi began as a camp for workers involved in the Capital Project to build Gaborone in the mid 1960s. Originally situated outside the city limits, as Gaborone expanded, adding buildings and people, the city encroached on the worker camp—which at this time was known only as “Naledi,” the “Old” was added some time later following government efforts to build an ordered and planned neighborhood, “New” Naledi. New Naledi however, never succeeded in supplanting Old Naledi, as the officially sanctioned alternative place to live. Over time then, as the capital grew larger, (Old) Naledi was swallowed by Gaborone; today it is surrounded by urban development, located on the southern side of the city. Old Naledi managed to survive into the present, despite early efforts by city officials to have it demolished and its residents relocated. And even from its earliest days as an unauthorized settlement, Old Naledi has always been home to approximately one-quarter to one-third of the entire city’s population. The continued presence of Old Naledi

has long been a source of consternation and embarrassment, even as the government has attempted to upgrade the neighborhood, for a city that presents itself as a shining exemplar of Botswana's self-proclaimed economic and political successes.

The general feeling of ambivalence about Old Naledi from residents of Botswana can be gleaned from some of the earliest writings about the location, as well as those from a more contemporary period. In 1976, ten years after the official founding of Gaborone, steps were taken to initiate a development project for Old Naledi. In describing the need for an infrastructural upgrade, the usual slum descriptions were employed, as in the opening line of Botswana's *Kutlwano* magazine's article on the subject: "Those shanty huts made out of conglomerations of mud, grass, coconut leaves, cardboards, beer tins, oil drums and all types of metals pieced together will certainly be bulldozed [sic] out of existence. . . ." ¹⁴ Instead of these "futile effort[s] to provide for human habitation" ¹⁵ the structures will be cleared to make way for housing that "conforms with both hygienic [sic] and architectural standards set for the area." ¹⁶ Also at odds with the modern urban presumptions of Botswana's still new capital, was the physical layout of the settlement as the streets "winds [sic] like wild animals' trails." ¹⁷ All these modifications were necessary because, as the authors almost ruefully notes, it would be "impossible politically, socially, and economically to completely put a stop to and prohibit squatters from settling" in Gaborone. ¹⁸ If people couldn't be prevented from relocating to

¹⁴ Paul Rantao, 'Blue print to upgrade Naledi squalid status', *Kutlwano*, **10**, 1976, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Gaborone, they must be reconstituted in order to fit the expectations required for legitimate membership in the urban community.

An article from the same publication written a quarter century later articulates the same set of problems and images. In its early years, Old Naledi was deemed a “cesspit of people.”¹⁹ In the intervening years, the descriptions have only marginally improved. While, for example, noting the “vast improvement” in the neighborhood that is vaguely stated in terms of infrastructure development and “getting rid of thugs,” Old Naledi remains embedded in a slum discourse that distinguishes it from the rest of Gaborone as a defiled site.²⁰ The author notes that Gaborone residents remain “prejudiced” against Old Naledi because “like many heavily populated and low income urban areas,”

[Old Naledi] is dirty. People discard garbage indiscriminately and pour dirty water on the roads.

If you have a weak liver you may not stomach the putrid smells from pit latrines which perforate the air at certain times of the day.²¹

Worth noting is the fact that the above passage speaks only generally about the positive changes in Old Naledi, dwelling instead, and in specific detail, on the usual descriptive and normative judgments about filth and disorder. And going even further, the unnamed author suggests that not just is the air contaminated, but that the behaviors of its residents are to blame. Old Naledi, in other words, might be a clean, civilized and respectable place, if it weren't for the people who live there. The statement declaring Old Naledi to be “dirty” refers to much more than the physical location the neighborhood occupies.

¹⁹ *Kutlwano*, ‘Old Naledi: a Setswana village grappling with urban problems’, **38**, 3 (March 2000), p. 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

One final example ought to be included here, as these adjectives and biases are injected into formal policy or development discussions. The overpopulation of Old Naledi has resulted in a shortage of adequate bathroom facilities (pit latrines are the norm in the neighborhood). Consequently, the open areas of the railway reserve adjacent to Old Naledi are “used extensively for indiscriminate defecation, with the flies, smells and open access posing all too obvious health hazards. The main organisms . . . [that present a risk] are a number of pathogenic bacteria, viruses, parasitic protozoa and helminthes. . . .”²² Exposed trash is also a problem. Bins “are normally overflowing with miscellaneous garbage. They contain rotting refuse, have offensive smells and attract flies and other vermin. . . .”²³

While the researcher might raise a legitimate point, the rhetoric fetishizing the diseases, contaminants, and the transgression of public space by bringing, for example, private (bodily) functions out into the open situates Old Naledi in direct opposition to the rest of a sterilized, secure and ordered Gaborone where people, along with garbage and waste, can be predictably located in their proper place. The ultimate consequence of this opposition is that if Old Naledi can’t be cleaned up and reformed, it must be contained. These concerns related to the maintenance of urban order are not new to Gaborone, nor are they limited to abstract, ambiguous discursive realms. Instead slum talk is directly inserted into wider concerns about poverty and urban citizenship, as will be demonstrated in the upcoming discussion about Gaborone’s oldest and largest slum, Old Naledi.

²² Thando D. Gwebu, “Environmental problems among low income urban residents: an empirical analysis of Old Naledi—Gaborone, Botswana”, *Habitat International*, **27** (2003), p. 421.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

Bugs and Dirt and Crud: Accounting for the Ick! Factor in Colonial Bechuanaland

In her anthropological study of rituals practiced by people from ancient times to now, Mary Douglas discussed the practical uses of discursive and symbolic boundaries in religious and cultural life. Ostensibly a work of comparative religion, *Purity and Danger* possesses relevance extending far beyond these narrowly focused disciplinary boundaries. Douglas's take on the meaning and formations of the symbolisms of sterility and impurity, or disorder and cleanliness, along with, for example, the mechanisms to prevent or punish transgressions of these borders, expressly touches the topics of social control, politics and power. Of particular relevance in a discussion about slums, is her understanding of the social construction of dirt. Society, Douglas suggests, is perhaps best described in terms of the borders and boundaries that delineate it.²⁴ Rather than conceiving of the image of society as a coherent body with clearly defined edges, Douglas presents us with a more muddled picture. The margins, gaps and interstices where things don't just quite fit together or are beset by ambiguity pose problems for creating and maintaining an internally coherent social order, where the good is clearly identified from the bad, where the clean can be readily distinguished from the dirty.

Yet, determining where clean ends and dirt begins is rarely a simple, or static, task. Dirt never exists by itself, and therefore can't just be extricated on its own to exist as a discrete, stand-alone entity: "where there is dirt there is system."²⁵ In other words, by identifying what is dirty, contaminated or bad, judgments are also being made that determine what is clean, pure or good. The function of boundaries, as lines we are forbidden to cross, is to provide a guiding framework to the practice of living, "to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is

²⁴ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966), p. 114.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.”²⁶ By the same logic, the slum is extracted from, and set against, the city center (the proper city); the designation between those who retain a legitimate right to the urban space of the city and those who don’t is starkly (though not always permanently) drawn. Ambiguity over citizenship is erased and the subsequent possibilities of confusion and contamination are decreased, at least ideally. In contemporary Gaborone for example, the “right” kinds of urban citizens are those who watch satellite television and possess an ATM card, while those who lack indoor plumbing or don’t own a car are relegated to a fuzzy inter-zone of urban citizenship—they might live in the city, but they aren’t really *of* the city.

“Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment.”²⁷ Urbanity, like beauty, is a quality that seems to exist in the eye of the beholder. Therefore, those people not quite adhering to the standards of respectable urban living are seen by those positioned to impose their judgments as a form of human dirt cluttering up the cityscape. These determinations about what constitute dirt and disorder are inherently normative. They outline an idealized version of the city, marking out its symbolic and physical topography and identifying who should be allowed to not only traverse, but also occupy, its spaces. In this way, the slum and slum-dweller are differentiated from the rest of the city and its inhabitants.

In their work on the politics of boundary-making/maintaining, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White further explore these processes in their work on high and low cultural practices and

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

spaces.²⁸ They write that the symbolic binaries of high and low constitute a “fundamental basis to mechanisms of ordering and sense-making”.²⁹ Applied to the spaces of the city, the functions of these mechanisms was to make the city knowable, predictable, and routinized—where everybody and everything could be found, and bound, to their appropriate place. One of the primary purposes being to remove the possibility of unpleasant or surprising urban encounters with matter-out-of-place, where finding a street corner beggar in a safe suburban enclave might be akin to finding a swimming cockroach in your soup. As Stallybrass and White note, the middle classes feared the slums because these places were viewed as open, whose borders were easily transcended, leaving open the possibility that the proper areas of the city might be placed in danger by having unregulated contact with these outsiders.³⁰

These concerns were not just limited to European geography. Indeed, as European attitudes and biases transcended their borders of origin as they accompanied the colonial project, it is only “reasonable to expect that the European background formed a major source of inspiration for the white response to social problems in Africa.”³¹ Though writing specifically of Victorian London, but also equally relatable to the colonial fears of the unsupervised, “off the grid” migrants who founded Old Naledi, Henry Mayhew identifies the two urban “races:” the “wanderers and the civilized tribes.”³² He describes the wanderers as having a “repugnance to regular and continuous labor . . . by his passion for stupefying herbs and roots, and, when

²⁸ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1986). See especially the ‘Introduction’ and ‘The city: the sewer, the gaze and the contaminating touch.’

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

³¹ Maynard W. Swanson, “The sanitation syndrome: bubonic plague and urban native policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909”, *The Journal of African History*, **18**, 3 (1977), p. 390.

³² Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 128.

possible, for intoxicating fermented liquors . . . by his love of libidinous dances . . . by the absence of the chastity among his women. . . .”³³ Protecting the civilized urban dweller from these negative influences required that the sanctified spaces of fantasy, imagination, and geography be “systematically scoured.”³⁴ Through, for example, State-sponsored health regulations, urban planning, or housing schematics, city spaces can be cleansed, marking out the boundary between safety and danger, civilized and wild.

It is not though, only the macro spaces of the city that become sites of contestation, as the body is placed under scrutiny in order to make it conform to the practices of modern urban living. That is, further removed from the broad tendrils of official policy, informal norms of behavior become powerful tools to remake, if possible, demonize—more likely—slum dwellers. Rules governing the acceptable limits of public behavior, for example, become markers of bourgeois identification: dumping garbage in public, smelling bad, Chris Abani’s fictional child at play rooting around in filth like a pig, or Gwebu’s “indiscriminate defecation”: all these mundane behaviors of the everyday are affixed with a political tinge, as they denote a distinctive non-urban identity (to those who look on disapprovingly, that is).³⁵ Or to extend the language to the American colonial enterprise in the Philippines, bodies of the American colonizers, unlike those of the colonized, were understood as having overcome the grotesque products and limitations previously imposed by their bodily functions.³⁶ In keeping with this new imagery trope of the modern American body, an act of “indiscriminate defecation” served as an

³³ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1861), quoted in Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 128.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90.

³⁶ Anderson, ‘Excremental colonialism’, pp. 648-650.

uncrossable chasm marking the boundary between civilization and its antithesis. As Americans, the supposed mastery of the body, meant that the body was recast as a sort of natural machine, an ideal human vehicle fit for living in an industrial age.³⁷ Part of the progression from filthy to clean, primitive to modern, this transcendence of the natural body is what the colonized native peoples of the Philippines were exhorted to aspire. Whether they could actually ever become “fully” modern—one thinks not—is another matter entirely. But what is important to take note of then, as David Arnold suggests, is that notions of public health were not just a bundle of rules and regulations cultivated exclusively for practical application on Third World bodies, but they also functioned as an ideological tool, as an “incontrovertible demonstration of the superiority of Western science” and culture.³⁸

If people want to be truly embraced as a legitimate urban citizen, the thinking of the urban resident goes, they must overcome their unseemly tendencies, if not, they must keep to their own confined spaces and away from those who’ve already attained full-fledged urban status. The quest to obtain sanitized urban spaces as outlined in the works above however, proved to be an elusive, though enduring goal, of colonial (and post-colonial) city-making in Africa and elsewhere. In Old Naledi, as elsewhere, the objectives of urban planning and public health merged.³⁹

As has already been intimated, at the core of regulations enacted to maintain a cleansed city free from population impurities are efforts to keep order, binding marginal people and things

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 650.

³⁸ David Arnold, ‘Public health and public power: medicine and hegemony in colonial India’, in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and society in Africa and India* (British Academic Press, London, 1994), p. 139.

³⁹ Philip D. Curtin, “Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa”, *The American Historical Review*, **90**, 3 (June 1985), p. 594.

to the geographies where the State and urban elite expects to find them. Whether out of place, or at a more ambiguous extreme, placeless—as a homeless person or transient labor migrant moving from village to city and back again might be—people “living outside of any embedding context and divested of all social location[s]” posed unique problems to society and the State.⁴⁰ Not the least of which being that the Dis-embedded presented potential challenges or personified subversions to authority. Because transient populations weren’t easily counted made urban governance and administration difficult, the colonial solution to these problems involved some combination of supervision and segregation of African urban dwellers.⁴¹ Similar to dirt and filth then, “placelessness” can be understood as a normative construct directed towards problem populations.⁴² In this view, there is, in other words, a right way and a wrong way to engage in urban living: the middle class for example, with its ordered neighborhoods and rigid implementation of private/public distinctions, has got it more or less correct, not so much for the typical slum-dweller, whose rootlessness and ambiguous use of urban spaces seemed to exemplify an innate moral degradation. These conclusions made efforts to insulate “rightful” urban citizens from the potential negative influence of faulty citizens seem all the more reasonable and urgent.

And thus Africans were characterized as vectors of disease on the one hand, and harbingers of moral calamity on the other. Much as the talk about slums and their occupants in Victorian Britain across most of the decades of the 1800s, well-publicized “images of decay, of untamed sexuality and of the madness of disorder” likewise brought about the “general pathologization”

⁴⁰ Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, “Crossing the Howrah Bridge: Calcutta, filth and dwelling—forms, fragments, phantasms”, *Theory, Culture & Society*, **23**, 7-8 (2006), p. 228.

⁴¹ Curtin, “Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa,” p. 607.

⁴² Mukhopadhyay, “Crossing the Howrah Bridge”, p. 229.

of African populations.⁴³ A widely disseminated trope in colonial Africa perpetuated these characterizations, as African rural life was valorized and those who found themselves living in urban environments were depicted as deficient, as yet unfit for city-living. The mythology of the “healthy reserve” and the “dressed native” rather disingenuously, as it reinforced a set of political and economic interests related to migration and the control of labor, posited that it was for their own good that Africans remain in the rural areas or homelands.⁴⁴

Specifically sketching the dichotomy between an African living in an overly idealized state of nature and one living on a city’s peripheral, T. Duncan Greenless, a South African health official made a “clear distinction between the ‘uncontaminated native’ living a simple mode of life and the ‘contaminated,’ living in or near cities. The latter were found to suffer most from ‘general paralysis,’ which Greenless attributed to ‘excessive drinking and the smoking of *dagga*’.”⁴⁵ These stereotypes and discourses were no doubt common across the Southern African region, including in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Indeed, as will be seen below, these mythologies were manifest in the planning of Gaborone and were perhaps used to legitimate the official reactions of colonial officers to the unauthorized appearance of Africans and the informal settlements in which they resided. By tracing the topography and mechanics of discourse about slums and Africans and city planning, we can see that informal talking points and conversations and official health and political discourse corroborated each other.

But before moving on to the specifics of the Gaborone case, it is worth mentioning a few other applicable points related to planning for Africans in South Africa. The South African case

⁴³ Megan Vaughn, ‘Health and hegemony: representation of disease and the creation of the colonial subject in Nyasaland’, in Engels and Marks, *Contesting Colonial Hegemony*, p. 181.

⁴⁴ Randall M. Packard, “The ‘healthy reserve’ and the ‘dressed native’: discourses on black health and the language of legitimization in South Africa”, *American Ethnologist*, **16**, 4 (November 1989), p. 687.

⁴⁵ Vaughn, ‘Health and hegemony’, p. 175.

is particularly instructive for a look at events in Botswana because of the close geographic proximity of the two nations; as a satellite of its larger neighbor to the south, the South African Republic wielded much influence in the economics, politics and colonial culture of Bechuanaland. Also included underneath the umbrella of the South African sphere of influence, attitudes related to the regulation of slums and poor urban Africans permeated the planning bureaucracy charged with founding Botswana's new capital. The "clean slate" approach to urban development in British colonial Africa, in which cities were sited on previously undeveloped land, allowed health and racial and economic segregation to be built directly into the spatial fabric of the city.⁴⁶

And where founding a city on pristine land wasn't possible at the onset, efforts to enforce "rules for public hygiene" or the "police of dwellings" has been a long-used tool of the State to manage the difference(s) embodied by the poor.⁴⁷ In South Africa example, where the construction of urban areas occurred well before the establishment of comprehensive housing or urban planning regulations, South African urban centers, government planners in the first decades of the 20th century, in the name of cleaning up the cities, advocated that slums and African housing be cleared and relocated away from the core urban areas and rebuilt on land sited on the cities' outskirts.⁴⁸ Of course though, as Susan Parnell points out, the enforcement of town planning regulations on African neighborhoods hinged on whether or not they were useful

⁴⁶ Curtin, 'Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa', p. 602.

⁴⁷ Giovanna Procacci, 'Social economy and the government of poverty', in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in governmentality with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991), pp. 164-165.

⁴⁸ Susan Parnell, "Creating racial privilege: the origins of South African public health and town planning legislation", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **19**, 3 (September 1993), p. 481.

as a means to evict these populations from the urban areas determined to be for exclusively white usage.⁴⁹

For one final word about the interaction between the talk about health and urban planning in South Africa we will draw from the work of the urban historian, Maynard Swanson. Swanson suggests that metaphors related to disease, hygiene, danger or crime produce urban segregation: metaphors, he writes, “function not simply as rationalizations but as active motives or forces tending to shape perceptions, perspectives and behavior in those who rule[.]”⁵⁰ In the case of Durban, for example, political and economic conflicts between whites and Indians were couched in terms of dirt and pollution, as whites attempted to assert their dominance over the spaces of the city by consistently associating Indian “coolies” with filth and squalor.⁵¹ And although these characterizations didn’t mesh with facts on the ground, demonizing the Indian population proved an effective tactic for achieving social control through urban planning and segregation.

Similarly, white collective panic over the presence of urban-dwelling Africans who were considered to be festering pockets of disease—during, for example, the outbreak of plague in the Cape Colony around the turn of the 20th century—saw the “sanitation syndrome [become] a fundamental condition of the white response to African urbanization.”⁵² These measures more than faintly echo Foucault’s description of a typical 17th century European town placed under quarantine following an outbreak of bubonic plague.⁵³ Indeed, the formal State-led white response to epidemics in South Africa, or even for more mundane public health concerns,

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

⁵⁰ Maynard W. Swanson, “‘The Asiatic menace’: creating segregation in Durban, 1870-1900”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, **16**, 3 (1983), p. 402.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 408; 420.

⁵² Swanson, “The sanitation syndrome”, pp. 396; 407.

⁵³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195-200.

involved, perhaps inevitably, policies related to urban segregation that eventually became more a matter of policing and surveillance than it was purely about the application of health regulations.⁵⁴

Taking Foucault and Swanson in tandem is of great value here: and Swanson especially, since he is writing of circumstances relevant specifically to the Southern African context. He makes clear that reality and actual real-life health worries often took a back seat to public hysteria and long disseminated myths about the inherent dangers of civilized, middle class whites associating, if only tangentially through casual contact, with poor, African slum-dwellers. Linking morality and modernity to the quality and layout of urban environments—whether those in European metropolises, and later, in colonial cities—colored, and actively influenced, the official policy reactions marshaled to grapple with urban slums. There is though, perhaps another motivating factor at work here beyond simply solving—whatever that might even meant in colonial urban society—the slum puzzle. A further consequence of the prominence of stories of fear, danger and moral degradation is that they are often used to obscure the enduring political or economic inequalities that enable slums to be created, as well as persist, in the first place. This is as true in the early days of the Cape Colony, as it is today with regards to the contemporary circumstances and marginalization of Old Naledi in Gaborone. The repetition of these stories, where the poor are painted as “tramp-monsters,” boogeymen or worse, becomes an explicitly political act—even as the story itself is decontextualized and depoliticized—that reinforces, indeed legitimates, structural inequities. As Charles Briggs explains in a piece on

⁵⁴ Swanson, “The sanitation syndrome”, pp. 387; 398.

cholera and conspiracy theory, the everyday performance of subtle prejudice and discrimination turns the people on the margins into inscrutable “monsters.”⁵⁵

Well before construction on the Capital Project started in Bechuanaland, generalized talk of the dirty, unhygienic Motswana had long circulated in colonial government circles. Much of the discussion tended to focus, not just on the supposedly poor living environments, but also on the bodies and minds of the Batswana, implying that they were somehow cognitively deficient or naturally predisposed to unhealthy living (as defined by colonial observers). Writing to the Principal Medical Officer stationed in Mafikeng, the District Commissioner of Gaborones condescendingly advises that there is little hope of enacting behavioral change through talking and education, “Unless, of course, you intend paying the native to help himself.”⁵⁶ He further elaborates “that it is useless talking to [Batswana] about the risks of dysentery, enteric, plague and so on, for their usual reply is really unanswerable—they will say that their fathers, grandfathers . . . lived as they did now and if these diseases did not attack and overwhelm them why should they do so now?”⁵⁷ From the perspective of the Batswana, this folk logic, though belittled in the above inter-office correspondence, makes a good bit of sense. But for the British colonial officer taught to fear dirt and disease from his earliest days, such apparent cultural obstinacy served as another piece of accumulated evidence regarding the backwardness of their colonial subjects. Adhering to the established pattern of beliefs about “dirty” natives and the susceptibility of whites to their diseases, these failings were framed as dangers—in need of

⁵⁵ Charles L. Briggs, “Theorizing modernity conspiratorially: science, scale and the political economy of public discourse in explanations of a cholera epidemic”, *American Ethnologist*, **31**, 2 (2004), p. 165.

⁵⁶ District Commissioner of Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Dispatch to the Principal Health Officer in Mafeking, 22 August 1936’ (Collected Files, ‘Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, 1936).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

urgent solution—that might ultimately impinge on the health and well-being of Europeans living throughout the region.

Subsequently, in a 1937 meeting with the Native Advisory Council, the Resident Commissioner urged local leaders to do something to protect their clean water wells. “I have asked the teachers,” he later wrote in a summary of the meeting, “. . . with the consent of the Headman, to put a parapet at least round one well to stop the filth of this somewhat filthy country [from] going into the water supply, to put up at least one incinerator to burn the rubbish rather than dig a hole into which someone wandering home late at night might fall, even myself. . . .”⁵⁸

While the above passage is amusing for the ironic image of the disapproving colonial administrator toppling into a garbage pit of the sort he desperately wanted to eradicate, it inadvertently exposes the core objective of the application of health policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: when it came down to it, though perhaps not terribly surprising, the health of the white population was of primary importance. Health regulations, as with planning regulations in adjacent South Africa (see the article by Susan Parnell cited earlier in this chapter), were only necessary or enforced insofar as there might be a possibility that the European population could be harmed. A description of the living circumstances of the white residents of the large village, and capital of the Bamangwato tribe, Serowe, suggests this might indeed be the case. Written by observers sent from London, the report notes:

[G]enerally speaking, however, sanitary conditions throughout [the] B.P. are appalling and the effect of the lack of a public health branch of the medical service is everywhere evident. Conditions under which some of the poorer white people[,] farmers and storekeepers are living in must be seen to be believed. At towns such as Serowe[,] European houses are scattered through the town amongst the Native huts, the Residency is

⁵⁸ Native Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the 18th Session of the Native Advisory Council, 4-6 March 1937’ (Collected Files, ‘Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, 1937).

up against the Native prison, and there is no possible control over animals, dust, and flies. The Bechuana native has never learnt the use of a latrine, even in larger villages. . . .⁵⁹

The struggle for village hygiene, therefore, was not only about helping Batswana maintain clean water sources or supply a more efficient way to take out the trash. It was, in terms laid out by the Resident Commissioner, a battle for the moral health of the village(r), both white and black. The “state of sanitation in some of the villages,” he proclaimed to the Native Advisory Council, was the physical manifestation of “evil,” an evil to “tackle,”⁶⁰ a dragon to be slayed by the powers—however limited or ill-funded they might have been in the Bechuanaland Protectorate—of the State.

In this declared battle against “evil,” where Batswana were the specific focus of health regulations, implementation was generally geared towards efforts designed to legitimate and maintain a sufficient level of control and observation so that policies could be enforced from above. Public health proclamations were both oriented toward the general Batswana population inhabiting the territory, as in 1924’s decree allowing the quarantine and movement restrictions of individuals in case of an infectious disease outbreak, to specific groups of individuals, as with “The Health and Sanitation (Mines and Works)” rule of 1934.⁶¹ The mining and sanitation rule is particularly illuminating for what it says about colonial perceptions about the inherent dirtiness and backwardness of Africans. The Proclamation gives instructions pertaining to sanitary

⁵⁹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Advise on Medical Administration in [the] Bechuanaland Protectorate’ (Collected Files, ‘Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, no date).

⁶⁰ Native Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the 18th Session of the Native Advisory Council, 4-6 March 1937’.

⁶¹ Both Proclamation No. 51 of 1934 and Proclamation No. 54 of 1934 (known as ‘The Health and Sanitation (Mines and Works) (Bechuanaland Protectorate) Proclamation, 1934’) can be found in: Bechuanaland Protectorate, *High Commissioner’s Proclamations and more Important Government Notices, from 1st January to 31st December 1934* (Mafeking, 1935).

supervisions and inspections, as well as more detailed explanations for the number of toilet facilities needed in proportion to the number of workers (1 bucket latrine for every 50 people) to the amount of air needed for proper breathing and ventilation (“sleeping accommodation shall not contain less cubic air space than 600 feet for Europeans and 250 feet for natives.”).⁶² Also worth noting for its addition to the composite picture being developed is the rations scale for the African laborers:

- Mealie Meal: 1 ½ lbs. per day
- Beans: 2 lbs. per week
- Meat: 2 lbs. per week
- Vegetables: 2 lbs. per week
- Peanuts (shelled): 1 lb. per week
- Salt: 3.5 ounces per week⁶³

These policies detailing the basic nourishment or oxygen requirements of “native” workers seem little different than the instructions a person might leave with a friend charged with watching a house-pet. Essentially they are rules governing the upkeep of the African manual laborer, the product of a bureaucratic calculus used to determine what is the bare minimum required to keep the body alive and functioning.

Ultimately, the delineation of basic rules used to keep mineworkers supervised, alive and in sanitary conditions extended to the broader circumstances of everyday village life across the Protectorate. In the “Bechuanaland Protectorate Sanitary Regulations,” again enacted in 1934, the government imposed rules ranging from advising on the appropriate distance from a person’s house where they might legally “relieve nature” to the obligation to clear brush and undergrowth

⁶² See specifically: Pt. 2, Section 3 of ‘The Health and Sanitation (Mines and Works) (Bechuanaland Protectorate) Proclamation, 1934’. The concerns with air circulation perhaps make more sense when considered in the context of the desire to build Gaborone with proper “lungs” in order to encourage what was thought to be a healthy level of ventilation for its European inhabitants. This issue, as it relates to urban planning ideology and the construction of Gaborone, is addressed in Chapter 2.

⁶³ These subsistence guidelines are listed in ‘The Health and Sanitation (Mines and Works) (Bechuanaland Protectorate) Proclamation, 1934’.

if the local colonial health official determined that their presence “may impair the health of the community, by harbouring mosquitoes, reptiles or rodents.”⁶⁴ As the District Commissioner of Gaborones quoted above cautioned in his memo to the Medical Officer a few years later, these policy proposals attempt to “break into the native’s private life and alter his ways of living—a delicate matter. . . .”⁶⁵ And indeed, these requirements did more than just benignly transform everyday village life, they actively sought to supplant it with a set of rules and behaviors deemed more appropriate and respectable, and which were, in the final analysis, more palatable to European tastes. In this way, then, the imposition of polite society was inevitably political, as it worked to reshape rural village landscapes, while also recasting African bodies so that they might better conform to Western behavioral expectations.

The Establishment of Unauthorized Settlements in Gaborone

Decades later, as the planning of Gaborone begin to build some momentum, these widely held worries and apprehensions were reactivated—if, they ever actually were muted or went underground—as city officials and local elites, worked to write unauthorized people and settlements out of the designs for the new capital. When that wasn’t feasible, or possible, colonial officers attempted to at least manage the development process, as well as the flow of people into Gaborone. To this end, exercising some form of development control to limit the number of people who might move to Gaborone, as well as providing a supervised space for Batswana, was from the beginning, seen as a key measure of the success of the new town. Failing to account for the possibility of slums would, the Director of Public Works warned in a working paper, would produce “tin shacks, an assortment of mud huts, which eventually results

⁶⁴ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘High Commissioner’s Notice 116 of 1934: Bechuanaland Protectorate Sanitary Regulations’, in *High Commissioner’s Proclamations and more Important Government Notices*.

⁶⁵ District Commissioner of Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Dispatch to the Principal Health Officer in Mafeking, 22 August 1936’.

in an unhygienic Shanty-Town”⁶⁶ with the potential to subvert the intentions of the planners by engulfing the colonial design of Gaborone.

Such a result, for a planned town where the allocation of every plot or business permit was, at least officially, even if not always practically possible, a matter of careful consideration, would mean Gaborone was a failed city, a perversion of the planners’ intent. The importance placed on an ordered and well-planned urban environment meant that apart from the bigger issues of neighborhood construction and the decisions regarding where to put people, even the most mundane and trivial matters were subject to state intervention. In the months preceding the formal start of the Capital Project, for example, G. S. L. Atkinson, the District Commissioner of Gaborone, circulated a memo to the European residents of the area urging them, “in the interests of everybody’s peace and quiet, and in the interests of good neighbourliness,” to check the “considerable inconvenience” caused by barking dogs.⁶⁷

Newly arrived Batswana allowed to live within the city limits—manual laborers and other service workers needed to keep Botswana’s political and commerce hub functional—were relegated to designated areas of low cost/high density housing apart from the upper and middle class ranks of Gaborone’s citizenry.⁶⁸ Provision was made for the bulk of African housing to be located in a concentrated area near to the town’s industrial area: the proposal called for the allocation of “semi-detached terraced houses, flats and communal rooms. This development

⁶⁶ Director of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Low Cost Housing: Bechuanaland Protectorate: An Appreciation by the Director of Public Works, Paper No. 1, 22 May 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaborone: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1962).

⁶⁷ G. S. L. Atkinson, ‘District Commissioner’s Notice, 7 July 1961’ (Collected Files, ‘Crown Lands, Township; from the District Commissioner of Gaborone, 1956-1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number DCG. 15/13, Gaborone, 1961).

⁶⁸ The details of the issues surrounding the establishment of low cost housing in Gaborone are covered at length in the latter pages of Chapter 2.

would be in the area near to where most of the labour demand will occur and under such supervision as would preclude its developing into a slum.”⁶⁹

A version of an early Gaborone town plan provides some visual evidence as to the model envisioned early in the planning process (see Figure 6-1 and 6-2 below).⁷⁰ Commissioned by the Public Works Department, the planning blueprint authored by the architect J. L. Harrison, clearly shows the distinction between the parts of the city where public life and commerce would occur and those areas, residential dumping grounds, to be occupied by the African population that were cut off from the full urban experience. Shaped approximately like an arrow-point, the drawing depicts the tip of Gaborone as being home to the government offices, tennis courts, shops and the capital’s only hotel. Following the vertical axis downward towards the southern base of the city sat the clinic, prison and the location designated for “African Housing.”⁷¹ Assembled in a circular pattern akin to a wheel with spokes, the African location revolved around a central point capable of providing a suitable vantage point for constant observation and surveillance, not unlike Bentham’s or Foucault’s panopticon. Further separating these residences from the rest of

⁶⁹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaberones Township Report’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962), p. 13.

⁷⁰ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Town Planning Layout—Gaberones’ (Collected Files, ‘Town Planning Gaberones Village, December 1960-1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/2, Gaborone, no date). The map lacks a date stamp, but was placed with documents from January 1962, so it is probably safe to assume that it originates from sometime around that period. Apologies for the poor picture quality, but I had to take a picture of the well-worn map with a digital camera in a far from ideal setting in the reading room of the National Archives.

⁷¹ Also discussed in Chapter 2 is the effort to create a non-racial city. Much discussion occurred around the ideology of non-racialism and the accompanying desire to build a Capital that while divided by class, would not succumb to the apartheid tendencies of the region and be segregated by race. Yet this early map depicting an area reserved for African housing no doubt undercuts these stated lofty intentions. Perhaps implying that later talk about “low-cost” or high-density housing had morphed into an acceptable euphemism to talk about African housing without actually talking about African housing. Of course though, the issue is more complicated than being simply a matter of white attempts to dominate Batswana populations in the new Gaborone, because as I also point out in Chapter 2, for other reasons, elite Batswana as well, had little desire to reside adjacent to the vast majority of newly arrived Batswana residents of Gaborone.

the city was the single road leading into and out of the area. Rather than taking the most direct route, one can see that it followed a more meandering path, first traveling west before turning north and into the city center. Looking at this design, an observer can't but make the conclusion that this layout, and its particular road arrangement, was to be a spatial deterrent used to discourage poor Batswana from coming into the inner part of the city, a seemingly insulated urban sanctuary set aside for Gaborone's newly emergent town-elites.

Not only were these areas seen by the city government as necessary to maintaining order in the city, they were also seen as a critical tool to guide Batswana to proper ways of urban living; planned, supervised housing was identified as fertile ground on which to grow good urban citizens. Carrying strong echoes of earlier strains of Victorian links between morality and environment, the prevention of slum development would lead to a stable social life, thus creating the conditions leading to the adoption of proper standards of urban behavior that would mimic the idealized Western image of a "typical" domestic household. One colonial housing manual used as a reference in the building of Gaborone states in the first sentence, "The basis of family life being the home, hygiene and sanitation are essential for the health and comfort of the family."⁷² Cultivating a European vision of family life was not however, just about altering manners and private lives. These efforts carried political and economic implications as well, since if workers became part of the formal urban economy and labor structure, they would, at least ostensibly, be more easily controlled by the official mechanisms of governance and State power. Accordingly, the possibility of a lack of control over the local African population in Gaborone was a great fear of the colonial authorities.

⁷² A. H. Taylor, 'Aided Self-Help Housing' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962). This document was presented at the CCTA/WHO Symposium on Hygiene and Sanitation in Relation to Housing (4th-9th December 1961).

These worries were manifested in two ways. First, members of the colonial establishment, along with their local advisors, worried that Batswana existing outside their sphere of influence would not be successfully civilized or urbanized. Secondly, and probably more important, based on the amount of internally circulated correspondence across governmental offices, is the presence of unregulated or unwatched African populations, existing outside of their specified area for “African Housing,” which was projected as constituting the ruination of the pristine, modern urban environment that colonial officials and local elites were attempting to make for themselves. The large amount of internal communication exchanged with regard to the adjacent village of Tlokweng, for example, illuminates the scope and prevalence of these worries.⁷³ One town-planning manual argued that it was “vitaly necessary to take steps immediately to control development outside the boundaries of [Gaborone], and particularly the control of Tlokweng village which, with the influx of workers, could very rapidly become a slum area and defeat the object of the planners.”⁷⁴ Administered according to the tribal law and custom of the Batlokwa, the already present village of Tlokweng was worrisome to the Protectorate government because neither its space nor inhabitants fell under the planning authority of the colonial government. From the European point of view, Tlokweng, because it wasn’t subject to the zoning or infrastructure requirements that would be enforced in the new capital, invoked predictions envisioning the “defeat” of the planners.

Yet, beyond the logistical or planning concerns, Tlokweng represented the negation of Gaborone, reflecting everything the new capital was not supposed to be. Thus, the object of the planners wasn’t just a matter of building types and street layouts, but was also inherently about

⁷³ For further examples and discussion of the Tlokweng issue, as it relates to the planning and founding of Gaborone, please also refer to Chapter 2.

⁷⁴ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Capital Project: Draft Town Plan Report’ (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1098, Mafikeng, 1962), p. 2.

aesthetics and ideology, if there is even a distinction between the two. According to the rigid normative colonial measurements of settlement types, Tlokweng, as an African founded and governed village, was an example of a lower spatial form whose mere presence would potentially infringe on the evolved, Western-inspired Gaborone. Hinting at these worries, another planning report warns that measures must be taken, lest Tlokweng become a “shanty town and an eyesore on the boundary of the town.”⁷⁵ Another document further notes the choice facing migrants to the capital: paying for a plot in the city or acquiring a free site in an adjacent village that would be allocated through customary practice. Only by acting early in the planning process could the worst-case scenario—the establishment of a “haphazard settlement by a colony of paupers hoping to beg a living from the township inhabitants”—be averted.⁷⁶ One proposal, for example, floated in planning meetings suggested cooperation with the Batlokwa *kgosi*, since an influx of new arrivals to the area would equally tax his community’s resources. This option was eventually dismissed as not likely to produce results though, since, in the muted phraseology of polite colonial racism, Protectorate officials claimed, “the inertia of the Batlokwa was notorious and the Chief was not a strong character.”⁷⁷ Instead, the primary measure taken to control development in Tlokweng, and especially elsewhere within the Gaborone’s borders, was an attempt to stem the movement of people into the city; and when that wasn’t possible, the State sought to funnel migrants into specifically designated areas for recent arrivals to live. These

⁷⁵ Kenneth Watts, ‘The Planning of Gaborones, the New Capital for Bechuanaland: Report of an Advisory Visit: January 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters: Town Plan’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963), p. 6.

⁷⁶ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Memorandum for Discussion on 6 July: Low Cost Housing, Gaborones 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

⁷⁷ Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Headquarters Development Committee, 9 July 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters—Headquarters Development Sub-Committee Minutes, June 1962-April 1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/10, Gaborone, 1962).

mandates guided the way in which slums and their inhabitants were regulated from the earliest days of the city. Whether these efforts were successful, however, is another matter entirely.

Of course though, dictating outcomes related to large-scale population movements or individual day-to-day life decisions, usually exceed the limits of formal authority. And so it was with the emergence of unauthorized settlements in Gaborone. In this instance, no amount of careful planning could have accounted for the population displacements caused by one of the worst droughts in decades to occur in Botswana. The 1968-1973 *National Development Plan* describes the event as “the most calamitous drought in living memory. It lasted from 1961 to 1966. Famine was widespread and about one third of the national herd was lost. In many areas, the vegetation was grazed away, and permanent damage done to the veld.”⁷⁸ The ramifications of the years-long drought quickly reached crisis proportions. Immediately, the government was forced to provide food for approximately 111,000 individuals made destitute by failed crops and widespread cattle starvation,⁷⁹ while at the same time, the country’s ability to feed itself was undermined as the Southern and Eastern regions of Botswana experienced unsuccessful harvests.⁸⁰ The significance of these 111,000 destitutes is enhanced when considered in the context of the total population of the Protectorate during this period. The 1964 census places the

⁷⁸ Republic of Botswana, ‘National Development Plan, 1968-1973’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1968), p. 1.

⁷⁹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly Official Report (Hansard 17): First Session, Fifth Meeting, Sittings from 14th to 21st March 1966* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 827, Gaborone, 1966), p. 125.

⁸⁰ Department of Agriculture, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Report from the Department of Agriculture to be used for preparation of High Commissioner’s Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly, 29 June 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Legislative Council Meetings: General Correspondence, ‘State of the Nation’ Speech, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.550/4, Gaborone, 1962).

figure at 549,510, meaning that the drought and its aftermath exacted a severe human toll on approximately 20% of the territory's population.⁸¹

Over the longer term though, the damaging effects of the drought on rural livelihoods and village economies prompted people to seek options elsewhere. Obvious places for relocation were the growing urban centers, Francistown, Lobatse, and Gaborone.⁸² In Gaborone, the influx of people no doubt contributed to the growth of squatter areas, as the town plan, already struggling to accommodate unforeseen growth, was further overwhelmed. And although the large numbers of migrants to Gaborone caused government to invest in more low-cost housing during the period of the 5 year plan (1968-1973),⁸³ with limited funds and resources, demand increasingly outpaced the supply of affordable housing. Early on even, the provision of adequate housing was lamented as a futile task: by June 1965, the Permanent Secretary for Local Government, M. R. B. Williams, admitted that government-sponsored low-cost housing schemes could “never hope by itself to meet the demand for housing, which is ever increasing.”⁸⁴

Unfortunate luck and catastrophic weather patterns however, are certainly not the only reason why squatter settlements appeared in Gaborone. The drought merely made worse an already bad situation. Consequences wrought by the drought disaster were exacerbated by poor planning, as well as a general unwillingness to make room in the new capital for poor workers, the unemployed and their families who were not directly connected to the civil service.

⁸¹ 1964 census statistics taken from the government of Botswana's Central Statistics Office and are available at: www.cso.gov.bw.

⁸² Republic of Botswana, 'National Development Plan, 1968-1973', p. 50.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁸⁴ M. R. B. Williams, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Memo from P. S. Local Government to P. S. Ministry of Labour and Social Services, 18 June 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

First, the question of labor. At the onset of the Headquarters Development Project, officials recognized that labor was going to have to be imported from somewhere other than the Gaborone area due to the fact that there was a lack of the skilled labor and expertise required to propel a construction project of this magnitude forward. From the Rhodesian building company hired to oversee the bulk of the project, Costains, to the skilled manual labor, much of the workforce was brought from outside the area. Generally, the explanation given for relying so heavily on a non-local population was that Batswana lacked the requisite skills (e.g. carpentry, masonry, plumbing) to properly do the work. Yet, from what we know about the intentions and future look of the new capital—as a modern hub of government and bureaucracy populated by a civil service elite—I can’t help but wonder if the initial reliance on foreign (manual) labor helped further these goals. Foreign workers could be brought in to build the city, but would not be able to stay once it was completed, unlike locally born workers who might be tempted to stick around and live in the town they built. While I couldn’t find direct confirmation of these suspicions, a reading of the internal government documentation makes it possible to justify such an inference. For example, the planning authorities were adamant that worker housing not be constructed within the Gaborone city limits, for fear of its derogatory effects on the look and lifestyles of the city. The Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications wrote in an internally circulated memo before construction began, “One of our biggest problems will be to ensure that temporary houses built by contractors are not built within the planned township area and that, should any contractor wish to build any housing within the planned township area . . . these houses should be built to a stand approved by us.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Secretary Townships, Works, and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Note by Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications on Housing in Gaborones and the Protectorate in General, 22 May 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

Despite the influx of foreign workers into the capital, these numbers were fluid over time. As construction progressed, complaints were aired that locals should have opportunity to compete for jobs held by non-locals. The ratios of locals to non-locals thus changed during the course of the construction project. The following chart detailing the breakdown was entered into the Legislative Assembly public record:⁸⁶

Table 6-1. Chart of labor statistics entered into Legislative Assembly public record.

	Locals	Non-Locals
Travaglini Brothers (Painters)	44	16
Costains (Builders)	720	229
Hancock & Ward (Plumbers)	280	20
Asphalt & General (Roads)	168	12
Drake & Gorham (Electrical)	54	6

The problem was, of course, that the planning or design of Gaborone didn't respond to these labor changes that would later have an effect on the town's development. Whether it was too late to alter things, or officials just turned a blind eye to the new circumstances is probably irrelevant. What matters is that the plan still adhered to the notion that the workers would eventually leave, even as the number of locally produced workers increased. Of course, this didn't happen. Instead, one long time Old Naledi resident estimates, recalling the years of Gaborone's construction, that if 100 people were to depart the train in Gaborone, 90 would come to Naledi, while the remaining 10 would trek to the town center or other surrounding areas.⁸⁷

Irregardless of the demographic transformation of the worker population, government's reluctance to set aside a place for workers to live that wouldn't conform to the high standards applied elsewhere in Gaborone, led to their worst-case scenario: the creation of squatter settlements. And indeed, as we will see below, the Naledi neighborhood began life as a worker

⁸⁶ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly Official Report (Hansard 15): First Session, Third Meeting, Sittings from 6th to 14th December 1965* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 826, Gaborone, 1965), p. 14.

⁸⁷ Tshireletso Motlogelwa, 'In the heart of the hood, pt. 2', *Mmegi*, 16 June 2004, p. 6.

community residing just beyond the formal town borders. Even though Naledi was a worry, there was, initially, an overly optimistic feeling that this was only a temporary situation; the workers would leave sometime in 1966 as the main construction project reached its conclusion.⁸⁸ There is also a sense in the archival record that the construction project was so overwhelming as to allow the so-called squatter problem to fall through the cracks. One Town Council document explains, “No hard measures were taken against the squatters, mainly because the magnitude of the task of transforming Gaborone into a Capital was of such a nature as to cause the attention of squatters to be relegated to the background.”⁸⁹ This early inattentiveness, however soon led to seemingly intractable difficulties. Instead of housing only transient laborers, as male workers arrived, so did their families; and later, other Batswana came, lured by the possibility of employment servicing the manual labor population. By the latter months of 1964 therefore, the Administrative Officer in charge of the Capital Project, Hugh-Murray Hudson could conclude in a memo distributed throughout the bureaucracy, “Well over 1,500 workers and their families reside on Crown Land in and around Gaborone in home made huts.”⁹⁰ To give some sense of the demographic breakdown around this time, a government survey conducted in 1967 suggested

⁸⁸ Officials eventually relented on the prohibition for families to live with their husbands and fathers, since they assumed that once the Costains contract was up and their paychecks disappeared, people would leave the area voluntary. This proposal is outlined in a savingram written to the Permanent Secretary of Local Government from the District Commissioner of Gaborone, P. Cardross-Grant. See: P. Cardross-Grant, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Squatters in Gaborone, 11 March 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

⁸⁹ This quote is taken from a 1967 Gaborone Town Council Report (and Survey) about the personal characteristics of Naledi residents. I had access to this, and other documents, from a local historian, journalist and writer, Sandy Grant; who himself acquired these papers from the Reverend J. Derek Jones, the first mayor of Gaborone, while working on a project related to the early history of Gaborone. Many thanks to Sandy for offering up his collection for perusal.

⁹⁰ Hugh Murray-Hudson, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Slum Conditions—Gaborone, 27 October 1962’ (Collected Files Entitled, ‘Gaborone New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964’, Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1962).

that adult males constituted only 28% of the population in Naledi; the rest were women (23%) and children (49%).⁹¹

Additionally, the commissioner of police also blamed unemployed foreigners for swelling the squatter population ranks. Quoting information provided by his criminal investigations unit, the police commissioner wrote to the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs in 1965,

‘A very large percentage of the Rhodesian Africans have been attracted [to Gaborone squatter areas] by the hope of employment and by relatives employed by firms working on Government contracts, but from questioning persons resident in Naledi it is evident that there are also many aliens who have been ordered to leave South Africa and who have drifted as far as Gaborone. Persons falling within this category are estimated between 2,000 and 4,000.’⁹²

Besides contributing to the growth of the squatter population, the increased presence of foreign workers heightened tensions between local Batswana and those from outside the territory. Resentment toward foreigners, because they were perceived as taking jobs for Batswana, occasionally precipitated brutal violence. One such occasion occurred in November 1965, as a fight over control of the standpipe located in a Costains work camp that was shared by Batswana and Rhodesians, escalated into a melee where a man was locked in a burning hut and 350 Batswana and 300 Rhodesians were set to riot.⁹³ Though mass conflict was averted, the need

⁹¹ The results of this survey though, should probably be read with some trepidation. Figures also put forth in this survey state that the Naledi population is 1,613 and that 73% of those eligible are working in Gaborone. The total population figures given in this document are substantially less than those found elsewhere (ranging anywhere from 3,000 to approximately 10,000). Since people living in Naledi were illegally occupying land, it seems likely that many might have made themselves scarce from the government employed survey taker. These results therefore, could have skewed the employment statistics as well, since only those with jobs might have felt comfortable making themselves available for a government survey. Thanks again to Sandy Grant, for granting access to this information.

⁹² Commissioner of Police, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Commissioner of Police to the P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 26 August 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

⁹³ Q. K. J. Masire, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Security—Disturbances Gaborone Township, 9 November 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

arose to keep separate the two populations. Standpipes were thus brought to the Naledi encampment. While these provisions defused the quite real potential for violence in the short-term, they ironically forced government to further entrench the population squatting in Naledi, as residents now possessed a permanent water source. This inevitably made Naledi more viable as a longer-term place to live.

Along with drought and the arrival of a large population related to the construction of Gaborone, the final facilitator of squatter settlement development was the government's generally unwavering insistence that development adhere to the plan and that certain types of people and places should not be tolerated in the new capital. Rather than deal realistically with the poorly paid or unemployed urban population, planners instead chose to—Naively? Stoically? Stubbornly?—assume that the problem would be resolved once squatters understood that their presence violated the vision of Gaborone's development plan. Which, of course, posited an elite bureaucratic fantasy that as a “modern” seat of government, a population of unemployed or undocumented residents would be absent from the grounds of the capital city. And even though the inadequacy of the town plan for Gaborone was apparent during the town's construction, the “Housing Problem” was only openly talked about following the onset of self-government. A Gaborone Town Council report notes that as a primarily civil service town, the housing needs of government employees had been taken care of, not so much though, for the rest of the urban residents who already exceeded the planned for government population. Furthermore, the report goes on to say that the original projected population for 1970 was around 10,000, but at the time of writing in 1967, it was in excess of 18,000.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ This data comes from another 1967 Gaborone Town Council report I found in Sandy Grant's possession. Thanks again to Sandy Grant.

This is not to say though, that these inadequacies were completely ignored within government circles. Shortly before independence even, disputes about the government's failure to account for low-income appeared. In a letter sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs in early 1966 by the Gaborone Town Clerk complained of the government's lack of foresight and incompetence. An outsider sent from Britain to help specifically with the transition to independence, W. T. W. Large was a former WWII fighter pilot who didn't have a stake in the initial planning of Gaborone. Perhaps then, he was freer than most to be overly critical regarding what had happened before his arrival. Chastising the government, Wally Large writes,

Government departments are very largely to blame for the present state of affairs [squattling] as no planning was made by them to house their daily paid labour and the Authority takes no responsibility for housing their staff and no repeat no record exists whereby 300 out of 500 [State built housing] units are [exclusively] reserved for Government employees.⁹⁵

This last allegation is particularly damning, since it cuts to the heart of the official stance that Gaborone was designed to be a government town composed of government employees.

As discussed at length in Chapter 2, both colonial and local Batswana elites worked to stake an exclusive claim to the new capital city. Under the rubric of a planning idea that proposed “racially equal, economically unequal” urban development at a time in which these divisions were essentially artificial (the only Batswana with any resources of substance were the larger cattle owners or ruling elites who would constitute the post-independence government), the suggestion was repeatedly made that what low cost housing there would be allowed in Gaborone was to be segregated from the ritzier parts of town in order to protect property

⁹⁵ W. T. W. Large, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Town Clerk, Gaborone to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 10 January 1966’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

values.⁹⁶ And indeed, for the lowest paid workers, it was considered unsound economics to provide low-cost housing for those unable “to build or pay an economic rent, and [who are], in any case, of a migratory disposition.”⁹⁷ The difficulty was then, that while it was bad finances to provide housing for those not able to pay for it—and, to be fair, funds weren’t readily available to provide enough housing, even if decision-makers thought it a good idea—the construction of traditional housing was viewed as an unacceptable alternative.⁹⁸ The effects of these seemingly contradictory positions were obvious. Both the lack of practical, “reality-based” planning on the one hand, and the inflexible adherence to the vision of what a future Gaborone should look like as a final product by those charged with creating and implementing the Capital Project, contributed to the “Housing Problem.” Perhaps some of the mistakes made and difficulties encountered can be forgiven—if that’s the right word—because of the scale of the project, the limited amount of available funding and the inexperience of those involved. Indeed, as long-time official of the colonial and post-colonial government heavily involved in the economic development of Botswana, wrote in an email to Sandy Grant, the astonishing thing wasn’t the amount of mistakes that were made during construction, but that more did not occur. He writes,

The real good fortune was that the Capital Project Planning Team did not screw up more than it did. The Deputy Queen’s Commissioner, Arthur Douglas, had been entrusted with the responsibility for the implementation of the project but he delegated that responsibility to the Director of Public Works, Bill Davies, a large florid beery Welshman with no prior experience in the design or implementation of large multi-functional urban projects. Bill assembled a team of engineers, architects and urban planners, drawn largely from his own staff resources (e.g. Peter Harrison who was the Chief Architect; Ray Renew, the Surveyor

⁹⁶ Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Gaborones Capital Project’, p. 9.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁸ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Summary of Discussions in Government Secretary’s Office, 15 May 1962’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Headquarters: Headquarters Development Committee Minutes, 1961-1963’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/9, Gaborone, 1962).

General). One member of the team, whose name I forget, was recruited in a bar in Bulawayo!⁹⁹

The author of the email paints an almost charming portrait of an ill-equipped group of individuals who put forth their best efforts under difficult circumstances. However, the planning ideologies, assumptions, motivations and intentions aren't so easily explained away. With regards to slums and squatters, as suggested earlier, these places and people, represented the total negation, the ultimate repudiation of what Gaborone was intended to be, both then and now. The continued presence of places like Naledi amounts to a daily, visible reminder of the plan's violation; an affront, in some sense, to the authority and power of the State to enact a particular vision or way of urban living. Focusing on these aspects below, will bring us back to the "slum-talk" elaborated on previously, and later still, allow us to put a contemporary spin on what is nowadays known as Old Naledi.

One of the central tenets of urban planning regulating the development of Gaborone in this early period, and even, to a certain extent today, was the idea that construction must occur in an orderly pattern set down by the Gaborone planners. The locations of neighborhoods, offices, factories, even down to specific building details such as the number and placement of gas stations, fell under the purview of the bureaucracy in charge of constructing Gaborone. Ideally, these guidelines would allow Government to control all urban development in order to prevent land speculation, unauthorized plot subdivisions, or shanty development that didn't conform to the minimal building regulations.¹⁰⁰ Through building and zoning regulations, the issues of

⁹⁹ Thanks to Sandy Grant for providing this June 2005 email correspondence between himself and another government participant in the founding of Gaborone. Further on in the letter, the author catalogues some of the major mistakes made by the Planning Team. The worst of which being the poor oversight of the contractors. The upper echelon of management remained in Mafeking over the course of construction, making infrequent visits to Gaborone, "heavily" relying instead on progress reports from Davies and other subordinates. Free to run amok, the contractors often got away with shoddy workmanship.

¹⁰⁰ Watts, 'The Planning of Gaborone, the New Capital for Bechuanaland', p. 6.

urban aesthetics and movement of people, not only intersected, but controls could be legally enforced. One method of enforcement put forth by the Acting Secretary of Townships, Works and Communications in a meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee suggested that Government preferred to lease whatever low-cost housing that was built, “so that administrative control could be retained over the occupants and it could be ensured that they maintained the standards which had been laid down by government for the area. . . .”¹⁰¹

To achieve the above objectives for example, Ray Renew (the Surveyor General mentioned above) advocated incorporating as much land as could be reasonably administered by town officials into the new Gaborone. Extending the town’s boundaries at a 5 mile radius out from the center would have two beneficial effects to this end: such a distance would, on the one hand, prevent businesses from opening outside the town that might draw development away from Gaborone’s center, while at the same time, it would force laborers to live in Gaborone, rather than residing in unregulated shanty towns constructed just outside the town limits.¹⁰² For its part, Naledi, transgressed the overall zoning plan by occupying land set aside for the hoped-for industrial development in Gaborone.

Moreover, with regards to Naledi and the few other squatter camps that dotted the peri-urban landscape, they provided visible contradiction to the look and ambience Gaborone was intended to portray. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government, M. R. B. Williams, argued, “control [of squatter camps] is immediately necessary . . . because this is the

¹⁰¹ Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Minutes of a Meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee held at Lobatsi, Tuesday 28 May 1963 at 9:30 am’ (Collected Files Entitled, ‘Gaborones New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964’, Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).

¹⁰² Ray Renew, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Surveyor-General at Mafeking to the Town Clerk at Gaborones, Regarding Control of Peri-Urban Development at Gaborones, 6 October 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Township Authority: Affairs, January 1965-February 1966’, Botswana National Archives, Archival Series Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Unit Number MLGL 5, Box Number 24, Gaborone, 1965).

capital of a country, and should to the greatest extent possible, be regarded as something in the nature of a show-piece.”¹⁰³ Similarly, under the heading, “The General Appearance of the Town,” an officer of the Gaborone city government wrote of the need to keep up appearances, however superficially, telling Secretary Williams, “the entrances to Gaborones are being cleared of unsightly houses as fast as possible in order that visitors to the Capital arrive with a favorable impression.”¹⁰⁴

The desire to make the city legible through zoning however, was not simply a matter of achieving a town stylized to look a particular way. The regulation of the spaces of the new capital was meant to subordinate potentially untamed places. In the same way that planners attempted to tame the “wild” Botswana environment through landscaping and the management of green spaces, they also tried to place slums and squatters under the eye and arm of the city government. As indicated in Chapter 2 earlier, there was a real anxiety about heterotopic urban-spaces that existed outside of, or actively subverted, the influence of the State. Officials favored African “beer shops” or smaller, dispersed “pubs” rather than a centralized beerhall that might lead to “passions being roused” or to the “focussing (sic) of political action” that might oppose the colonial government and their Batswana counterparts who constituted the ruling Botswana Democratic Party following independence.¹⁰⁵ And for slums more generally, in a report

¹⁰³ M. R. B. Williams, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Squatters within the Gaborones Township, 12 March 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

¹⁰⁴ Gaborones Township Executive Officer, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from Township Executive Officer, Gaborones to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, 11 March 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Gaborones Township Authority: Affairs, January 1965-February 1966’, Botswana National Archives, Archival Series Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Unit Number MLGL 5, Box Number 24, Gaborone, 1965).

¹⁰⁵ District Commissioner Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from D.C. at Gaborones to Administrative Secretary at Mafeking, 17 December 1963’ (Collected Files, ‘Beer Halls: Production and

commissioned shortly after independence, the worry over disorienting urban spaces is explicitly stated. One of the most “serious defects in Naledi” identified by the report’s authors was the “maze of intertwining pathways which defy order and fail to provide adequate transportation essential for fire or police protection. The resultant confusion to the outside observer suggests disorder which may or may not exist in the situation itself.”¹⁰⁶ Though there might be internal coherence for the resident of Naledi—they could likely find their way around the “maze” just fine—this situation was untenable for authorities lacking knowledge on what sorts of things transpired in this urban frontier. For order to reign, confusion was to be eradicated, chaos simplified. Indeed, in a later part of the Fuller Report, as the above document came to be known, the need to preclude urban dissension that might percolate amongst Naledi’s population was expressly stated as a reason to remove the encampment: “social dissatisfaction growing among people [in Naledi] . . . brings about social movements which disrupt both local and state government.”¹⁰⁷

Applying long-established discourses about the evils of urban slums, Naledi was characterized as a jumbled site of disease, danger and degeneration, a malignant blemish in need of excision. A 1967 document written by officials in the then Gaborone municipal government describes Naledi in the following way:

The third settlement, known incongruously as Naledi (The Star), is still with us. Here, on a rectangular piece of ground about 660 yards by 400 yards is a concentration of over 4000 people. Some of the houses are quite respectable and are thatch buildings, but some are little more than shelters made of branches, grass, cement bags, polythene scraps, and odds

Distribution of Local Beer, December 1963-September 1964’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.399/16, Gaborone, 1963).

¹⁰⁶ Charles Edward Fuller, ‘A Study of the Squatter Population in Gaborone: Undertaken for the Town Council of Gaborone July-August 1967’ (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 5316, Gaborone, 1967), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

and ends of builders' materials. Good and bad houses alike are concentrated together so closely that hygienic (sic) standards are non-existent, one tap serves the whole area, the few latrines built by communal effort have proved totally inadequate, and the risk of devastating fire is considerable. Moreover, the sites on which these people are squatting are urgently needed for industrial development. A more appropriate name than the Star would be the Running Sore.¹⁰⁸

A couple things here are worth pointing out. First, the ever-fluctuating official population of Naledi. Formal estimates put the population at anywhere between approximately 1,600 to 4,000 to 10,000 individuals (see also footnote 87), with all this variation being noted within the temporal space of about one year (1967). For a plan contingent on knowledge of people and places, the lack of information was a cause for concern. And even today, as we'll see below, officials remain uncertain of Naledi's demography. Then, as now, Naledi remains a sort of urban wilderness, a blank space on the Gaborone map. Secondly, there is also the suggestion that Naledi isn't just a homogenous blob of ramshackle huts and lean-tos, but instead, a more diverse location where houses of varying degrees of sophistication and construction can be found. This depiction is at odds with its usual portrayal as a dirty and dilapidated "Running Sore" on the urban landscape. The popular generalization accentuating the negative projects into present-day Gaborone as well, seemingly innocuously disseminated through everyday assumptions and street-talk, even as it is employed on behalf of particular political and economic interests.

Leaving aside these observations for the moment, the above passage indicates the size of Naledi; not only was it the last squatter camp standing, it was by far the most substantial. In the town's early days, there were 3 main squatter settlements: one occupying land by the dam that was depopulated/abandoned following the dam's completion; another, Ditakhana, located within the town limits, which was cleared following the construction of 200 low-cost housing units

¹⁰⁸ Gaborones Town Council, Republic of Botswana, 'A Housing Problem at Gaborones, Botswana—and a Remedy, 12 December 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

preceding Independence; and finally, Naledi. And even before these formal informal settlements were established, some residents of Gaborone complained of squatters and the so-called filthy conditions they engendered. Government, for example, assailed the conditions at the Department of Public Works camp near the town's only service station, De Wet's Garage, as "extremely unsanitary" because of the increasing numbers of "unsupervised" "coloured" laborers who were unlawfully settling there.¹⁰⁹ A health inspector describes the scene,

There are between 40-50 structures, spread over a wide area which is not fenced in, consequently there is no control as to who lives in this area.

This camp has no lavatories, and the only place where water is drawn is from a tap at the rear of the Postmaster's house. This whole area is very dirty and fouled with human excreta, papers, tins and all types of refuse are scattered in all directions.¹¹⁰

Although the concerns stated above captured the essence of those that would later be expressed with regards to Naledi, as time went on and construction on the capital site progressed however, most of the attention and accompanying ire was directed there. In the space of Naledi, along with the other smaller unauthorized settlements, the Director of Medical Services in a memo on "slum conditions" ominously warned, "a very dangerous Public Health Menace is building up in Gaborone."¹¹¹ Constituting this "Menace," the usual dangers were invoked: garbage, human waste, poor toilet facilities, communicable diseases. Bugs, especially flies,

¹⁰⁹ P. Hansford, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Medical Officer of Health to the Member for Townships, Works and Communications, 14 March 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaborone Headquarters: High Density (or Low Cost) Housing, January-June 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).

¹¹⁰ This extract is taken from an undated memo sent to the Director of Medical Services, which consists of a set of excerpts from previously commissioned reports compiling information about slum conditions in Gaborone. It is available in: (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaborone New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).

¹¹¹ Director of Medical Services, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram to the Member for Tribal Affairs and Social Services, 21 October 1964' (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaborone New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).

because of their mobility¹¹² and ability to overcome the protection afforded by spatial distance to transport disease and dirt from its slum incubators to the pristine urban environs were also treated as a particularly worrisome predicament.

Flies. The fly population in Gaborone is enormous. This is no doubt due to the poor toilet facilities offered in the townships e.g. Shanty Town has no toilets, and in Naledi (Shanty Town on Lobatsi Road) there are no toilets.¹¹³

Another memo gets to the heart of what is at stake. Echoing the colonial officer of three decades earlier who worried about falling into a garbage pit while walking in the village after dark, the Director of Medical Services wrote, “The flies are appalling and the disease might easily attack anyone in the area regardless how good their personal and domestic hygiene is.”¹¹⁴ Implicit here, is the thought that squatter camps are intolerable because they can’t be contained: the dirt and germs that are supposed to be natural to these areas transgresses boundaries, making no difference between, for example, the African squatter and the government officer’s stay-at-home wife.

And indeed, the poor conditions at Naledi and elsewhere weren’t simply problems to be solved by health officials or civil engineers, but were cause for police intervention. In a letter to the Local Government offices from a representative of the Botswana Red Cross, Mrs. E. M. Norman advocates for “a patrol [to be] maintained to, a) prevent further overcrowding or erection of shacks and, b) control garbage disposal and prevent urination and defaecation (sic)

¹¹² As indicated elsewhere, worry over unchecked mobility was a common theme, not just confined to insect flight paths. The squatters occupying the PWD Camp, for example, were viewed with apprehension and suspicion, not to mention a matter of “great urgency,” because they were a “floating” population not anchored to any specific space. See document referenced in footnote 110.

¹¹³ Director of Medical Services, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Memo on Gastro-Enteritis—Gaborone, 13 October 1964’ (Collected Files Entitled, ‘Gaborone New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964’, Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).

¹¹⁴ Director of Medical Services, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram to the Member for Tribal Affairs and Social Services, 21 October 1964’.

outside latrines.”¹¹⁵ Responding to the letter, the Permanent Secretary for Local Government notes his sympathy to the group’s concerns—his letter opens with, “I am to say that the Ministry has long term plans for the clearing of these squatters camp (sic),”—but concludes that little can be done to increase action on the areas because of the tightness of funds.¹¹⁶ Even though the request didn’t produce the desired effects, merely by asking for police involvement in the everyday activities of Naledi (and elsewhere), being dirty or poor was equated to warrant police regulation in the same way that burglary or assault might. The outcome of this request to place the body and its functions under surveillance, if money were available, would have been to criminalize poverty, the very acts of living could have brought some kind of penalty or punishment.

Disease however, wasn’t the only thing thought dangerous or transmittable. Naledi, as a place characterized by moral indecency and illicit behaviors, was also thought to spread its degeneracy into the “respectable” parts of town. Already present in Gaborone, was a racist tradition among white settlers, who worried about the derogatory consequences of close contact with the Batswana population. Reacting angrily to government efforts to allocate more land to local Batswana tribes, white farmers protested that their lives were soon to be infringed on if these new policies took effect. Representing the white farming interests at a meeting of the European Advisory Council, one settler complained, “the administration seems to prefer the less costly [rather than buying the farmers out completely] but more slow and cruel method of getting natives sandwiched in between settlers’ farms, which can only finally result in the degeneration

¹¹⁵ E. M. Norman, ‘Letter to the Minister of Local Government, 20 May 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

¹¹⁶ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Letter to Mrs. E. M. Norman of the Botswana Red Cross Society’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

of the settler. . . .”¹¹⁷ Another farmer, E. Sim—whose family was later represented in the Legislative Council during the independence period—predicted that the demands to provide more land “would mean that I would be surrounded by natives and I could not live isolated.”¹¹⁸ Landowner T.O. Haston further argues that close contact between Whites and Africans can’t ever work: “I believe White Men will always be White Men, Bantu Peoples always Bantu Peoples, No (sic) matter what polish.”¹¹⁹ And finally, a Mr. Glover, anticipating the debates of nearly three decades later asks, “When the day of transfer comes, will Gaborones be a white or a black area?”¹²⁰

For all the high-minded rhetoric that went into the planning of Gaborone, when cut down to the core, as in the anxious discussions about Naledi specifically and slums generally, many of the farmers’ worries about living with or nearby poor Batswana populations were recreated. The supposed degeneracy of the elite urban resident, perhaps devolution is a more apt term, was cause for widespread concern. Viewed with official eyes, Naledi represented a dangerous location, a site of a vicious circle that was both home to, and breeder of, vice and immorality. Painted in broad terms, Naledi was said to attract a large cast of “supposed work-seekers and other doubtful characters,” along with the “disturbing fact [that] girls between the ages of 14 and 18 are increasingly appearing on the scene and in these difficult times it is obvious that the type

¹¹⁷ European Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Extract from Minutes of [the] 21st Session of the European Advisory Council, 19-23 October 1936’ (Collected Files, ‘Alienation of Land: Question of Preventing Sale of Land to Natives in the Gaborones Block, 1936-1938’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.435/4, Gaborone, 1936).

¹¹⁸ This untitled document—14 August 1936—describes the white opposition to a proposed sale of land to the Bamalete tribe. It is located in: (Collected Files, ‘Alienation of Land: Question of Preventing Sale of Land to Natives in the Gaborones Block, 1936-1938’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.435/4, Gaborone, 1936).

¹¹⁹ European Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Extract of Minutes of the European Advisory Council, 22 August 1938’ (Collected Files, ‘Alienation of Land: Question of Preventing Sale of Land to Natives in the Gaborones Block, 1936-1938’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.435/4, Gaborone, 1938).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

of life they live at Naledi without employment is most undesirable. The only way these girls could be reclaimed to their parents and to society is by returning them to their home villages.”¹²¹

It is probably worth pointing out however, that despite the stated fears about women coming to Gaborone solely to engage in immoral and unseemly behaviors, the assumption that all Batswana women arriving in Gaborone were practicing some form of prostitution was a large simplification of what was actually occurring in the squatter camps. Alberto Travaglini, one of the primary contractors during the Capital Project, tells a somewhat different story. Travaglini, a colorful Italian holdover from the first days of construction, whose active eyes peer through a slightly wild mane of shoulder-length hair and untrimmed beard, indicated that he and his brother employed at one point, approximately 250 workers, of which 40 were women. The women, he goes on to explain, were hired as cleaners, as well as placed in charge of boiling water, brought back from a dam that was for a time largely “pumping mud” into large metal drums whose contents had previously been making people ill when it was drunk without being first sterilized (a large problem considering the doctor from Johannesburg only came to Gaborone once a week).¹²²

Even so, and despite some facts to the contrary, the general perception among the authorities seemed to hold to the belief that town life, especially life in the squatter/worker camps, was having a corrosive effect on the morality of the women living among the general population. Prostitution however, was only a symptom of a much larger problem. The

¹²¹ Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, ‘Savingram to District Commissioners of Mochudi, Molepolole, and Gaborone, 13 January 1967’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).

¹²² Interview with Alberto Travaglini, Gaborone, 19 February 2005.

Commissioner of Police, for example, described the following squatter camp scene, capturing the feeling that the squatter areas were corrupting the residents:

The presence of such large concentrations of unemployed aliens, camp followers, vagrants, and persons without any means of livelihood presents not only a difficult problem to police whose limited resources are stretched to the utmost in investigating complaints [at these areas] of theft, assaults, gambling, illegal liquor brewing, domestic quarrels and faction fights, but is also, I believe, a matter of grave concern to the Health authorities in view of the incidence of disease caused by dirt and inadequate sanitation arrangements. . . . Prostitution, I am advised, is rife and the incidence of venereal disease is on the increase.¹²³

From the perspective of the town establishment, these illicit behaviors needed to be combated. Not only did they represent an evasion of the government's authority, but at the same time, they also presented a forbidden temptation to the respectable men of Gaborone's urban community. An uncontrolled Naledi, home to available women, booze or gambling might cause outsiders to stray into the camp, or even worse, for these elements to be brought into the formerly uncontaminated town. In the Fuller Report, for example, out of a list of seven reasons why the Naledi squatters needed to be relocated elsewhere, preferably back to the rural tribal regions from whence they came, three specifically addressed these worries. The Fuller Report variously concludes:

The continuation of a population area in the absence of educational amenities and other social services breeds delinquency and crime. Unorganized or disorganized living, in the midst of disorderly mazes of paths and confusions of buildings, tends to produce socially pathological conditions. . . . Contagion of disease, discontent, delinquency, and other evils, once started in an under-privileged area such as Naledi, swiftly spread to other areas with tragic results.¹²⁴

Immorality as a communicable virus, a "contagion" that could spark an epidemic infection of "evils" across the urban landscape of Gaborone, was the final, most urgent threat posed by

¹²³ Commissioner of Police, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram to the P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 26 August 1965'.

¹²⁴ Fuller, 'A Study of the Squatter Population in Gaborone', p. 4.

Naledi's continued existence. For this reason, the dwellings needed to be pulled down, the residents removed, the site razed and depopulated. This was the course to be taken in this early period, and which was, in the end, completely futile and thus unsuccessful. Ironically though, the same reasons that were once used to pursue Naledi's eradication, are nowadays put to a different purpose, to keep the neighborhood and its inhabitants alive, but largely disconnected and marginalized from the spaces of daily living in the rest of Gaborone.

So far we have seen how the Naledi squatter camp was established, along with how it was thought and talked about by the authorities as they articulated why squatter areas were a problem. To conclude the investigation of its early history, it is worth briefly discussing how government grappled with the slum areas within Gaborone. Much of the official reaction to Naledi, and the other smaller squatter neighborhoods in the town, consisted of moves to remove the resident populations, relocate them to more appropriate housing and dismantle the homes in which they were living. As was often the case, this was often easier in the planning than it was to accomplish in practice. Not only did people continue arriving into Gaborone—constantly adding to the “unplanned” for urban population—but the construction of low-cost housing conforming to the minimal building specifications could never keep up with demand for the people who were already there. At this time, both money and the capacity to respond to the housing need were in short supply.

One aspect of the approach to slum development was to try to prevent people from coming into Gaborone. This involved internal efforts to keep people in Botswana's rural areas from migrating to urban areas, as well as regional diplomacy to request that the neighboring racist governments stop deporting some of their “excess” African populations into Botswana. One 1968 letter sent to all the District Councils across the country urged local officials to exert

whatever influence they could to prevent Batswana from coming to Gaborone to look for jobs. The gist of the message that Gaborone was basically full and “that very few vacancies for workers exist in Gaborones at present and that people should not just arrive in Gaborones looking for work.”¹²⁵ Government officials also sought to engage the chiefs by having them assert their customary authority over the movements of their tribal membership. By employing Chiefs to explain the ways of the town in terms of customary land usage understandable to potential migrants, the State thought it could preclude movement to Gaborone. The thinking went like this:

The Chief and/or headmen should be asked particularly to stress that, just as outsiders, cannot according to customary usage settle in a tribal territory without the permission of that tribe, tribesmen cannot just come and erect buildings on State land without the approval of Government as has happened at Naledi. House Building and other developments in Gaborones have to proceed according to modern town planning methods and that any infringement of these [regulations] would be strictly dealt with by the authorities here.¹²⁶

Even before this was tried, the outcome assessment was gloomy. The document notes, “It is realized that once people have been affected by the lure of urban life it is difficult to control their drift to the towns.”¹²⁷

If Batswana citizens couldn’t be stopped from settling temporarily, if not permanently, in Gaborone, it was thought that at least the foreigners could be rounded up and repatriated. Specifically, there was thinking that the population pressure in Gaborone could be remedied by calling on places like Rhodesia and South Africa to quit dumping their unwanted or undesirables

¹²⁵ W. T. W. Large, Republic of Botswana, ‘Savingram from the Town Clerk [at] Gaborones to All District Councils, Town Council [at] Francistown, Town Council [at] Lobatsi, 16 April 1968’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1968).

¹²⁶ Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, ‘Savingram from P. S. Ministry of Local Government and Lands to District Commissioners of Mochudi, Molepolole, and Gaborones, 13 January 1967’.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

into Botswana. As indicated earlier, there was the general perception among town officials that Naledi was home to a few thousand unemployed foreign malingers or relatives of Capital Project employees who came to take advantage of their family member's steady paycheck. Although this generalization was wrong, it informed many of the decisions taken during the years immediately following the construction of Gaborone.

The Fuller Report for example, notes that only 6.6% of Naledi's population was foreign-born, and that the overwhelming number of employable males, as well as some women, had some sort of income-generating occupation.¹²⁸ And breaking the numbers down even further, out of the 273 foreigners in Naledi, there were only 10 from Rhodesia and 32 from South Africa (the most represented nation was Zambia, with 138 individuals).¹²⁹ So despite the facts on the ground, the Botswana government seemed to exaggerate both the numbers, as well as the burden these people placed on the town's infrastructure. In one instance, for example, the government claimed that 2,000-4,000 non-Batswana were present in the squatter camps.¹³⁰ Others complained of the policy enacted by apartheid South Africa that repatriated Africans through Botswana:

It is understood that a percentage of those in Naledi have moved off [some of the contracted employees working on the construction project had left the area] and their numbers replaced by newcomers from South Africa who have been deported in the usual manner by placing them on a northbound train and told not to return. They leave the train in Botswana and join their countrymen in Gaborone where they either get temporary employment or live on those who are already in employment.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Fuller, 'A Study of the Squatter Population in Gaborone', p. 3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³⁰ See footnote 88.

¹³¹ Immigration Control Officer, Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from Immigration Control Officer to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, P. S. Ministry of Labour and Social Services, P. S. Ministry of Local Government, Commissioner of Police, 2 December 1966' (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1966).

Alternately, even if those expelled from South Africa made it north to the Rhodesian border, they were not allowed entry: they could neither continue north or return to South Africa. “They inevitably end up in Botswana where they help to swell the ranks of the unemployed.”¹³²

And although these incidents did occur, prompting high-level meetings between South Africa and newly independent Botswana,¹³³ it is unclear whether they occurred with enough frequency to account for the large population at Naledi. Even accounting for some of the likely flaws or inaccuracies in the available figures, the census data seems to imply that foreigners were a minority in Naledi. The blame placed on foreigners therefore, seems rather misplaced.¹³⁴ Claiming that the situation would improve, or resolve itself, if only if it weren't for the presence foreigners, reads more like a ready-made excuse designed to mask a lack of governmental capacity or the inherent, intractable inadequacies of the design and implementation of the Gaborone town plan.

¹³² Commissioner of Police, Republic of Botswana, ‘Savingram from Commissioner of Police, Gaborones to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, P. S. Ministry of Labour and Social Services, P. S. Ministry of Local Government, Immigration Control Officer, 6 December 1966’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).

¹³³ One such meeting was held on 6 March 1967 and involved the Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs (Major A. H. Donald) and the Attorney General (A. G. Tilbury), as well as representatives of the South African government from the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Bantu Administration & Development, among others. See: Republic of Botswana, ‘Discussions Between Representatives of the Botswana and South African Governments on Matters Relating to the Documentation and Movement of Botswana Citizens Between South Africa and Botswana and Other Incidental Matters, 6 March 1967’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).

¹³⁴ The government of Botswana also initiated a repatriation project of Zambians and Malawians living in Gaborone to mixed success. It never seemed to get very far however, because officials worried that forcing Zambians to return home might prompt retaliatory measures from their Zambian counterparts who would send home their Botswana population, many of whom were employed in Zambia. “If this class of Batswana,” the Botswana High Commissioner wrote to the higher-ups back in Gaborone, “are repatriated we may not find jobs for them and they will swell up the ranks of the opposition parties in Botswana particularly that it will be public knowledge that they are repatriated in relation to our policy.” See: R. Mannathoko, Republic of Botswana, ‘Letter from the Botswana High Commissioner in Lusaka, Zambia, R. Mannathoko to Archie Mogwe, Secretary for External Affairs, 17 January 1967’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).

Unable to cut off the flow of people into Gaborone, Gaborone's Town Council sought to eliminate the places where they might live; the hope being that arrivals couldn't remain in the town if they had no place to stay. Thus the government embarked on a dual policy of slum demolition, replacing those structures with government constructed low-cost housing. Or, at least that was the hope anyway. Wally Large, the Gaborone Town Clerk, who had already criticized Gaborone authorities for their previous failures, also recognized the need to do something about the squatter camps. Stating the problem, he wrote:

The Ditakana¹³⁵ Camp [one of the three in Gaborone]—between the South Ring Road and the Airfield—is a disgrace and has been caused solely by Government Departments being allowed to erect temporary camps around which have sprung up camp followers['] shacks. These camps should be removed immediately as this area will be the first sight that visitors to Gaborone by air will see.

This authority is anxious to co-operate with all Ministries in an effort to eradicate these sores before they spread over more skin of the Capital and earnestly requests that this co-operation be reciprocated.¹³⁶

Employing a body metaphor, describing a sick town covered by a contagious pox of lesions, the assistance Large calls for requires the local police and security apparatus to serve as doctors. A cured Gaborone, a healthy town, required that the slums be eliminated. To this end, the Commissioner of Police, J. T. A. Bailey, identified the need for a “police commitment” to seek out all the foreign-born squatters living in these areas.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ “Ditakana” is a Setswana word that can be loosely translated to mean “informal house.” I’ve also seen it spelled elsewhere as “Ditakhana.”

¹³⁶ Large, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Town Clerk, Gaborone to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 10 January 1966’.

¹³⁷ J. T. A. Bailey, Republic of Botswana, ‘Memo from J. T. A. Bailey, Commissioner of Police, 19 December 1966’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1966).

Going a step farther, the Town Clerk also suggests that the police began regular patrols in order to prevent, or when necessary, demolish unauthorized huts and shacks.¹³⁸ Vigilance must be constant, he said, because the structures take approximately one day to build. They could, in other words, be built at almost the same speed in which they could be knocked down.

Commissioner Bailey met these Sisyphean proposals with opposition. He argued that the police had no jurisdiction to engage in hut demolition, and that even if this were part of the department's mandate, there was no money available in the budget to pay for it.¹³⁹ Failing to obtain police cooperation, it was instead resolved in a meeting of Permanent Secretaries from the Ministries of Local Government and Lands, Labour and Social Services, Home Affairs and other high-ranking officials to use prison labor under the management of Gaborone authorities to demolish Naledi and another Gaborone slum (Maaipaaphela).¹⁴⁰

However it might be accomplished, worry circulated within the government about the possibility of slum-razing to spark public outcries and resistance. There was, for example, considerable concern about the racial implications of white government officers knocking down the homes of poor Batswana, even though much of these proposals were put forth following independence. For this reason, the use of prison labor seemed a good compromise, as the

¹³⁸ W. T. W. Large, Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram to P. S. Ministry of Local Government and Lands, P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, Commissioner of Police, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Water Affairs, 6 January 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

¹³⁹ J. T. A. Bailey, Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from Commissioner of Police to the Permanent Secretaries of Home Affairs, Local Government and Lands, Labour and Social Services, and the Town Clerk, 10 January 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

¹⁴⁰ Republic of Botswana, 'Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday, 11 January 1967 at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Gaborone, to Discuss the Squatters at Naledi' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

individuals involved in the demolition would look like the people whose houses they were razing to the ground. A hand-written P. S. added to the bottom of a township memo posing some suggestions for how to deal with Naledi, an unidentified author notes in neat cursive,

I would have thought that this highly ‘political’ and sensitive work should on no account be given to volunteers—nothing could be worse for race relations than to have European volunteers involved in any in the forced repatriation of [the] unemployed.¹⁴¹

The racial implications of demolition enforcement were not the only negative outcomes considered possible. Part of the calculus involved pure politics as well. The Botswana Democratic Party was overwhelmingly popular across much of the country in the days leading up to independence, and nobody wanted to take any action that might upset their dominant position. Any decision therefore, had to be taken carefully. Summarizing the points raised at a meeting on “Shanty Towns,” the minutes recorded that “it was noted there might be political repercussions to the pulling down of shacks, particularly when the occupier (sic) was unemployed and unable to build himself a house.”¹⁴²

To ameliorate the potential for dissension among the squatters, township officials sought to offset any public relations damage by building low-cost houses to replace those informal dwellings that were knocked down. Government, for example, intended to build approximately 200 new houses to accommodate people living in the Ditakana settlement.¹⁴³ The announcement

¹⁴¹ W. T. W. Large, Republic of Botswana, ‘Savingram from Town Clerk, Gaborones to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Office of the President, Ministry of Home Affairs, 21 June 1967’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

¹⁴² Large, Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Savingram from the Town Clerk, Gaborones to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 10 January 1966’.

¹⁴³ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Meeting about Shanty Towns Naledi and Ditakana, 26 November 1965’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

of the development was designed to send the message that there was only a finite amount of time that people could continue to live in the squatter areas. Public announcements and meetings were held, to describe the new plans, convey a deadline and inform people that in the end, there was no future in these areas and that all needed to make plans to move. Subsequently, by November 1966, shortly after the official completion of the Gaborone construction project—everything was supposed to be finished by independence in September 1966—the Gaborone Town Clerk sent a short message proclaiming that nearly all the Ditakana huts had been pulled to the ground.¹⁴⁴

And in addition to knocking huts down, many new houses were finally—though hurriedly—built in the area that became known as White City.¹⁴⁵ In its first incarnation, laborers working for Costains occupied the ground that became White City. Of White City’s early days, Alberto Travaglini describes a bare scene in which laborers were largely left to fend for themselves.¹⁴⁶ “The people slept in the open,” Travaglini says, and because formal structures not conforming to government housing standards were disallowed, the only shelter the workers had were makeshift canvas sheets hung on scrub trees to limit their exposure to the wind. By 1965, as sections of the capital were completed, both Costains and town authorities pushed workers to the Naledi area as the land was needed for low-cost housing. Travaglini tells of a no-frills, hurried construction project in White City, where his team built upwards of 40 housing units a day, far exceeding the government’s expectations of 73 houses per week. Costing £1, the

¹⁴⁴ W. T. W. Large, Republic of Botswana, ‘Savingram to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, 2 November 1966’ (Collected Files, ‘Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968’, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1968).

¹⁴⁵ White City is the same neighborhood that was the subject of the street-corner ethnography in Chapter 5.

¹⁴⁶ It is worth noting that the conditions for some of the contractors weren’t much better. Travaglini says that his first “workshop” was sited in an open space, shaded by the leafy umbrella of a large morula tree.

square two-room houses consisted of thin bricks, no plaster or insulation, and a makeshift waterproofing mixed with corn-flour as the primary ingredient.¹⁴⁷ And though I'm not sure they were expected to last for four decades, some of these structures still stand today. Despite their durability, many occupants who have been unable to upgrade the original two-room house still lack indoor plumbing or electricity, and although connecting to the power grid is possible, it remains out of economic reach for the less well-off who live in the neighborhood.

While this was a success in terms of trying to find some accommodation for squatters or those government employees without a place to live, it didn't alleviate the housing crisis completely. And indeed, for those that were unable to be housed in White City, they simply relocated and rebuilt in Naledi, which continued to thrive despite continued efforts to quell its growth—a perhaps more accurate assessment might be to say that while desire amongst authorities to eliminate Naledi was constant and pervasive, policy implementation towards these ends was infrequent and ill-funded. In the end, although some were removed from the squatter cycle and placed in formal, government-approved housing, the failure to provide for everyone else only served to compound the troubles in Naledi; squeezing the problem in one area only pushed it someplace else.

This was not altogether unexpected: town and State authorities involved recognized that the demand for housing far outstripped the supply. For those not granted White City plots, they were basically left to fend for themselves. “They should be allocated sites at whatever rental was decided upon and given three months in which to build houses according to the minimum specification, after which period their present shacks would be pulled down.”¹⁴⁸ The hope that

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Alberto Travaglini, Gaborone, 19 February 2005.

¹⁴⁸ Bechuanaland Protectorate, ‘Meeting about Shanty Towns Naledi and Ditakana, 26 November 1965’.

just by mere fact of setting a deadline, poorly paid—if they were employed at all—squatters would be compelled to both pay rent for a plot, along with building a house acceptable to the “modern” town planning standards imposed by township officials, seems, of course, wholly unrealistic.

Indeed, it is not of line to characterize the whole approach to the squatter situation in Naledi and elsewhere as completely unrealistic, an optimistic delusion. Responding in the Legislative Assembly to a question about what to do about Naledi and Ditakana squatters, Mr. Tsheko, who was later a Minister in the independent BDP government, nonchalantly responded, “I have been thinking of providing accommodation for those employed by government and regarding the rest [the unemployed, self-employed, those looking for work, etc.] I am afraid they will have to go back to the places where they came from.”¹⁴⁹ Setting aside the laziness of the answer, it is at odds with earlier government predictions, which noted that once people get a taste of urban life, it is exceedingly difficult to get them to return to the village. But for those who adhered to the notion that Gaborone was to be a modern town inhabited by modern, urban citizens, this “send ‘em back from whence they came” attitude represented the only possible alternative.

A few years after Tsheko made his comment in the Legislative Assembly, a government employed District Officer, E. B. Egner, questioned these perceptions, wondering about the “strange decision” to forbid traditional housing in low-cost housing areas, a decision that if reversed, would have likely precluded the emergence of shanty settlements across Gaborone. Egner’s explanation for the policy blames “some utopian dream of suburbia” posited by the

¹⁴⁹ Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly Official Report (Hansard 17)*, p. 17.

founders of the new capital.¹⁵⁰ Squatters, shanties or traditional rondavels constructed of mud and thatch contradicted this dream of verandahs, cocktail parties and well-manicured lawns. And thus, they could not be permitted to remain in Gaborone. Perhaps one lesson to take away from this, is that in some larger unifying sense, Gaborone as it was originally envisioned, was not all that different from contemporary gated or planned communities that one might encounter from Johannesburg to Celebration, Florida. In 1966, and today too, albeit in a different way, Gaborone was as much geographic location, as it was a state of mind, a way of presenting oneself to the world. To the slum-dwellers, job seekers, and the random assemblages of squatters therefore, the gates were closed: Gaborone was full.

Thus far we have sketched the early days of Naledi, along with how government efforts to eradicate it, fit in with the broader, global tradition of slum-talk. In the upcoming pages, I will briefly trace the government policies directed toward the neighborhood that became known as Old Naledi, as well as the everyday discourse surrounding Old Naledi in the popular press and people on the street.

A Village Becomes a Town?

In a similar vein to the White City housing project, the development of the residential neighborhood known as Bontleng was beset by a similar set of inspirations, problems and inadequacies. Situated adjacent to the White City area to the south of the Main Mall—the informal dividing line between the high-rent elite districts and everybody else—Bontleng was also intended to resolve the housing crisis in Gaborone by providing government-owned plots for self-help housing. The 1966 brainchild of the then District Commissioner, P. Cardross-Grant and the Community Development Officer, Bontleng was yet another attempt to alleviate the

¹⁵⁰ E. B. Egner, 'Report on a Preliminary Survey of the Bontleng Self-Help Housing Scheme, Gaborone, 28 July 1971' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 10,672, Gaborone, 1971), p. 8.

squatter problem by providing a regulated area for “casual labourers” and “people waiting for jobs’ i.e. for the poorer people who had migrated to the new capital in search of work.”¹⁵¹ To dissuade land speculators and legitimate government oversight of the properties in terms of health, aesthetics and building standards, the government would continue to own the plot, requiring only a 50 cent application fee and a small rent at the conclusion of a grace period during which time the renter was responsible for building a minimum standard house¹⁵² or forfeit the plot back to the township authorities. While a workable plan on paper, the execution of it was handled incompetently: poor record keeping for example, meant Gaborone officials had no idea who was renting plots, the precise boundaries of the plots allocated or what they were owed in back rent. Furthermore, no plots in Bontleng were released after 1968, meaning that people continued to settle in Naledi rather than Bontleng, thus defeating the whole goal of the self-help project.¹⁵³ As a mechanism to funnel residents of Naledi elsewhere, Bontleng was a failure.

No amount of convincing, cajoling or providing alternatives was able to dissolve the Naledi settlement. And even when some people did voluntarily relocate, others came and took their place. By the mid-1970s then, government began to realize that the land on which Naledi sat would never be used for the industrial purposes proposed in the town plan. Naledi was going to be a permanent fixture on the cityscape. Softening its stance on Naledi, the government department Town and Regional Planning started making preparations to upgrade the settlement and legalize the occupancy of its residents. Though the announcement was made public on April

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵² According to Egner’s report, some of the technical specifications for an acceptable minimum standard dwelling in Bontleng included, a single room covering 80 sq. feet, 8-foot high walls, 120 sq. inches of ventilation and a mandatory pit latrine.

¹⁵³ For a fuller account of Bontleng’s development, please see E. B. Egner’s report to the Ministry of Local Government and Lands.

23, 1976 in a page 2 headline placed in the government paper, *Daily News*,¹⁵⁴ the groundwork leading up to the proclamation had been occurring behind the scene months earlier.

Following a formal request in January 1975 by the Gaborone Town Council to rezone Naledi as a permanent settlement, Town and Regional Planning engaged outside consultants to determine the best way to proceed. From the point of view of the Town Council, if Naledi couldn't be removed, the only hope was to develop Naledi so that it might conform to the look and building regulations enforced elsewhere in the capital. The findings of the consultants suggested this would be difficult to achieve: Naledi, in 1975, was home to 8,000 people occupying 2,300 homes and buildings; or, put another way, one-fourth of Gaborone's population resided on one-tenth of its built space. Furthermore, the conclusions bluntly state, "Naledi lacks all facilities that are generally considered necessary in an urban area," including only 4 standpipes located at the northern edge of the neighborhood.¹⁵⁵ Despite basically starting from scratch, the new development plan called for a large-scale holistic approach that would address physical infrastructure (e.g. reduction of population density, street lighting), social considerations (e.g. the provision of shops, schools, a clinic), and economic development. Upgrading Naledi was made more problematic by the fact that it was expanding at an extremely rapid rate. Larsson suggests that the area was experiencing annual growth of approximately 15%, and that the population would surpass 10,000 by the beginning of 1976.¹⁵⁶ To successfully achieve development and arrive at the optimum population for the available space (thought to be around

¹⁵⁴ *Daily News*, 'Naledi now to be made a permanent settlement', 23 April 1976, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Anita Larsson, 'Naledi Squatter Area in Gaborone: First Report to the Steering Committee, 18 November 1975' (Gaborone Town Council, Gaborone, 1975), p. 1. This report, along with two others also authored by Anita Larsson and relating to the initial Naledi upgrading project were made available to me by a planning officer of the Gaborone City Council. They were originally commissioned by the Department of Town and Regional Planning.

¹⁵⁶ Anita Larsson, 'Survey and Interviews in Naledi, Gaborone, December 1975' (Gaborone Town Council, Gaborone, 1975), p. 3. The findings of this research were submitted on 14 January 1976.

4000), near 60% of the population have to be relocated elsewhere in 800-1600 low-cost/self-help plots around Gaborone (some of which were to be accommodated in the Broadhurst urban expansion development on the opposite edge of town).¹⁵⁷

In the preceding lines, I provide some of the details just to give a sense of some the difficulties confronting those involved in the development project, rather than provide a comprehensive narration of the upgrading policy.¹⁵⁸ What is of interest instead, are some of the softer social facts that illuminate the makeup of daily life of the neighborhood. These are worth discussing because they contradict some of the simplifications about Naledi that were prevalent during the independence—and which continue, to different effect in the present. As indicated earlier, the general, “top-down” consensus about Naledi was of a neighborhood consisting of a uniformly chaotic jumble of poorly constructed shacks made of whatever refuse was at hand. However, even in the early years of its history, the residents of Naledi, along with the spaces they occupied, had begun to differentiate themselves, not just from the whole of Gaborone, but from each other, as well. In Larsson’s initial survey for example, she writes of three distinct areas that composed Naledi. The northernmost area closest to the town center was, not surprisingly, the oldest part of the settlement. Here, “plots are very small and often not clearly demarcated. The blocks of houses are irregular in shape. . . . Roads and lanes are very narrow.”¹⁵⁹ Befitting its age and population density, the area held a more active social and business community of informal bars, restaurants services and a church. The two areas to the

¹⁵⁷ Anita Larsson, ‘Naledi, Gaborone District Plan Proposal, 12 March 1976’ (Gaborone Town Council, Gaborone, 1975), p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ For a detailed descriptive account of the phases of the development project, please refer to: John van Nostrand, *Old Naledi: The village becomes a town: an outline of the Old Naledi squatter upgrading project Gaborone, Botswana* (James Lorimer and Company Publishers, Halifax, 1982).

¹⁵⁹ Larsson, ‘Survey and Interviews in Naledi’, p. 2.

south on the other hand, were less crowded, with more clearly outlined plots, and in one of the locations, “the quality of houses [was] generally good, quite a few are [constructed] in permanent materials.”¹⁶⁰

John van Nostrand elaborates further on life, in what was by then known as Old Naledi, during the 1970s in his book on the initial upgrading work. In particular, his book muddles the established State wisdom regarding Old Naledi, which emphasized the belief that it was, in other words, a chaotic place, a mal-adjusted community characterized by the loose morals of its inhabitants. Even the Setswana name “Naledi” connotes more than simply “Star”¹⁶¹ when it is applied to a community, adopting a more expansive meaning along the lines of “under the open sky,” or “a community that stands out from all the others.”¹⁶² Van Nostrand, along with Larsson, for example, disputes the notion that housing in Old Naledi was a randomly situated assortment of shacks. Instead, he suggests that the boundaries denoting individual plot lines were clearly known to members of the community. Replicating traditional village practices in Gaborone to avoid conflicts with neighbors, especially bewitching, plot outlines were “defined by a variety of physical objects, including hedges, fences, trees, posters or even rows of beer cartons.”¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ Another explanation of the origins of the name “Naledi” seems to suggest that the visibility of the night sky was significant in the naming of the settlement. I quote the full story from Tshireletso Motlogelwa’s excellent series of articles in *Mmegi* on Old Naledi: “. . .the name must have come from the fact that stars were always visible when one was in the township; stars above the group of merrymakers sitting around a fire, stars above the man lying (sic) drunk in the backyard. But above all, stars would be visible even through the holes in the thatch and plastic roofing of the shack. The eyes could not help, but stare at the brightly sparkling little things against the dark sheet of the sky. . . .” In the same story, another person claims that Naledi borrowed its name from a relative of the first president Seretse Khama. See: Tshireletso Motlogelwa, ‘In the heart of the hood, pt. 1’, *Mmegi*, 15 June 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/June/Tuesday15/1009491627870.html>> (2 June 2007). From my own experience too, there is certainly some truth to this explanation. Even today, because of the lack of electricity in Old Naledi, it gets much darker, the stars are far brighter, than elsewhere in Gaborone. Part of my first night in Old Naledi was spent pointing out constellations with the owner of the house where I was staying. On that clear night, about the only thing to obscure my vision was a swarm of low flying bats or nocturnal birds traveling in a massive V-formation.

¹⁶² van Nostrand, *Old Naledi*, p. 13.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Additionally rather than confirming Rantao's assessment mentioned earlier that the paths of Old Naledi meander like "wild animals' trails," van Nostrand writes that inhabitants knew quite well what they doing, where they were walking: again, because residents worried about the possibilities of witchcraft from traversing the same path again and again, people carved with their feet a variety of paths to arrive at the same destination.¹⁶⁴ Elaborating on this topic in his ethnography, G. J. Hardie suggests that these defense mechanisms to defuse the potential for bewitching were a necessary way to protect themselves whilst living in a "world of strangers."¹⁶⁵ Because people from all different sorts of tribal backgrounds resided in Old Naledi, defensive behaviors that tapped into the spirit-world and witchcraft, available also, through the handful of traditional doctors living in Old Naledi, were common and acceptable.

These practices, considered in the context of a town that was supposed to exemplify what was new and modern, caused problems because they were foreign, out of place. They were of the village geographically, of another time and epoch temporally. By adapting village ways for the city, ways that seemed informal, random and confusing to the township authorities, transformation and conflict were perhaps inevitable. In some sense, city and state authorities operating from the vantage point of formal mechanisms of government couldn't grasp the informal, organically derived practices—I don't think I want to go so far as to describe them in terms of structures, or any other adjective that might suggest some sort of centralized organization—that seemed to organize what was actually occurring in Old Naledi. And therefore, what couldn't be understood, needed to be changed so as to conform to the look and feel and behaviors practiced elsewhere in Gaborone.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁶⁵ Graeme John Hardie, *Tswana Design of House and Settlement: Continuity and change in expressive space* (Boston University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1981), p. 117.

Referring to Old Naledi's development, we can see precisely just how important things like aesthetics, everyday village-like behaviors, appearances that clashed with the total vision of what the new capital city were supposed to represent were during this period of Gaborone's development. The issues weren't just about the provision of adequate infrastructure. Sure, drilling more standpipes or providing some street lighting or schools was important, and necessary, but formalizing the neighborhood certainly had something with these more abstract, less tangible reasons. Because, as van Nostrand also points out, again at odds with the established wisdom that was slowly, though temporarily, being punctured, Old Naledi wasn't nearly as ramshackle or filthy as officials liked to believe. Nearly 75% of the housing in Old Naledi during the 1970s was of medium or high quality; and of the upper end housing, the predominant type were made of permanent materials that mimicked the government housing built in other places in Gaborone.¹⁶⁶ These housing developments were triggered, as Hardie and van Nostrand both make clear, by the government's decision to grant permanent tenure, since previous insecurity over whether a house would be left standing or not, made it not worth the investment to build a better, more durable dwelling.

And furthermore, even though there were a small number of pit latrines in Old Naledi (only around 100 plot owners had built them), meaning that the vast majority used nearby fields, even these common areas possessed some semblance of order. Van Nostrand writes, these common fields were "surprisingly well organized and virtually odor-free."¹⁶⁷ Although perhaps the typical image held by those living outside Naledi was of Naledi residents relieving themselves wherever they stood, this just wasn't true.

¹⁶⁶ van Nostrand, *Old Naledi*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁶⁷ van Nostrand, *Old Naledi*, p. 29.

By the time the first upgrading project was completed in Old Naledi towards the end of the 1970s, the landscape of the area looked substantially different. Most plots had their own individual pit latrines, roads were improved and the major arterial thoroughways were fitted with street lighting, a community building and shopping complex were constructed, and there was now one standpipe for every 15 plots.¹⁶⁸ The infrastructure improvements however, didn't necessary translate into drastic quality of life alterations or better integrate Old Naledi into the rest of Gaborone; though I suppose the fact that authorities were no longer trying to bulldoze the neighborhood into oblivion does count for something. Larsson for example, indicates that shortly after the improvements and relocations in 1981, both the total population, as well as population density, had nearly reached their pre-intervention peaks. While these figures speak to the overall rapid growth of Gaborone, ironically, the development of services in Old Naledi attracted recent migrants to Gaborone, because of the cheap availability of rooms for rent.¹⁶⁹ And indeed, as renting simple rooms became a viable supplement to household incomes, more and more people were crammed into plots, further increasing the amount of people living in Old Naledi. It seems that once again, urban planning in Gaborone failed to prepare for a most likely outcome: people would continue to come to Old Naledi from elsewhere as a place to start their life in town due to the relative inexpensiveness of the neighborhood and now, because of the increased availability of civil and community services.

These growth trends have continued into the present, and have even gotten worse. Despite the now exploding population in Old Naledi, it looks much the same as it did following the late 1970s improvement project—except now, the improvements, the shops, community centers,

¹⁶⁸ Anita Larsson, "Old Naledi: the intergration (sic) of an upgraded area into the capital city of Botswana", *African Urban Quarterly*, 2, 3 (August 1987), p. 312.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

drainage systems are three decades over and well overtaxed. In an area planned for a maximum, but less than optimal, population of 10,000 individual, today Old Naledi is home to what some estimate to be a population of 46,000 people (though even these figures are in dispute, as I will discuss below).¹⁷⁰ To give some perspective, the population density of 403 people per hectare is more than double the second closest neighborhood in Gaborone (extension 32 in Broadhurst) at 193 persons per hectare.¹⁷¹ In light of the unemployment figures and poverty discussed in Chapter 1, many of the people who come to live in Old Naledi that aren't part of the formal economy are instead absorbed into the informal economy, or, of course, are shut out completely of any form of employment. For the most destitute, and desperate, a mid-90s survey of garbage dump scavengers in Gaborone, for example, found that roughly three-quarters called Old Naledi home.¹⁷² In stark socio-economic terms, as well as more qualitative indicators about the practice of everyday life in Old Naledi, the neighborhood remains far removed from the rest of the residents and urban experience in Gaborone.

To some degree, Gaborone authorities are aware of the failures related to the alleviation of overcrowding or compelling the construction of up-to-code buildings. Indeed, according to a recent appraisal of the success late 1970s development project, there has been a total lack of success on both counts. The current population of Old Naledi is well over what the state considers an acceptable population (8,500 people), and as for residential structures, 80% are considered "illegal" since they don't meet the minimum requirements established by SHHA

¹⁷⁰ Gwebu, "Environmental problems among low income urban residents", p. 417.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

¹⁷² D. S. Tevera, "Dump scavenging in Gaborone, Botswana: anachronism or refuge occupation of the poor?", *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, **76**, 1 (1994), p. 26.

(Self-Help Housing Agency).¹⁷³ In light of these persisting problems, in 2001, Gaborone City Council convened a task force to once again begin the process of implementing a broad Old Naledi development project that would once again attempt to upgrade housing, roads, and service provision. Subsequently, Haas Consult, the firm hired to plan and carry out the project, floated three possible scenarios in an initial feasibility study early in 2002. Their ambitious strategy called for anywhere from 30% to roughly 80% of the population of Naledi to be relocated to sites elsewhere in Gaborone, which would have required the allocation of 7,536 to 20,840 additional plots, respectively.¹⁷⁴ In a city where land is already scarce, expensive, and increasingly in the hands of private land speculators, these sorts of mass allocations were on the order of impossible. Not surprisingly then, the plans were scaled back immensely. Instead, it was decided to relocate approximately 100 plots—strategically located around Old Naledi to facilitate road and other community improvements—in a nearby open field situated across a busy road from Old Naledi.¹⁷⁵

While necessary, I wonder if such proposals will only make things worse for the people who live in Old Naledi. As the statistics available to the consultants and city officials make clear, only 15% of the residential plots in Old Naledi are occupied by a single family and only 43% of the plots have owners living on them—meaning that there is a quite large tenant population renting rooms across Old Naledi. What happens to them as upgrading moves forward

¹⁷³ Haas Consult, 'Old Naledi: Infrastructure Planning and Engineering Study: Feasibility Report: Executive Summary and Recommendation' (Haas Consult, Tlokweng, Botswana, 2002), p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ A map drawn up for Gaborone City Council by Haas Consult, 'Village Infrastructure Old Naledi: Road Layout', sets aside land for 94 new residential plots. Other individuals I talked to placed the number of relocated plots between 50-70.

and housing practices are more closely regulated? Without a satisfactory answer to this question, development will likely fail in Old Naledi.

But, perhaps I am getting too far ahead of myself, assuming that this project will move forward at all. Detailed plans have been made, but nothing beyond planning and discussion in five years; a recent check of Google Earth confirms that no large-scale projects in Old Naledi are currently underway. One likely reason for the delay is money. From the initial estimate in April 2001 of P47.69 million,¹⁷⁶ the project ballooned in cost by April 2005, nearly doubling to an expected cost of approximately P87 million.¹⁷⁷ An engineer working on the project puts the cost even higher at over P100 million.¹⁷⁸ Still, he tells me, “I can’t believe they don’t have the money,” it is more a matter of whether they intend to allocate it. Speculating as to why funds might not be budgeted, he suggests the then recent devaluation of the Pula, the drain of HIV/AIDS on the treasury, but also on the civil service pay increases and the large number of foreign automobiles imported into Botswana for use by government employees.¹⁷⁹ So indeed, this isn’t to say that the money isn’t available,¹⁸⁰ just that it might not be forthcoming.

¹⁷⁶ Gaborone City Council, ‘Record of the Proceedings of the Workshop Held with the Gaborone City Council on Old Naledi Upgrading Project, 24 April 2001’ (Gaborone City Council, Gaborone, 2001), p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Roy Mafunga (BNF Councilor for Old Naledi Central), Gaborone, 14 April 2005.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Haas Consult employee, Tlokweng, 28 April 2005.

¹⁷⁹ And indeed, when taking the main road into Johannesburg, you often come across numerous semi-trucks carrying loads of European cars headed towards the Tlokweng border. Rumors abound that tell of an incestuous relationship between the BDP government and the primary owners of Botswana’s car dealers. The most important car magnate, Satar Dada, has served as the BDP treasurer, financed earlier elections on behalf of the BDP, and has close ties to Botswana’s ruling class. Furthermore, the new BDP headquarters occupies a site in a new mall he owns, and before the last presidential election in 2004, the BDP anonymously acquired 57 new cars—one for each district in Botswana—which all found their way back to Dada’s lots following the conclusion of the election. For an early revelation of this story see: Gideon Nkala, ‘BDP to dole out 57 campaign cars,’ *Mmegi*, 19 April 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Monday19/943789545805.html>> (15 February 2008).

¹⁸⁰ For example, there is the now infamous Daisy Loo scandal that broke in June 2005. Here, the Gaborone City Council contracted the firm Daisy Loo to de-bush a small area in Gaborone at a cost of P24 million. As of this writing (Spring 2007), the case continues to wind through the courts, and still stands as an embarrassing episode of administrative incompetence, malfeasance, or outright corruption that launched a variety of investigations. My point in mentioning this is that there is at least some money available for Old Naledi improvements, should funding be

Dr. Jeff Ramsay, an American historian by training, now serving as spokesman for President Mogae, flatly states that Old Naledi development is strictly a “political issue.”¹⁸¹ He directs the blame towards the opposition parties who govern Gaborone and to recent structural changes in the bureaucracy that have caused the central government to cede power to local authorities. These changes result in increased inefficiency and a lack of accountability, telling me that while rural councilors empowered by governmental decentralization drive around in a Mercedes X5, “here,” referring to the Office of the President, “we count the number of paperclips.”

The politics though, are probably a bit trickier than the easy partisan take offered by a senior member of President Mogae’s staff. Because Old Naledi has, since the middle of the 1980s been a bastion of support for the opposition parties—the Botswana National Front (BNF) especially—there is the general feeling amongst residents that the government would never go out of its way to allocate money for neighborhood development in order to exact a punishment for their political disloyalty. At the same time though, many are equally skeptical of the BNF, who they see as capitalizing politically on their poverty. Continued Old Naledi poverty, in other words, makes for good politics for the BNF, who might lose their ample support in the area if the ruling party got around to enacting real reforms and improvements. The first-level realm of electoral politics and the control of voting blocs however is likely not the only political issue at play here. Below we will see how it not only makes for good politics and economics to keep Old Naledi poor and ostracized from the rest of Gaborone, but also is useful for cultivating a particular understanding of urban citizenship in contemporary Botswana.

allocated for that purpose. A search of “Daisy Loo” on the Mmegi website will locate numerous articles from the past few years to further detail the story.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Dr. Jeff Ramsay (Advisor to and Spokesman for President Festus Mogae), Gaborone, 5 July 2005.

For now though, one final word about why Old Naledi “development” will likely remain unfulfilled, or unsuccessful if tried. More basic than the underlying politics, is the mere fact that city officials and other consulting observers still have a tenuous grasp on the realities on the ground, which of course, continues a long-established tradition dating back to the pre-Independence period. Perhaps no example better illustrates these failures to get a handle on elusive facts than the persisting discrepancies on how many people actually reside in Old Naledi. The most recent (2001) census indicated that 21,693 people lived in Old Naledi;¹⁸² a local pastor and community aid worker, along with the Gaborone City Council engineer, put the figure at 35,000;¹⁸³ the report of Haas Consult places the population at 46,000;¹⁸⁴ a physical planning officer employed by the Gaborone City Council and a Professor at the University of Botswana say that the population of Old Naledi is around 33% of the total population of Gaborone (around 70,000 individuals).¹⁸⁵ When considering the wide array, it seems more likely that the higher end of the spectrum is most accurate: from its inception, Old Naledi, in its various forms, has been home to between one-quarter and one-third of the total population of Gaborone. And indeed, as Professor Gwebu pointed out to me, the census conducted by the Central Statistics Office puts forth an especially low-ball figure, since having so many individuals residing on a single plot violates local housing regulations—most occupants disappear when official census-takers are around to avoid any hassle or sanctions. Probably the Haas Consult survey, conducted

¹⁸² The Central Statistics Office further breaks the figure down to show a roughly equal gender distribution in Old Naledi, with 11,574 men and 10,119 women. For further census data, please see: <http://www.cso.gov.bw>.

¹⁸³ Interview with Old Naledi Resident (Name Withheld), Gaborone, 14 April 2004; Interview with Mr. Jain (Gaborone City Engineer), Gaborone, 21 April 2005.

¹⁸⁴ Haas Consult, *Old Naledi*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Vincent Kenosi (Gaborone City Council Principal Physical Planner), Gaborone, 18 February 2005; Interview with Professor T.D. Gwebu (University of Botswana), Gaborone, 22 April 2005.

under the auspices of city government, suffers from a similar popular suspicion or fear of the formal authorities.

Even so, these inconsistencies and inaccuracies in population totals perhaps take on a broader significance. These figures only reflect the wider perception of Old Naledi as a “great unknown” in Gaborone. To the Gaborone residents who don’t live in Old Naledi, the neighborhood continues to be a source of fear, derision and suspicion through the circulation of everyday rumors and gossip. 70,000 individuals live within Old Naledi’s borders, yet they are talked about and lumped together as one homogenous mass. Much as was the case during the early years of Gaborone, to live in Old Naledi is to be a criminal, a drunk, or worse. These speculations are commonplace across Gaborone. These days though, they are not employed as a way to legitimate the location’s destruction. Instead, they are used as a way to ignore or marginalize the neighborhood from the rest of the city. Perhaps because as a poverty-stricken area it contradicts Gaborone’s image of prosperity; perhaps because Old Naledi remains known as a “village” it is anathema to the notion that Gaborone is a place “new and modern in conception”—on the frontiers between Old Naledi and Gaborone is the site of a clash between Botswana’s rural, traditional past and Gaborone’s urban, modern forward-looking present. Or perhaps a willful ignorance of Old Naledi and its inhabitants is employed to further solidify entrenched economic and political interests in Gaborone. Probably it’s a little bit of all three explanations. Whatever the case though, Old Naledi—just like Riverwalk and its recent ilk—might be *in* Gaborone, but it certainly isn’t *of* Gaborone.

Wandering Where the Streets Have No Name: Talking about, Living in, Old Naledi

To properly understand why, how and in what form slum-talk persists, it is necessary to describe what Old Naledi looked like as of the middle months of 2005, before I left Gaborone at the conclusion of my fieldwork. As a visitor to Botswana’s capital, getting to Old Naledi isn’t

all that easy. A person passing through town who was unfamiliar with the layout of Gaborone not only might not be able to find Old Naledi, but could very well drive past it without realizing it was roadside. Why the relative anonymity of the neighborhood? I might start with the layout of Gaborone's roadways. The major intersections in Gaborone are British-style traffic circles, which in today's burgeoning car culture can be tough to navigate during peak hours on weekdays as they were designed for a slower-paced, smaller city with far fewer vehicles than there are today. At each of these circles are large signs with major destinations around town painted on them, indicating to drivers to keep straight for the National Stadium, keep right to the Main Mall or the Botswana Telecommunications (BTC) headquarters. Main residential areas are also noted—Gaborone West, Broadhurst, Tlokweng. Nowhere however, do any of the destination billboards provide directions for how to get to Old Naledi, home to approximately one-third of Gaborone's population. Commenting on this lack of signage, an exasperated interviewee asked how it could be that while no signs mark the way to Old Naledi, there are signs to aid potential visitors to the Central Business District, even though that doesn't yet exist.

It's unclear why this might be the case, and I can only offer a speculation or two as an explanation. Perhaps the department in charge of roads assumes that many residents of Old Naledi can't afford cars and therefore don't drive, so traffic signs don't need to account for places that could be important to them; maybe it is ignored so visitors to Gaborone don't accidentally stumble into settings not fit for inclusion in a glossy tourist brochure; or possibly, inscribing Old Naledi's name on Gaborone signposts would imply formal authorization of Old Naledi as a legitimate place in the city. It would mean that Old Naledi was connected in a concrete spatial sense to the rest of Gaborone, linked to the same system of roads and flyovers that could take a person to the State House, home of the President, or to the newest shopping

mall, home of the emergent bloc of urbanites consuming espresso and American cinematic blockbusters. But this doesn't happen. Old Naledi is not to be found on the face of navigational billboards erected even at the main circles with a close proximity.

Considering the spatial arrangements in Gaborone, Old Naledi exists in terms of some sort of bland, basic physicality that while occupied by tens of thousands of people, isn't granted a proper status or recognized as falling within the overall hierarchy of urban space in the city. Old Naledi is both there and not there; a real-live chunk of urban geography, but a discursive or imaginative non-place. Maybe "any-place" is a more apt term. Meanings are readily affixed or detached from the idea of "Old Naledi" by Gaborone residents who live elsewhere. "Old Naledi" as an amorphous concept carries a special importance in Gaborone; just as tales of Orwell's "tramp-monster" spooked English children at bedtime, stories told of Old Naledi—a slum located in the center of Gaborone—similarly monster-ize and differentiate the area and its residents from the rest of Gaborone. Lest there be any confusion, the discursive map of Gaborone articulates what is an acceptable part of the urban landscape and what is not. More on that however, will come shortly. In the interim, I'll continue with a general description of Old Naledi.

Bordering Old Naledi to the north is a busy four-lane road, fronted on the opposite side of the street by a collection of office buildings, shops, banks and government offices stretching north towards the government enclave, the administrative hub of the Botswana State bureaucracy. Directly to the west sits the railroad track that bisects town in its trek to the southern and northern borders. Immediately to the west of the railway, is Gaborone's industrial center. A bit further to the west and east, within a short walking distance from Old Naledi, are two recently built shopping malls (Game City and what is informally known as the "Dada Mall,"

named after the wealthy mogul and BDP financier who owns it, Satar Dada), car dealers selling products from Lexus to Toyota to Peugeot, and the Gaborone Commerce Park where businesses ranging from boutique florists, internationally known realtors, and a Dell computer sales office occupy the same large compound.

Surrounded by this diverse array of economic activity—ranging from manufacturing, commerce and finance—sits Old Naledi. You wouldn't know it though, to drive past it. The houses forming the border to the outside world are solidly respectable, even, in a few instances, charmingly eccentric. One house for example, that first caught my eye during my first trip to Botswana back in 2002, perhaps owned by a panel-beater, is ringed by a multi-colored fence composed of discarded car hoods. Where private houses don't sit on the outskirts of Naledi, passersby might instead see a neat row of government built housing for local police or the backs of the stores that make-up the Old Naledi shopping complex. One individual dismissingly referred to these structural "curtains" that obscure the interior layout of Old Naledi from external scrutiny.

While footpaths into and out of Old Naledi are numerous, traveling in a variety of directions, there are only four primary road entrances into Old Naledi on the Old Lobatse Road that follows the outer (north/south) edge of the area. These roads linking Old Naledi to a main Gaborone thorough-fare are unmarked, making travel into Old Naledi difficult if you don't know exactly where you are going—or, at least that was my experience, since I and my taxi driver often got lost until I finally got used to following landmarks rather than street names and plot numbers. Furthermore, the only indication pointing out that a person was passing by Old Naledi were two small, faded blue signs placed at the northern and southern ends of the neighborhood. A few feet taller than the height of a full-grown man, signs with "Old Naledi" stenciled on them,

seem to reinforce the impression that this neighborhood, seemingly labeled as an afterthought, is best left forgotten.

But that's just the view from outside. If you were to hover above the area in a balloon or blimp to observe Old Naledi, a more complex picture of its interior emerges. From an aerial point of view, Old Naledi is shaped approximately like a rectangle with a large bulge jutting out along one of its longer edges, wider in the middle than at either of the ends. As has been observed in the pages above, the northern section of the location is the oldest part of the neighborhood. It is, then, a bit more congested, cramped, traversed by narrow paths that double as roads, houses and plots are arranged in way that might be unfamiliar to those used to the neatly demarcated property lines found elsewhere in the Gaborone suburbs. If we were to drift a bit farther south in our imaginary blimp, the settlement pattern present in the north replicates itself. In this, the mid-section of Old Naledi, a bit more space opens up, thus making room for a community hall, an informal market selling fruits and vegetables and perhaps a bit of meat for the night's dinner, the local government offices and *kgotla*, and Old Naledi's primary sports ground—little more than dusty field where political rallies might be held, concerts performed, or football played. These constructions are a product of the development project undertaken in the late 1970s.

Further on, as the shape of Old Naledi tapers to its southern end, the neighborhood adopts a more legible appearance: the streets are wider and evenly graded, individual plots are clearly distinguishable from those adjacent, the roads run linear and parallel to one another. This part of Old Naledi looks planned, organized, the houses built to follow the predictable spacing of the street, rather than the other way around. Whereas previously, meandering paths wove between already established dwellings according to the use and requirements of the occupants, this newer

part of the settlement was designed to compel a particular method of engagement with the space of the neighborhood. The arrangement almost carries an educational tinge, serving as a demonstration of how a place in the city is to be arranged, to drive out the practices of the village. It was a way to bring the order of the city to the disordered, chaotic spaces of Old Naledi. To send the subtle message that city-people walk along straight, neatly kempt streets, village-people wander along curving alleyways strewn with garbage and wastewater. Appropriately enough, this area—also an intentional product of earlier upgrading projects—is known to residents as “Diline.”¹⁸⁶ As will be demonstrated below, the difference in the physical layout of the area carries important consequences for interactions and understandings of the people who live within Old Naledi.

Apart from Diline, Old Naledi is divided up into 9 different administrative wards or locations (1-9). As of mid-2005, the smallest, Location 9, consisted of 50 plots, while the largest, the centrally sited Location 7, was composed of 278 plots. Back during the time of the original upgrading project, van Nostrand noted that each of these locations adopted a name, chosen by residents, reflecting the travails and optimism of the inhabitants. These ranged from Boiteko (“self-trial) for Location 1, Itereleng (“do it yourself”) for Location 6, and Boitshoko (“those who have suffered”) for Location 8.¹⁸⁷ I’m not sure how operational these names are presently, since I never really heard people refer to their specific home locations in such a way. Instead, I usually only heard residents speak in terms of the whole neighborhood, which they called, generically, a “Village.” Or, for some of the younger people, attuned to the wider world of rap, hip-hop and the “gangsta” lifestyle depicted in Western and South African movies and

¹⁸⁶ A Setswana-English hybrid meaning “the lines.” I’ve also seen it spelled as “Dilaene” and “di-line.”

¹⁸⁷ van Nostrand, *Old Naledi*, p. 24.

music videos, Old Naledi was the “Ghetto” or “Zola”—appropriating the name of a large, well-known Johannesburg slum.

Close to Diline, sits the police barracks and jail, the Naledi (development) Brigade and the Old Naledi shopping complex. The shops deserve further mention. Designed to serve the full population of Old Naledi, except of course for the informal markets and the house-front tuck shops selling basic goods or front-yard shebeens that dot the landscape, the Old Naledi shops attract residents from across the urban Village. To transport items bought from the shops, people usually carry things on foot—if it is an extra large load, they’ll use a wheelbarrow. Indeed, as my research assistant told me when I asked how he would contrast Old Naledi to the newer malls built around the city, he suggested that while the parking lot of a place like Riverwalk or Game City is full of cars, the complex here in Old Naledi is full of wheelbarrows. “That’s our cars,” he half-jokingly says, as we counted 12 wheelbarrows “parked” in front of shops as their owners browse inside.

The few shops in the Old Naledi complex occupy mostly dilapidated buildings that seem not to have been refurbished since their construction almost three decades ago. The buildings form a semi-enclosed perimeter around an open space probably intended as a parking lot. Mostly though, few cars use it, appropriated instead by women selling produce, discarded plastic bags and aluminum cans, and locals hanging out, drinking beer or sharing some neighborhood gossip. Along with the “It’s a Knockout Butchery and Supermarket” and the “Naledi Cash n’ Carry” there are a few other food shops, where foodstuffs are available at rates no cheaper than what you find at Gaborone’s more upscale shopping malls. In addition to the food shops, are two liquor stores, a Chinese owned clothing shop, and a bar, the “Speak Easy Pub,” outside of which are pictographic signs warning men against public urination. A rusted metal braai stand

sits outside one of the bottle stores, to be used by people, men usually, who've bought meat from one of the grocery stores to go along with their Coke, Fanta, or the occasional late morning beer consumed while sitting on the storefront curb. Overlooking it all is a large billboard advocating condom use: accompanying a picture of a basketball, is the slogan—a quote attributed to a member of the Botswana national basketball team—“Even the best ballers take a safe dunk with it!”¹⁸⁸ Spread out underneath the shadow of the billboard and the shade of surrounding trees on the shopping complex's periphery, produce vendors, public phone operators and other independent merchants have set up an alternative to the formal commerce offered by the mall.

Walking from the Old Naledi shops out into the rest of the neighborhood can be a bit disorienting the first time attempted. The central and northern sections of Old Naledi look more or less the similar: densely packed plots occupied by single room shacks to larger, more elaborate complexes that can support a large number of tenants. With no observable signs or plot numbers and paths that seemed to circle back on themselves, finding my way around became an acquired skill that was obtained only after I got comfortable using an oddly crooked tree, a fence that was falling apart, or the box of discarded chibuku cartons as markers; a random assortment of geographic breadcrumbs to get me from A to B and back again. (And of course, it didn't hurt that I almost always had a friend with me.) The streets and alleys are narrow, cramped, and uneven. A mixture of sand, packed dirt and rubble, the streets tend to be pot-holed in the center and slope steeply on the edges. Dodging rocks and holes and open drains was always an adventure requiring me to attempt wild maneuvers in my chair, resulting in precarious tilts and angles, and almost as frequently, a barely averted disaster. Travel in these parts then,

¹⁸⁸ These sports-themed billboards sponsored by the Lovers Plus condom brand appear elsewhere in Gaborone, including one with a golf theme that juxtaposes a close-up of a driver and a similar play on words. This bit of signage always struck as inexplicably odd, since hardly anyone in Botswana participates in the sport. As an interesting side note that perhaps sheds some light on this, is the rumor that speculates some of the HIV/AIDS ad campaigns disseminated in Botswana are cooked up by advertising firms based in New York City.

was generally slow going, particularly following the sporadic, but fierce, downpours that would sweep across the landscape.

In contrast to this part of Old Naledi, walking the southern area, Dilines, was no problem at all. The roads were wide, at least as big as to allow two cars to comfortably pass each other, and evenly graded. And because they traveled straight, laid out on a rough grid pattern, when you set out on one you could accurately predict where you were going to end up; telling someone, that is, to take the first left, second right was far simpler than directing a person to pass the pile of bricks and look for the chain link fence with the missing door. Similarly, the plots in Dilines tended to be bigger, adhere to the same basic square-ish shape, and the chances were far greater that in Diline, people had access to a standpipe on their property, rather than having to rely on one designated for community use. The differences in space and layout found in the north and south of Old Naledi hint at conflicts and divisions in community attitudes and relations. These sources of tensions provide further evidence that Old Naledi is not the uniform, undifferentiated slum-blob that it is generally described to be by those who don't live there. The above account then, albeit brief, is meant to give a general impression of what Old Naledi is like, to give the reader something with which to compare the external slum-talk about Old Naledi. We will begin first with descriptions published in the popular press.

Perhaps not surprisingly, based on the establishment's negative view of Naledi dating back to the colonial period, the perception of Old Naledi as a place of danger and disease, a location apart from the everyday goings-on of Gaborone, was commonly held early in Gaborone's history. By the mid-1970s, a front-page headline in the government newspaper announced that there was "Deep Concern About Naledi Delinquency." Accompanied by a photo of barely standing dwellings virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding rubble, the story vaguely

tells of “Abhorrent” crime in Naledi, and that if the situation is not soon improved, “the area would soon turn into ‘Sodom and Gomora’(sic).”¹⁸⁹ Conjuring up the archetypal biblical image of immorality and all-around depravity, all occurring within the walls of the new capital, the alarm was sounded that something needed to be done, and urgently.¹⁹⁰ The shrillness of the warning probably still reflects the previous thinking about Naledi—it needed to be gotten rid of. The prevalence of this attitude was slowly eroding however, as town officials came to realize that Naledi was likely to be a permanent fixture on the landscape, thus leading to the upgrading projects described above.

Once the possibility of demolishing Old Naledi had been removed, talk about Old Naledi began to shift in a subtle but significant way. Rather than mention the “evils” of Old Naledi in order to advocate for its destruction, the “evils” of Old Naledi were presented in such a way as to ostracize the area from the rest of Gaborone, to create a discursive distance between it and Gaborone that would not otherwise exist in the compact spatial geography of the capital. If, in other words, the terrain of occupied by Old Naledi couldn’t be wiped clean, and its residents removed, they could at least, be ignored and kept at arms length. The general outcome of these rhetorical maneuvers being that the topography of the city was rearranged to prioritize the spaces of discourse and imagination. Since location was no longer a trustworthy marker of status and urbanity, other modes of differentiation became important, as I have shown previously with regards to the shopping mall and the constructive performance of a Batswana identity through everyday encounters with Zimbabweans on Gaborone’s streets.

¹⁸⁹ *Daily News*, ‘Deep concern about Naledi delinquency’, 29 September 1975, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰ For the record, it is worth noting that in response to the problems in Naledi a committee composed of residents adopted a more practical solution: they asked for a telephone to be installed in the village so the police could be more efficiently summoned when, or if, trouble arose.

This transition to active indifference and marginalization occurred quickly, building on the already present stereotypes about slums in general and Old Naledi in particular. An example from the late 1970s or early 1980s (the date is uncertain) provides an especially useful illustration. As the headline of a piece originally written for the Botswana magazine, *Kutlwano*, suggests, the notion that Old Naledi was proximate but also distant was already well understood. “My Trip to Old Naledi—So Near and Yet So Far” by the one-time mayor of Gaborone, and later, an MP for the opposition, Paul Rantao, reads like a travelogue, of someone visiting a place both faraway and exotic. And indeed, even the title phrase, “My Trip,” suggests a journey to a far-off destination. As a so-called village in the town, the neighborhood is quite a ways off from the real activities of town living; a point Rantao emphasizes at least three different times in the just over two-page article. The reader is told that Old Naledi is “so near and yet so far!”, a “village within a metropolis,” and a “micro-town within a town.”¹⁹¹

What was going on out there, in that apparently distant urban frontier, Rantao wonders? To answer that question, “One beautiful afternoon I decided to go out and witness the goings on at (sic) and have a personal experience of this Gaborone town spot so much talked about the public at large: maligned by the socially successful people[,] causing so much concern to the vigilant police.”¹⁹² Following the practice of any explorer, Rantao goes on to describe some of the sights and experiences to be found. From the good—the friendliness of the people and the “high life” to be located at the corner shabeen—to the bad—“the ugliest, messiest[,] and shoddiest compounds you could think of right in the heart of [a] thriving fast developing modern town,” the “flesh peddlers,” the many men walking around with the scarred over facial wounds

¹⁹¹ Paul Rantao, *Independence: Pimples and pay-offs* (Botswana Cooperative Union Ltd., Gaborone, 1984), pp. 28-29.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

from a bar fight gone too far.¹⁹³ Even with the superficial treatment of Old Naledi, a portrait of a complex place still manages to emerge; Old Naledi is just as much about the maintenance of a vibrant community under difficult circumstances, as it is about stabbings and ramshackle living quarters.

It is the bad, the sensational though, that is most often dwelled on. And not just with respect to Old Naledi either. Practically any mention of slums or squatters in the Botswana press is accompanied by a generic comment that mentions the generic dangers associated with slums. Writing about a squatter camp located by the Gaborone dam, the *Mmegi* story hits on two usual targets: liquor and immigrants. Quoting one advocate's take on the scene, "There are lots of shebeens here selling all sorts of hot stuff and people often fight . . . there are a lot of rapes . . . [shebeens] must be stopped." Furthermore, illegal immigrants are making themselves at home in the area, and thus, "we believe that all shacks must be brought down so that the illegal immigrants do not have anywhere to stay."¹⁹⁴ Another report on squatters being evicted from their homes in an area outside Gaborone, offhandedly remarks that of the people whose homes were to be bulldozed, "None was found drinking alcohol as it is usually assumed."¹⁹⁵ The essentializing assumption that the poor, squatters, or slum-dwellers are immersed in a life of vice is so well-ingrained in the popular consciousness that the *absence* of a stumbling drunk or two is a newsy detail worthy to print. As if, perhaps, the fact that they are not incorrigible drunkards makes the fact that their homes were being destroyed a bit more tragic. Usually though, the humanizations are short-lived. More typically, writing of a tour taken of the Francistown slum,

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁹⁴ This quote, and the preceding one, are taken from: Monkagedi Gaothlobogwe, 'Brick association wants squatters out', *Mmegi*, 9 March 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/March/Thursday9/26647110169>> (9 March 2006).

¹⁹⁵ Shirley Nkepe, 'The human side of demolitions', *Mmegi*, 30 March 2004, p. 6.

Somerset East, the writer confidently gives his appraisal of the landscape, “As we toured the area, we could counte (sic) many drinking holes in the location. There are no shops here except tuck shops scattered throughout the township. The soul of this township is booze, crime and sex.”¹⁹⁶ There is not just something wrong with their behavior, but their soul is degraded, slum inhabitants represent a damaged form of humanity.

Rough behaviors practiced by slum occupants are the most obvious layer of distinction between them and the more well-heeled, respectable urbanite who might transgress the boundaries of the slum frontier—in this case, to demonstrate the ease of procuring pot. Writing in the same edition of *Mmegi*, another journalist points out that outward mannerisms are an easy method of differentiation. Describing how to blend in to the slum environs as an outsider, the author tells the reader:

It is very easy for residents of the notorious Somerset East to detect that a stranger has arrived at the location. A visitor would either be betrayed by his or her walk, dressing or language. Here there are no such things as *Dumela Rra* or *Mma* [formal Setswana greetings]. It is either *Shapo* or *Eita* [street slang greetings], otherwise the residents will catch on that a visitor is around.¹⁹⁷

The familiar etiquette of the refined city dweller has no place the space of the slum. Born in the city—customs, language, even one’s gait—all these things that serve as anchors to the comforts of the city center, they have no use in the supposedly strange, foreign slum landscape.

Other evidence is presented in the papers, detailing Old Naledi’s oddity, its marginality. Tshireletso Motlogelwa, one of the more perceptive journalists working in Botswana today, particularly with regards to the Old Naledi neighborhood in which he grew up and still lives (as of 2005), puts it this way:

¹⁹⁶ Ryder Gabathuse, ‘The ‘ghetto’ that is Somerset East’, *Mmegi*, 9 July 2004, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ Alice Banda, ‘Getting high with ease’, *Mmegi*, 9 July 2004, p. 8.

Some say if Gaborone were a family, Old Naledi would be the old toothless, tick-infested grandmother condemned to the dark backyard while the rest of the youthful family laughs and feasts their way through the night around the giant fire.¹⁹⁸

Equating Old Naledi to a toothless elder best left neglected and forgotten is certainly applicable to some degree, when one considers, for example, the fact that the neighborhood remains largely without access to electricity, indoor plumbing or sewage.

Yet, besides being seen as a harmless, unsupported old woman, the imagery directed towards also adopts a darker tinge, as place to be feared and kept away from. Even while Motlogelwa writes with a sympathetic eye toward because of its poverty, he vaguely asserts that Old Naledi is a dangerous place as he discusses Old Naledi's "spiralling (sic) crime rate."¹⁹⁹ He further goes on to write of the ominous air that pervades Old Naledi at month's end—when everyone gets paid for the month—and workers have money to buy chibuku and beer, along with the accompanying late-night troubles wrought by excessive inebriation. Of the last Friday night, "as it gets darker, it gets calmer, but only calmer as it would just before a hurricane."²⁰⁰ In the typical formulation then, Old Naledi is a cauldron, waiting for any excuse or reason to boil over into chaos. But is this really the case? Official statistics suggest a contradiction with common perception. Published a few weeks before the article citing the "spiralling (sic) crime rate," the numbers of murders, rape and robbery dropped over the same six-month period from the previous year.²⁰¹ Why do these discrepancies, between the facts on the ground and widely accepted reputation, persist? If the conventional wisdom about Old Naledi is false, or at least more complicated than is generally believed, what could be the reasons for its continued

¹⁹⁸ Tshireletso Motlogelwa, 'In the heart of the hood, pt. 4', *Mmegi*, 18 June 2004, p. 9.

¹⁹⁹ Tshireletso Motlogelwa, 'Of football passions', *Mmegi*, 23 June 2004, p. 6.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁰¹ Bame Piet, 'Crime goes down in Naledi', *Mmegi Monitor*, 7 June 2004, p. 12. The given figures from January to May are: Murders, Rapes and Robberies dropped from 4 to 1, 14 to 11, and 42 to 36, respectively.

dissemination? The answer(s) to this question sit at the heart of contemporary slum-talk in Gaborone—by its continued circulation and presence, who wins, and who loses, if I might put it so crassly. We will explore this question more deeply below, but for the moment, outlining one aspect of it will suffice.

Writing about Old Naledi suggests that there is a dual, Janus-faced quality to the space of the neighborhood. It is, for example, a different place during the day than it is at night, or its perceived danger or immorality is not just something to be shunned, but is to be exploited. Former mayor Paul Rantao captures this two-facedness in his “travel writing” about Old Naledi. “Time was ticking by. It was getting pitch dark and I had to join my group again to say goodbye,” he writes, continuing:

They were at that time a bit soaked up but they at least whispered to me that it was too dangerous for me to stay any longer. ‘This spot looks like a heaven of peace during the day but at night it is hell,’ said one of them in a rather drunken voice. I was not so much blind folded into false security. I soon realised that darkness was a major draw back to slum pleasure seekers. At night everyone have to be content with a hurricane lamp for lighting their ill ventilated shelters.²⁰²

Although Rantao choose to depart Old Naledi as dusk approached and night followed, others from outside the area see opportunity in the darkness. Here, the urban slum as some sort of uncharted territory, as a frontier where the norms and boundaries of the city-proper are reversed, negated or inverted. Upon reflection, it seems, at least to some superficial extent, the moral environmentalists of the Victorian and colonial age—although maybe this divide is more arbitrary than factual—who fretted over the damaging influence of slums on the respectable men and women of the city, might have had a point. Describing the Satellite location east of Francistown, a journalist reports, “this is the place where moneyed outsiders can get a generous fix of guilty pleasures from fresh juveniles ready to trade bodies for money, marijuana and a ride

²⁰² Rantao, *Independence*, p. 30.

in the car.²⁰³ Further quoting a “known madman” about the nightly scene, “‘it is mostly soldiers who come here to pick up these little girls under the cover of darkness,’” who frequent “this place with ill-defined moral boundaries.”²⁰⁴ Again, the image of boundaries and borders. Not only is the physical space of the slum said to be a distinct place where transgressing the border of the city and the slum represents an entrance into a unique phase, zone, space of urban existence, but the moral limits aren’t fixed, but rather they remain elusive. Behavior that is repudiated in other parts of the urban environment is permissible under “the cover of darkness,” to the anonymity granted by the meandering unmarked pathways of the densely packed slum.

Old Naledi too, like Satellite location, as a wild space of disorder and danger to the outsider, represents a space of desire and unchecked deviance. While it is said that Old Naledi “is where the rest of the city dumps its unkept (sic) promises,”²⁰⁵ Old Naledi is also a receptacle for the longings and lurid fantasies of the better parts of Gaborone. What might be taboo elsewhere—girls and liquor and girls—is seen as widely and cheaply available, to excess even, in Old Naledi. Referring to what Motlogelwa suggested earlier, darkness on a weekend night doesn’t just imbue the atmosphere with the tinge of danger—the calm before the storm—it harbors something else as well. “Tonight,” the by now familiar story goes, “like all the other nights, flashy cars from the glittering city will crowd these dusty streets hunting for a piece of the ‘action.’ It is in this ghetto that unconventional Gaborone comes to fulfil (sic) its wildest dreams, quench its thirst, satisfy its want and live out its wildest fantasies.”²⁰⁶ The place described in the

²⁰³ Tomeletso Sereetsi, ‘Location of frustrated dreams’, *Mmegi*, 22 October 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday22/365689781565.html>> (28 May 2007).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Tshireletso Motlogelwa, ‘A life that could have been’, *Mmegi*, 6 July 2004, p. 4.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

preceding lines sounds more apt to be an advertisement for a hotel in the freewheeling city of Las Vegas. But in this case, there is perhaps one parallel to the neon-lit, air-conditioned decadence of Sin City: “what happens in Vegas,” the saying goes, “stays in Vegas.” This might also be an appropriate slogan to describe Old Naledi. As an alternative venue facilitating the evasive of restrictions imposed by the expectations of a respectable, a virtuous, Gaborone, Old Naledi serves an apparently useful purpose as an outlet, a bubble whose one-sided permeability depends on how many Pula rest folded in your wallet, or the make of foreign car that you drive.

Old Naledi doesn't just stand isolated because of its image as a theatre where the performance of vice is permitted. Instead, its marginality is also experienced in a more banal form of neglect. Perhaps the most striking example of the general indifference to Old Naledi and its residents was the annual practice of then President Seretse Khama and his family giving out Christmas presents to Old Naledi's children, before walking amongst the populace. This display, almost royal its imagery of the First Family deigning to interact with the commoner class, is described with more than a hint of sarcasm by an Old Naledi resident, “[Seretse Khama] would come to a tent pitched in the northern part of the location and we would be enchanted at Lady Khama and the twins.”²⁰⁷ Further describing the protocol of the scene, “Everyone would gather around the immaculate looking family; scantily dressed bulbous kneed children salivating at the toys . . . the President would give away the toys and then, with his entourage, stroll through the settlement.”²⁰⁸ Apart from the Christmas holiday, local historian Sandy Grant, says that Lady Khama would also periodically come to Old Naledi to distribute cake and balloons, bluntly adding, “They neglect them all year, and then go and do *that*? It's insulting is what that is.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Rogers Ngakane quoted in: Tshireletso Motlogelwa, ‘In the heart of the hood, pt. 3’, *Mmegi*, 17 June 2004, p. 5.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁰⁹ Communication with Sandy Grant, Oodi Village, 16 July 2005.

Whether an outgrowth of genuine generosity or not, this sort of ceremonial gift giving is an easy opportunity to demonstrate benevolent concern without actually doing anything substantive. This form of ritualized patronage bestowed upon the most marginal population is not, it is worth noting, limited only to the era of Botswana's first president. A variant of this practice made headlines in the winter month of June 2004, when the current President Festus Mogae brought donated food and blankets to the "resettled" Bushmen populations in the Kalahari village of New Xade.²¹⁰ Already under international pressure due to the circumstances of the Basarwa relocations, Mogae's gesture was criticized as a bit of bribery. Even so, nobody pointed out the odd fact that while the resettlement villages were presented as a vast improvement over their previous living conditions, the development villages apparently lacked such basic necessities as an adequate number blankets. Whether in the remote areas of the Kalahari, or the urban spaces of Old Naledi, a carefully choreographed photo-op seems more preferable than does a durable policy solution.

If Old Naledi is only worth a passing glance to government leaders, ignored until the next scheduled opportunity for charity, most other Gaborone residents likewise ignore it. When discussed at all, it is almost always about the dangers posed by Old Naledi. A place, other words, I would be smart to avoid. And while the talk about Old Naledi is more interesting to me than what "actually" happens, I don't want to give the impression that nothing "bad" ever happens in Old Naledi. A friend of mine for example, driving in a taxi on the Old Lobatse Road that follows the eastern edge of the area, had somebody throw a brick through the car, steal her groceries out of the back seat and then run away into Old Naledi's interior. All this occurred in a matter of few seconds as the taxi slowed so as not to grind the car's undercarriage over the

²¹⁰ Chandapiwa Baputaki, 'OP [Office of the President] denies Mogae bribed Basarwa', *Mmegi*, 17 June 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/June/Thursday17/10134044261.html>> (15 June 2007).

surface of a speed bump. And while certainly a surprising, even scary experience for my friend, the fact that only food was stolen, from a white foreigner no doubt assumed to be able to financially absorb the loss, doesn't necessarily provide evidence of the inherent criminality of Old Naledi residents. Yet this is precisely the sense I got whenever I talked to a non-resident—whether expatriate or Batswana, wealthy or not—about Old Naledi. Statements about Old Naledi would typically be short, generic and to the point. A respected Motswana businesswoman explaining why she refuses to drive past Old Naledi after dark—or the Old Lobatse Road at any time—tells me, “Naledi has always been rough, right from the onset.” A former Gaborone mayor says, Old Naledi is “regarded as a lurking place for crime.” A retired Gaborone City Council civil service officer plainly says of Old Naledi residents, “they are a rough people,” before going on to add, “pick-pocketing is not an Old Naledi thing now, but a Gaborone thing.” A University of Botswana professor tells me over dinner, after I explain my plan to temporarily move to Old Naledi as part of my fieldwork, looks skeptically at me, before advising that I “better leave the credit cards at home.”

The Old Naledi *kgosi* makes a similar point. A political appointee of the BDP—assigned by the Ministry of Local Government—the Old Naledi *kgosi* is not from the area, originating instead from, while continuing to live in Mochudi, a village roughly 30 minutes north of Gaborone. Accordingly, even though he is supposed to represent the people of Old Naledi, he maintains the perspectives and attitudes usually associated with non-Naledi residents. Most inhabitants of the area, especially the unemployed, are “rowdy” and “rascals” and therefore, *Kgosi* Pilane tells me, “I would be advised not to travel at night here.” Pilane suggests two factors to account for the problems: rampant unemployment, which leaves people idle and

isolated from the rest of Gaborone. At the same time, further exacerbating the notion that Old Naledi is not part of Gaborone, is the fact that people from all over Botswana settle there.

Thus, while it retains the set-up and atmosphere of a traditional village, it remains, Pilane says, a “bit of a cosmopolitan area” where “there is a clash of interests” between differing tribal factions. Pilane’s conclusion though, needs to be considered with a bit of skepticism. He suggests that because of this tension, not only is Old Naledi set apart from the rest of Gaborone, but is also cloven internally because of a fractious community identity. In the past however, even from the earliest days of the Naledi squatter encampment, elders and other community leaders were selected by residents to advise, settle disputes and informally govern the settlement’s population.

For accuracy’s sake then, it is probably too easy, perhaps even outright wrong, for *Kgosi* Pilane to suggest that Old Naledi’s diversity is to blame for whatever problems it experiences. Like other non-Naledi residents, Pilane’s explanation suggests an overly generalized, substantial misreading of the Old Naledi scene. Indeed, as other people have told me, not to mention the fact that Pilane is viewed with suspicion as a BDP partisan spy by most of the neighborhood’s opposition supporters, the local chief might have far more legitimacy, and authority, if he actually lived in the neighborhood. Because as it is now, one person complained, he fails to adhere to the expected chiefly protocols by, for example, failing to attend weddings or funerals.²¹¹

There are a couple points to be made regarding the preceding discussion. First, let me address the emphasis on old Naledi as a “rough” and “rowdy” place. There are two ways to parse the meaning of “rough” as used in this context. On the one hand, it is no doubt a way to

²¹¹ Interview with *Kgosi* Pilane (Chief of Old Naledi), Old Naledi *kgotla*, 23 April 2004.

suggest that Old Naledi residents are a tough lot, potentially dangerous. At the same time though, “rough” might also imply that they are a coarser, less refined or ill-mannered people who aren’t quite ready for city living. They still have a bush or village mentality that makes them deficient as citizens of Gaborone, or at least not yet integrated into the everyday pulse of urban living. The retired civil servant quoted in a preceding paragraph hints at this at multiple times in our conversation, telling me in his cramped office a few blocks away from the downtown Main Mall, “Old Naledi is away from the other settlements [in Gaborone],” “it is far off,” and that the people who live there “didn’t look at themselves as part of Gaborone.” Or, as a Zimbabwean lecturer at the Old Naledi Brigade explained, fixing the distance from Gaborone on a cosmic scale, “People from Old Naledi are like people from another planet.”

Secondly, the very form of these statements is imbued with significance. The everyday “stories” told about Old Naledi aren’t traditional narratives with a beginning, middle and end, or inhabited by distinguishable characters or a coherent plot. Instead, tales told of Old Naledi take the form a short declarative statement or sentence, such as the ones described above that make an authoritative pronouncement or vague generalization about some “fact” about Old Naledi. These generic statements convey a minimal amount of detail along the lines of “those people are dangerous,” Old Naledi is the “place where criminals are,” or that area is labeled as a “lurking place for crime.” During my fieldwork, I thought it strange that I usually wasn’t able to get people to elaborate on what they meant or why they thought that was true. At the time, probably mistakenly, I left it alone and didn’t give it much further thought. It wasn’t until much later after I returned from Botswana that I hit on a reason why this might be the case. These stories, shaped as they are, generically stated with little in the way of supporting evidence are essentially irrefutable. In the absence of any substantive details, they become nearly impossible to dismiss,

deny, or prove wrong. The only possible way to contradict them is to take the complete opposite position: that Old Naledi people aren't dangerous, which is a perspective that most people aren't willing to adopt.

And furthermore, these narrative simplifications have the added benefit of removing complexity or ambiguity from the urban landscape. If the point is to differentiate Old Naledi from the rest of Gaborone, it makes no sense to introduce details that might muddy the waters; that is, to suggest that while there might be some dangerous people in Old Naledi that doesn't make everyone who lives in the neighborhood that way. For non-Naledi residents though, complicating the picture is not desirable—painting with a broad brush is. These simple stories are also more easily circulated in everyday discursive transactions. Rather than being laden with details and nuance, they are stripped bare, made more aerodynamic, so only the most basic information is transmitted. If the idea is to disseminate the idea that Old Naledi “people” are dangerous, there is no reason to muddle the message of this urban mythology with an assortment of disclaimers, details and caveats. Moreover, in this, the era of the text message in Gaborone, these story forms seem especially appropriate. During the first night I spent in Old Naledi, a Batswana friend of mine sent me a text message reminder to “be careful flashing my phone around.” More than a little ironic, since in order to read the message, I would indeed have to “flash my phone around.” As an easily swallowed oral capsule, or as a typed warning fitting well under the 180-character maximum of a text message, in the stories of Old Naledi, speaking about what “happened” is irrelevant. Talk of Old Naledi is instead elevated to the level of urban legend, akin to stories exchanged among suburban children about supernatural apparitions that appear in a darkened mirror when summoned by a repetitive chant or menacing hitchhikers standing in wait for lost cars of teenagers traveling along lonely country roads. Old Naledi is the

“tramp-monster” under the bed—or worse—lurking beneath the comfortable middle-class veneer of contemporary Gaborone.

Yet, these stories aren’t just circulated amongst Gaborone elites, as a product of established class divisions, but rather, they seem just as common amongst the low-paid, working class populations of the city as well. As I described at length earlier, Old Naledi can be a difficult place to navigate when not familiar with the layout—the lack of plot numbers, meandering streets, the seemingly random organization of the houses. This goes not just for easily overwhelmed American graduate students like myself, but Batswana taxi drivers too. One morning in April 2005, I was in a taxi en route to a meeting in the southern part of Old Naledi, nearby the police station. By that time, having spent a couple weeks traversing Old Naledi’s streets, I was beginning to feel comfortable finding my way around, assuming I traveled my usual path.²¹² On this morning however, the driver took a different way than I was used to and we quickly became lost. After about 10 minutes of back-tracking and dead-ends, I was late for my meeting and asked the driver if we couldn’t just ask somebody for directions, as there were numerous residents out walking or sitting in their yards. The driver however, shook his head and refused. Already annoyed, I pressed for a further explanation. He plainly said, “I don’t trust them.” When I asked why, he again cryptically responded, “These Old Naledi people are a problem.” No more explanation was forthcoming, but really, none was needed.

I might also offer one other example. There was a street vendor in the Main Mall that I became friendly with following an interview I conducted with him. He had set up a lopsided wooden table—he sold belts and sunglasses and other accessories—in a prime location in the

²¹² I should probably note that this isn’t simply because Old Naledi is *so* incredibly difficult to navigate, but also because my sense of direction is atrocious, having once gotten lost driving to my own house. I think though, I’ll leave the fuller version of that story for another time.

Mall. So whenever I was there, we would chat for a bit about the current news and how my research was going. One of the last times we met, I told Simon that I was thinking about moving to Old Naledi. He immediately began laughing, asking how I would be able to survive without running water or electricity. “What are you going to do there,” he challenged me, “just drink hot water?” The conversation continued like that for a few minutes until I convinced him that I’d be just fine. Then he turned a bit serious, telling me that he worried that living in Old Naledi might have a negative influence or harm me in some way. He seemed to think that I would somehow become damaged or contaminated simply by coming into contact with the place and people who lived there. Simon told me that the next time he saw me, I’d probably “be walking down the street smoking *dagga*.”

Simon’s view of Old Naledi hits on the two archetypes of Old Naledi talk. By mentioning the lack of electricity or running water, living solely on a diet of “hot water,” Simon intersects with the talk about Old Naledi being backwards and less developed than the rest of Gaborone. That Old Naledi exists in a time and space apart from other sections of Gaborone, a vestigial relic of the past standing disjointed from the modern space represented by Gaborone. This conception of contradictory, perhaps competing, presents, echoes a point made decades earlier:

Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, by virtue of the fact that they may all be seen today. But that does not mean that they are living at the same time with others.²¹³

Even though Old Naledi is in the town, Simon seemed to imply, just as *Kgosi* Pilane did nearly a year earlier, it remains a village. Subsequently, Simon also duplicates, almost verbatim, the earlier Victorian and colonial discourse about slums and their capacity for spreading moral degeneration. Indeed, Simon’s comment about *dagga* seems more than a little similar to what

²¹³ Ernst Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and the obligation to its dialectics”, *New German Critique*, 11 (Spring 1977), p. 22.

the South African public health official, T. Duncan Greenless, said decades earlier about the “contaminated” native suffering from “general paralysis” stemming from “excessive drinking and the smoking of *dagga*.”²¹⁴ For the present purpose, it is probably just enough to note the durability of these words and images, as well as the fact that they remain operational in contemporary, post-colonial Botswana, rather than determining the precise mechanisms as to how they trickled down from the memos of elite colonial officialdom to working people on Gaborone’s streets years and years later.

What is particularly interesting too, is that this kind of slum-talk is also circulated *within* Old Naledi. As I’ve previously indicated, the section of Old Naledi known as Dilines looks quite a bit different than the older parts of the area to the north. In Dilines, the roads are wide, the plots are larger, and the area is laid out more or less on a grid pattern that mirrors the planning of other suburbs in Gaborone. The older areas on the other hand, grew organically as people settled wherever there was space—the roads are winding, the plots cramped and not arranged with any discernible pattern or external order in mind. To residents who live in Dilines then, the northern part of Old Naledi represents a slum-within-a-slum. Living in a planned area, surrounded by better behaved individuals, the residents of Dilines are claim a link with other parts of Gaborone, differentiating themselves from the “real” slum. Just as space and fear informed attitudes and perceptions of those outside Old Naledi, so was the case for people within Old Naledi.

While outsiders make no distinction when talking about Old Naledi, those who live there divide the neighborhood, separating out the good parts from the bad. Similar to the stories I heard that talked about Old Naledi, people in the southern region of Dilines spoke of the badly mannered, dirtier, less healthy, criminal elements who inhabit the northern sections. One police

²¹⁴ See footnote 44, in this chapter.

officer told me that section 4 is especially problematic since it is located far from the local police station and is the most densely packed part of Old Naledi. A gardener named Mac saying that the police station marks the boundary of the good and bad sections of Old Naledi. Adhering to this view, another resident of Dilines made the sweeping claim that all the northern sections (6-9) were dangerous, attracting criminals from all over Gaborone who go there to hide. Just like the outsider afraid to travel in or near Old Naledi—gas delivery companies won't deliver to internal residences out of fear of being robbed, for example—people from Dilines are fearful of their neighbors to the north after dark. And also, when walking around Dilines, for instance, my research assistant didn't mind me carrying my own bag, but would insist on carrying it himself when we traveled north, for fear of someone snatching it from me.

Why might these stories disseminated about different sections, the totality of Old Naledi, or slums in general, persist? Why are they latched onto by both the more well-off, as well as those occupying lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder, including those residing in Old Naledi? I think in broad terms, as we've already suggested, talk about Old Naledi is a way to delineate the modern, urban spaces of Gaborone from those images that are at odds with the reputation of Gaborone as a cosmopolitan city connected with the world outside Botswana and southern Africa. Can Botswana and Gaborone, retain its label as the African exception if one-third of the capital city's population is poor, or (supposedly) inherently backwards? An answer to that question is likely part of the puzzle, especially for the poor who don't live in Old Naledi—the contemporary rich of Gaborone have their newly constructed gated communities and shopping malls to really differentiate themselves as “real” urban citizens of Gaborone and the world. For the rest though, stories about Old Naledi told by the poor—my taxi driver, my friend Simon, for example—carve out a space for urban citizenship that might not otherwise be

available to them. While they might be poor, at least they are not lumped in and associated with the ostracized, disreputable residents of Old Naledi. Keeping this story about degenerate slums and those who live there alive active, is a way to claim a place of the modern city for their own, since other, more visible ways—driving a foreign car, meeting for an afternoon espresso at Riverwalk—remain largely unattainable. Into Old Naledi go all images associated with the Not-City as understood by the typical Gaborone urbanite. Old Naledi represents Botswana’s history, the perhaps embarrassing spectacles associated with traditional village living, wheelbarrows used in place of German sedans, cartons of chibuku instead of cans of Red Bull, dented coins and crumpled paper currency in lieu of a Visa debit card. The image of Gaborone as a gleaming monument to the future is something that all Old Naledi non-residents can unite behind, rich and poor alike. In a significant way, the idea of Gaborone, the manifestation of the imagination, fantasies and aspirations of its population couldn’t exist without Old Naledi as the contrasting backdrop.

Yet, there is more to it than Old Naledi stories being told in order to prop up Old-Naledi-as-symbol, however useful it might be. Characterizing Old Naledi as a place of vice, crime and immorality also effectively masks the structural socio-economic inequalities that pervade the politics and economics of Botswana. During a wide-ranging discussion with an elderly Old Naledi woman who moved there from her home village in the early 1970s and now owns a local bar, she complained that all the outsiders want to talk about in relation to Old Naledi is rape and murder, but “they don’t talk about our poverty.” This is an important point, echoed in work conducted by Teresa Caldeira on Sao Paulo, who showed that the creation of the idea of “natural” criminals legitimates inequalities.²¹⁵ So as is the case a Brazilian metropolis, in

²¹⁵ Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, segregation, and citizenship in Sao Paulo* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2000), p. 31.

Gaborone it is far easier to ignore a place whose inhabitants have been essentialized as “rough,” or drunks, or sexually available under cover of darkness, than it would be if talk about Old Naledi residents revolved around issues of education, employment or poverty. The latter are problems for which possible solutions exist, while for the former, the only response is a shrug of the shoulders that says “What can you do?”

Placing Old Naledi in the broader context of the economy might be instructive here. Former Gaborone Mayor Paul Rantao wrote back in the early 1980s, “let’s face it, nobody likes being poor and few people like poor people. In fact many people are afraid of poor people.”²¹⁶ Unfortunately, in today’s Botswana, Gaborone included, there are more and more “poor people.” In recent years, Botswana has been tumbling backwards in the UN’s Human Development Report, as the most recent figures available suggest that one-half of Botswana’s population lives on less than \$2 per day (approximately P12), while 23.5% live on less than \$1 per day (P6.21).²¹⁷

Critics of Botswana’s government have made much of these declining figures. Opposition MP Dumelang Saleshando (of the Botswana Congress Party) asks, “What is the worth of our independence, when the wealth of our country eludes us,” further concluding that it is time to end policies that “disproportionately usher a small elite to heaven on earth, while the majority wallow in poverty.”²¹⁸ Newspaper columnist Comrade Moore has proclaimed conditions at Old Naledi to be “disguised homelessness,” the product of a “dual economy” that looks like a “nut with one part fresh and appetizing and the other part of the same nut, rotten and stinking.” Further comparing Old Naledi to the gated community of Phakalane, just outside Gaborone,

²¹⁶ Rantao, *Independence*, p. 41.

²¹⁷ Gideon Nkala, ‘Most Batswana live on P12 a day’, *Mmegi*, 24 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday24/583611393977.html>> (24 November 2006).

²¹⁸ Dumelang Saleshando, ‘What is the worth of our independence?’, *Mmegi*, 8 May 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/May/Monday8/274371337117.html>> (8 May 2006).

Comrade Moore writes, “Slums like Old Naledi exist side by side with super modern settlements like Phakalane, which are oases of opulence or pieces of Europe in a desert of want and poverty.”²¹⁹ Expelled political scientist Kenneth Good goes even further in his criticism, accusing the government of actively pursuing policies that keep the poor underfoot of the minority of elites that dominate the politics and economics of Botswana. Good argues that the economy of Botswana is explicitly oriented to ensure that the biggest contributors to the growth of the economy should see the largest rewards, and the poorest—he is writing here of Basarwa and Remote Area Dweller populations, but the point is applicable in this case too—“are to be kept in their structured underclass position, non-participants in Botswana’s society.”²²⁰ A report written in the same period commissioned by the Gaborone City Council however, suggests a more benign, less conspiracy theory-esque approach to the “invisibility” of the poor in Gaborone, stating that a large part of the problem with approaches to poverty alleviation in the city stem from adhering to the fictive notion that the urban poor have a rural safety net that ultimately limits their slide into total financial ruin.²²¹

While there might be some truth to the above point, there seems little doubt that policies directed toward the poor, particularly those classified as “destitutes,” serve to stigmatize them. For example, in the brief section on destitutes in a government report detailing the upcoming 25 years of development in Gaborone, the authors replicate long-wielded tropes about the correlative effects of slums, poverty, crime and innate human dysfunctionality. Adopting a now

²¹⁹ Comrade Moore, ‘Alternatives to the ‘yellow monster’’, *Mmegi*, 6 April 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Tuesday6/238845590352.html>> (15 June 2007).

²²⁰ Kenneth Good, “The state and extreme poverty in Botswana: the San and destitutes”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **37**, 2 (1999), pp. 199-200.

²²¹ GHK International, ‘Gaborone Urban Poverty and Housing Needs Assessment: Final Report for the Gaborone City Council’ (GHK International, Gaborone, 1999), p. 32.

familiar judgmental, moralistic tone, the writers of the *Gaborone City Development Plan (1997-2021)* note,

“Destitutes and paupers are people on the fringe of society who (sic) have a propensity to cross over into the world of crime. They are usually very gullible people who can easily be carried away by the rosy promises of demagogues and can therefore be lured into antisocial behaviour.”²²²

And when not deeming the very poor as inherently deficient on a hierarchical scale of human progress, the Government of Botswana goes one step further: building welfare policy around the premise that “destitutes and paupers” are little more than living, breathing bodies, and certainly not as full-fledged citizens or members of their community. Indeed, the original definition of “destitute,” first formulated in 1980 bluntly states that a destitute person is “an individual who is without assets,” either economic or familial.²²³ The destitute policies implemented by the Botswana government seem intent on keeping this state of barren liquidation as the status quo. Good, for example, quotes from the Botswana government’s 1991 report *A Poverty Datum Line for Botswana*, that the program was intended to provide assistance of only a “minimal nature” and that therefore, the food rations allotted were “the minimum necessary to maintain physical health.”²²⁴ This report further elaborated in minute detail what a destitute person was permitted to purchase with his assistance and what he was not: cosmetics, gifts, cooking utensils, or money for travel to funerals or weddings, were among the exclusions.²²⁵ And though there was to be no furniture in the house—no beds or mattresses even—the

²²² Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Gaborone City Council, and Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, ‘Gaborone City Development Plan (1997-2021)’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2001), p. 145.

²²³ Ministry of Local Government, Social Welfare Division, Republic of Botswana, ‘Revised National Policy on Destitute Persons’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2002), p. 2.

²²⁴ Republic of Botswana, ‘A Poverty Datum Line for Botswana’ (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1991). Quoted in: Good, “The state and extreme poverty in Botswana”, p. 196.

²²⁵ Good, “The state and extreme poverty in Botswana”, p. 196.

government did allow for one exception: the purchase of a chair or bench was permissible so that the “head of the household” was able to “discharge [his] social obligation . . . to an important visitor.”²²⁶

And while the government amended the destitute policy in 2002, it still managed to retain the stigmatizing, bare minimum approach to poverty alleviation that kept people alive, if only barely. The monthly allowance of food rations and cash given by government to destitute individuals was, for urban areas, an amount equivalent to P211.40, which is actually 50 thebe *less* than what was allotted to people living in rural areas.²²⁷ Included within this allowance was P55 for what the government described as “personal items.” Worth noting is that the P55 given in cash for daily expenditures falls far below the money available even to those people living on less \$1 or P6 per day; instead destitutes are expected to make due on less than P2 per day. The list of allowed provisions and “personal items” looks strikingly similar, if somewhat expanded, to the list of weekly rations provided to African laborers working in the mines of colonial Bechuanaland.²²⁸ In addition to the 500 grams of salt, 250 grams of tea and 12.5 kilograms of maize meal granted to an adult on a monthly basis, amongst other consumables, the list of allowable “personal hygiene items” was limited to:

- Toilet Soap: 2 x 150 grams
- Toothbrush: 1 per 6 months
- Vaseline: 1 x 100 ml
- Powder Soap: 1 x 500 g
- Paraffin: 1 Liter²²⁹

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

²²⁷ Ministry of Local Government, Social Welfare Division, Republic of Botswana, ‘Revised National Policy on Destitute Persons’, p. 8.

²²⁸ See footnote 61.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Much like the colonial instructions detailing the proper care and maintenance of the African laborer, the destitute policy employed by the government of Botswana follows a similar trajectory that treats the poor as something to be kept alive, to be tolerated, but are to be otherwise kept at arm's length. Writing this, I'm reminded of an old man I met in the Dilines section of Old Naledi. Formerly a cleaner at the University of Botswana, he had gotten sick and was forced to retire. These days he lives on a pension of P130 per month, along with the occasional Pula he receives from neighbors for repairing their shoes. With this bit of money he struggles to save for a tractor to bring to his family's cattle post, while also attempting to support the 14 others—a combination of daughters and grandchildren—who stay on the plot with him. Though this might be an extreme example, the poor, especially the worst off, are allowed to hover at the threshold of survival. An equally damaging consequence of poverty is the denial of access to the broader community. In the end, formal government action and informal street talk about slums and the poor intersect and complement one another.

These circumstances might not be all that surprising when considered in the context of the utility of urban poverty on behalf of the continued growth of the local Gaborone economy. The MP who represents Old Naledi in Botswana's Parliament observed that the national economy has been tilted to favor "growth with uneven development." Akanyang Magama further told me that a direct product of this structural bias has been the permanent establishment of "Old Naledi [as] a concentration of cheap labor."²³⁰ Magama's point is that because the nearby factories in the area of the city known as Gaborone West need workers cheaply available with few, if any rights,²³¹

²³⁰ Interview with Akanyang Magama (BNF MP for Old Naledi), Gaborone, 20 April 2005.

²³¹ MP Magama went on to tell me that generally, workers can be fired without cause, while at the same time having no recourse to complain or appeal. And in my own experience, the powerlessness of manual laborers has been something that I've experienced in a wide variety of settings. The old man mentioned in the preceding paragraph was fired only after he became sick, cut loose with no severance or insurance benefits. Nearly every Zimbabwean construction worker I encountered, had a story about working on a job for weeks only to be fired at month's end

Old Naledi is useful because it keeps people marginalized and undeveloped. Factory owners can pay their workers less, if, for example as is the case in Old Naledi, laborers don't have to spend money for such things as running water and electricity, let alone other "luxuries" that people in other parts of the city enjoy. An individual involved in the current upgrading project explains that further development of Old Naledi will be difficult because of its present function as a "labor pool." As a reserve of manual laborers who are unaware of the few rights that they do have, he tells me, it is common for employers to come to Old Naledi to look for workers at one end of the neighborhood, only to get new ones at the other edge of the neighborhood the next day, discarding the first group if they ask too many questions or demand too much money.

The situation is hardly any better even for those with steady employment. A female Old Naledi resident in her early 20s, employed at the Game City Checkers grocery store as a shelf stocker, works a forty-hour week at P3.36 an hour (slightly more than \$0.50, depending on the exchange rate). At P537.6 a month, this wage is a bit more than the guaranteed monthly minimum, set by government at P450. But as a young-ish (in his early 20s) guy who goes by the moniker "Fresh" and is employed part-time as a special constable complained, that amount can't help you improve your situation or properly budget for savings, as all the money goes to food and rent. But, he goes on to bitterly tell me, "Government doesn't give a fuck about that, as long as Mogae has his big house to live in." And indeed, in these, the last months of President Mogae's term in office, his new mansion, built with State funding for his retirement, awaits him in the Phakalane gated community just outside of Gaborone.

when their wages were due—though they were an especially vulnerable population due to their usually difficult immigration circumstances. Or, lastly, the far more tragic example that occurred in mid-2005 of the factory foreman who locked his workers inside the assembly area during their shift, only to have the building catch fire with no way for those inside to escape.

The adjacent village of Tlokweng serves as one final illustration. Abutting the southeastern edge of Gaborone, the tribal village of Tlokweng has retained to some extent its rustic village feel even as its population has grown in recent years—indeed, the occasional donkey or goats still cross the shared border with Gaborone, passing through the Riverwalk shopping mall’s expanse of parking. Despite Tlokweng’s proximity to Gaborone, it too, like Old Naledi, remains on the periphery of Gaborone’s development—although, unlike Old Naledi, Tlokweng falls outside the specific authority of the Gaborone city government. Quoted in *Mmegi*, one unemployed male says, “Tlokweng is far from developing. There is nothing that is really happening here . . . all we have to do is to sit here the whole day and idle.”²³² The article also quotes the local chief, who adds, “It is pathetic. There is not even one robot [traffic light] in the village. . . . Gaborone grew up on Tlokweng, don’t you think they could have developed it so that people get here [and] should see that they are near the city.”²³³ Rationalizing these discrepancies, the chief, Spokes Gaborone, identifies a similar reason to explain Tlokweng’s marginality. “They [the local land board] are forever allocating plots for residential and not making any effort of bringing companies here. Its [sic] like this place has turned into a sleeping area for the people who work in Gaborone.”²³⁴

The presence of ostracized or isolated areas that act largely as reservoirs of workers employed in the centralized urban economic hub is not a phenomenon unique to Botswana. In his 1975-76 lectures compiled in the volume *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault describes the birth of biopolitics and the evolution of the State’s efforts to manage and organize its internal

²³² Chandapiwa Baputaki, ‘The underdevelopment of Tlokweng’, *Mmegi*, 25 November 2005 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/November/Friday25/9406363171363.html>> (25 November 2005).

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

population. Writing about the transformation of Death from something that physically kills to something that is quieter, more subtle, but eternally debilitating, he makes a point applicable to the situation under discussion here: in this new era of technologies of State power, “Death was no longer something that suddenly swooped down on life—as in an epidemic. Death was now something permanent, something that slips onto life, perpetually gnaws at it, diminishes it and weakens it.”²³⁵ Or, in the words of James Scott, tools of “modern statecraft [are] largely a project of internal colonization” employed to “shape a people and landscape that will fit their techniques of observation.”²³⁶

The circumstances of Tlokweng, and of course Old Naledi, speak to a similar set of processes. What couldn’t be destroyed, erased from the spatial fabric of Gaborone, is now permitted to carry on into the future, banished to the periphery of urban wilderness. Indeed, Caldeira’s work on Sao Paulo suggests that even when their wealth and position was not affected, elites “remained uncomfortable with the working classes’ incorporation into . . . modern society.”²³⁷ Elsewhere, both James Scott and James Holston write eloquently of the city center’s need for its inverse (Scott’s “dark twin”) exemplified by slums on the periphery.²³⁸ Scott goes so far as to suggest that the urban core and periphery are entwined in a “symbiotic” relationship,²³⁹ since the urban core requires a periphery in which the slums and poor can be

²³⁵ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976* (Allen Lane, London, 2003), p. 244.

²³⁶ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1998), p. 82.

²³⁷ Caldeira, *City of Walls*, p. 44.

²³⁸ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 63; James Holston, *The Modernist City: An anthropological critique of Brasilia* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989), pp. 257-288.

²³⁹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 130.

funneled, so as to preserve the sanctified, idealized space(s) of the city (in this case, Brasilia).²⁴⁰ So it goes too, for Old Naledi, whose presence is these days now tolerated, perhaps even encouraged to some extent, only as long as it benefits the “real” city and its citizens. We should not be surprised to see this pattern replicated in Gaborone.

Residing on the “bad edge of postmodernity,” the global duplication of the fortress city has produced not only upper-class enclaves, but also caged those not falling into the acceptable categories of race, nationality or income in the places they occupy through an increasing militarization of urban space.²⁴¹ In Gaborone though, the fortress city has not been so bluntly constructed or enforced as it is in places ranging from Los Angeles to Johannesburg. It has, instead, been a far quieter, more-subtle transformation in the capital city of Botswana. In a recent book on slums, Mike Davis gets a bit closer to the Gaborone ground-truth as he describes the global process that see the contemporary city undergoing a massive spatial reorganization, as elites “disembed” themselves from the city, creating an ideal urban environment that doesn’t have to be shared with the large population of undesirables to be found in any large city space.²⁴² In Gaborone though, this isn’t a new occurrence. From the colonial to the present, the urban elites have long sought to claim the city—geographically, imaginatively, etc—for themselves, both by first creating their own economically segregated neighborhoods to today’s shopping malls and gated communities, and also by discursively fencing in the more marginal populations through the circulation of durable slum-talk. In Gaborone the objective is more than a process of dis-embedding, but about de-linking from the city. The distinction is an important one, as the

²⁴⁰ Holston, *The Modernist City*, pp. 273; 279.

²⁴¹ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1992), pp. 224; 248.

²⁴² Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (Verso, New York, NY, 2006), p. 119.

goal is not only to produce new, pure urban geography, but to also birth new spaces of fantasy and imagination perceived to be more befitting modern, globalized urban citizens. For Gaborone then, the rise of the enclave city is just as much about creating protected spaces for aspirations and ideas, as it about dividing the city into separate fortified realms.

Conclusion: The Village Talks Back?

Writing generally of the management of poverty, the social theorist Giovanna Procacci says, “the task of governing poverty . . . [is] to channel [paupers and the poor] so that they ‘aspire to find their satisfaction through the means permitted them by the social regime.’”²⁴³ Armed with a destitute policy that suggests a recipient buy a toothbrush once every six months, or furnish their home only with a chair in order to properly receive visitors, this State objective is difficult, if not impossible to achieve. One problem of course with the efforts to keep Old Naledi at the margins is that the people living inside the area usually aren’t inclined to cooperate with the roles and expectations set for them. In these final pages then, I’d like to say a few things about some Old Naledi responses to external efforts, both formal and informal, to marginalize them from the rest of Gaborone. Moreover, what they told me, along with what I saw, calls into question the idea that Old Naledi is totally cut-off from the wider Gaborone society. Not surprisingly, the internal picture is far more complicated, even contradictory, from that painted by the easy simplifications carried by stories of crime, vice and slums.

Filling in the details on behalf of the Old Naledi side of the story—which in itself is difficult, if not impossible, to get at, since there is no single, uniform “Old Naledi”—is important for another reason. It exposes the potential for possible action against or subversion of the establishment. Holston writes of the possibility of insurgent citizenship constructed and

²⁴³ Procacci, ‘Social economy and the government of poverty’, p. 160.

practiced outside the totalizing purview of the modernist state. These sites of insurgency “embody possible alternative futures” by “struggl[ing] over what it means to be a member of the modern state,”²⁴⁴ or in this case, the modern city. Just as gated communities and shopping malls make possible different citizenship claims, so too, do slums. Though in a place like Gaborone, where the expectations and goals of the State and the shopping mall are more or less the same, the possibilities of the slum carry extra weight. “Countersites,” Holston concludes, “are more than just indicators of the norm. They are themselves possible alternatives to it. They contain the germ of a related but different development.”²⁴⁵ Hopefully, in these last few pages, we’ll see how Old Naledi measures up as a space of subversion and insurgency, as an alternative to not only the future, but the now.

However much Old Naledi exists on the economic and political periphery of Gaborone—it is not completely severed, of course, because of the movement back and forth of people working in other parts of the city—the linkages to local and world culture and consumerism are far more pervasive and vibrant. By the late 1980s, for example, there was at least one TV on every street in Old Naledi, meaning that most children of that era viewed kung-fu movies from Southeast Asia and music videos produced in Hollywood. Accordingly, Old Naledi culture and aspirations changed, down even, to the nicknames people gave themselves and their friends: “While the preceding generation of young people picked nicknames like Killer, Jomo, Teenage and Kaizer (for it was a soccer loving generation), the new generation would call themselves names like Sexxy, Fresh, Flexxy, Zeco and Busta. The hip-hop era had come.” Infused with images of how the “other half” lived, there was consequently, a sense of optimism in Old Naledi. For the

²⁴⁴ James Holston, ‘Spaces of insurgent citizenship’, in James Holston (ed), *Cities and Citizenship* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1999), pp. 158; 167.

²⁴⁵ Holston, ‘Spaces of insurgent citizenship’, p. 172.

individuals who founded Old Naledi, there was the feeling that upward mobility for their children was possible, “if anyone in the family would get out of the ghetto, move to the suburbs, and drive a fancy car, it would be this generation.”²⁴⁶

As for conditions these days, the valorization of ghetto life in music and movies continues, though now it has a homegrown influence from groups who have their origins in places like Old Naledi. Groups like the Eskimos hope through their music to “create a new meaning for life in the locations.”²⁴⁷ Beyond the messages of empowerment offered by Old Naledi artists, such is the broader popularity of slum iconography that symbols, dress and talk of the ghetto—“street glamour”—is the foundation of a common fad among youth all around Botswana.²⁴⁸ So while on the one hand, people outside Old Naledi consume the “glamorous” bits of ghetto culture, a defanged product that harmlessly seeps into wider Botswana society, what of the previous optimistic attitudes toward the potential for upward mobility? Two women who I interviewed in the central part of Old Naledi summed up the feelings well. Though they dreamed of the day when they might have large suburban house or a car of any year or model, they knew that these wishes would remain outside the realm of possibility. One tells me, “We will walk until we die.” Today, the longings for consumerism remain, but gone is the optimism.

The female bar owner, Mma Makoba, I quoted earlier who lamented the fact that outsiders don’t talk about the poverty in Old Naledi, but only the crime, provides a representative perspective on the dwindling optimism to be found in the neighborhood. First arriving in Old Naledi in 1970, today she runs a fairly successful shabeen in the Dilines section of Naledi.

²⁴⁶ The information and quotes in this paragraph are drawn from: Motlogelwa, ‘In the heart of the hood, pt. 3’, p. 4.

²⁴⁷ Morongwa Phala, ‘Out of the shadows’, *Mmegi*, 14 September 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/September/Monday13/7462308801906.html>> (2 June 2007).

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

While she wouldn't divulge many details of her business—she was suspicious of my motives for asking—I could tell she did well for herself. Packed inside her small bar was a pool table, an electronic jukebox and two stand up video arcade games—one of which, an original Ms. Pac-man, renamed “Zola Pac,” was, speaking as someone who spent way too much time in arcades as a kid, one of my favorite Old Naledi findings. All this, despite the fact that her prices were exceptionally low: P13 for three Hansas and a Coke, which would barely cover the cost of one drink in any of the fancier restaurants elsewhere in Gaborone. Over the course of our talk, she told me that the government had come around 2-4 years earlier (anyway between 2001-2003) to discuss possible development and relocation plans. Since then however, there had been no further word regarding progress or decisions made, and anyway, she didn't believe anything was likely to ever happen. She explained that all the government needed were unfulfilled plans, since then the government could claim that there were efforts underway to help the poor. They could, in other words, look good without taking any concrete action. In a similar vein, another woman I talked with sarcastically noted that “the pipeline is very long in Botswana.”

When I asked what needed to be done to improve the neighborhood, Mma Makoba, along with most of the other people I asked, listed fairly simple, basic requests. Flush toilets, paved roads, perhaps street lighting—the same things that other suburbs of Gaborone, such as Phase 2, Broadhurst, or Gaborone West, possessed. For many, the question of flush toilets and indoor plumbing was particularly important, since the continued use of outhouses in Old Naledi was a fact used to make fun of residents when they traveled to other areas of Gaborone, an easy way to label them as backwards and of the village. Yet, while most people claimed they were happy in Old Naledi, and just wanted to know why the government couldn't “civilize” them where they already lived, many, especially the older people who had been there from the beginning, when I

asked if they would leave Old Naledi if given the chance, wanted to move elsewhere. On further reflection, long after I left Gaborone, two things seemed clear about this ambivalence. One, older people who were the first Old Naledi settlers perhaps still believed in the idea of upward mobility, which meant that there was to be a lifestyle progression, that people should start in Old Naledi, but then move to better-off areas of town when they were able. This idea of progress being at the heart of Botswana's development policy, as well as sitting at the core of the idealized vision for the new capital of Gaborone. For the younger generation though, Old Naledi is all they have known—this is where they were born, grew up, and thus, they don't necessarily have the strong ties to their "home" village as their parents and grandparents might. Furthermore, there is, a certain amount of street credibility for Old Naledi youth to be gained by living in Gaborone's largest slum. Rather than turn away from labels affixed to them by the circulation of slum-talk, they have, at least to some degree, embraced them as part of their Old Naledi identity. Not to say, of course, that Old Naledi youth aren't interested in fast cars and nice clothes and new model cell phones—they are—but that their consumer longings are refracted through, added to, a more textured understanding of Old Naledi citizenship. But the accumulation of things, though desirable, remains largely unattainable for most of Old Naledi's population: German cars, the old pensioner's tractor for the cattle post, even Mma Makoba's longed for flush toilets will likely remain unrealized aspirations for the foreseeable future. Though this doesn't mean that efforts aren't made to create a modern, consumer space with the tools and resources at hand. My research assistant for Old Naledi, for example, was extremely proud of the clear, plastic bubble-wrap coat and pants outfit—yes, rest assured, he wore his regular clothes under it—he commissioned from an Old Naledi fashion designer. Not only was this a one of a kind item, but also being made of plastic and designed to resemble a

typical business suit, it was perhaps, an individual attempt to participate in the realm of Gaborone consumerism and fashion, from which he would have been otherwise shut out.

Others see the consumer behavior practiced and lifestyles enjoyed in Gaborone and recognize that it is outside their grasp. One interviewee said that growing up in Old Naledi and seeing the riches possessed by others in Gaborone, it was “like going to a foreign country. . . . The people looked perfect, looked smarter [i.e. better dressed, groomed, taken care of] . . . like God loved them more.” Or in the words of a *Mmegi* journalist, “Although some of the locations are just across the street from a suburb, to a lot of the township dwellers, it is like looking through a glass case—you have your eye on a prize and it is right in front of you, but you just cannot touch it.”²⁴⁹ There is then, a rupture between aspiring to this style of living, but at the same time it would be unachievable. Consequently, many people I spoke to in Old Naledi valorize their community as being the last bastion of Tswana culture in Gaborone; they are the keepers of the Tswana flame that has been extinguished elsewhere in Gaborone, where people are so intent on being urban and modern, that they have forgotten how to be Batswana. Activating this criticism is a way to come to terms with their unequal structural position in the political and social economy in Gaborone. Through an inversion of their inequitable socio-economic position their relative inequality holds the hint of a transformative quality, moving from something that marginalizes to something that empowers.

The people of Old Naledi, even through the simple act of referring to their neighborhood as a “Village,” are making a distinction between where they live and the rest of the “City.” By living in a “Village” they are able to make the discursive and imaginative linkage to Botswana’s previous rural lifestyles and established cultural traditions. By making these claims, residents of

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Old Naledi suggest that they are more “Batswana” than those who live in other parts of Gaborone, and therefore, are able to make a critique of life outside their home neighborhood. Even their politicians echo this difference between the “Village” and the “City.” The founder of the BNF, Dr. Kenneth Koma, had enduring popularity in Old Naledi during his lifetime, as he was seen as the complete opposite of the polished, elite dominated officials who represented the BDP. “The party founder Dr. Kenneth Koma,” Motlogelwa writes, “was viewed as a modern day Moses. In Koma, the people of Old Naledi had found someone who was as much an outcast as they were in the social and economic sphere. They found Koma to be a very ‘common man.’ His appearance (crumbled (sic) pants, unlaced shoes, and overcoats) and a rich Setswana all enamoured him to the residents.”²⁵⁰

So while being of the “Village” is something to denigrate while seeing a movie at Riverwalk or buying clothes at a Game City boutique, for those in Old Naledi, who don’t have access to these things, being from the “Village” is something to take pride in. Contrasting, for example, Old Naledi to the moneyed suburbs of Gaborone, Motlogelwa concludes that “money breeds dishonesty,” while in Old Naledi the “poverty is honest.”²⁵¹ One friend of mine from Old Naledi for example, claimed that the “luxury” practiced and paraded around Gaborone made people “self-centered.” Conversely, in Old Naledi, the idea of community was said to be alive and well. A married couple who had lived in Old Naledi for nearly four decades expressed the feeling that neighbors will help you with funerals and when you are sick, or when someone is behaving badly, people will teach him or her how to behave properly. Indeed, another person, reversing the slum-talk about Old Naledi, claimed that the reason there was any crime at all in

²⁵⁰ Motlogelwa, ‘In the heart of the hood, pt. 3’, p. 5.

²⁵¹ Tshireletso Motlogelwa, ‘Where the streets have no names’, *Mmegi*, 22 October 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday22/365689801957.html>> (1 June 2007).

Old Naledi was because “rich guys” from outside come into the area and entice kids to commit crimes for them. According to the perspective put forth in this scenario then, the style of living encouraged in Gaborone becomes the source of corrosive behavior in Old Naledi.

According to the people who live there, the primary strength of Old Naledi is derived from the community bonds that residents have with one another. I was repeatedly informed that people know their neighbors in the Village, as opposed what they understood to be the typical practice elsewhere in Gaborone where residents hid behind their security walls and didn’t have any interaction with those around them. Such neighborly indifference or isolation could be “very dangerous” I was cautioned, since how would anyone know if I was sick or dying. Mma Makoba offers one final lament about what she sees as the death of Setswana values in Gaborone: “You guys are so sad. You borrow only your lives and don’t borrow from somebody else’s.” What she seemed to mean by this was to say that much is lost by failing to share your life with your friends and those around you and that by turning their back on these values, the residents of Gaborone are neglecting what it means to be Batswana. Outside Old Naledi, people are criticized for being too backwards, too of-the-village, while for those inside Old Naledi, the feeling seems to be that there is such a thing as too much “modernity.”

The potential for harnessing this alternative form of slum-talk—which like its Gaborone equivalent, suffers from its own generalizations, romanticizations and lack of specificity—into some sort of action or the establishment of a viable alternate citizenship seem unclear. On one hand, the valorization of the “Village” seems an avenue to empowering new forms of identity or creating space for new forms of imagination or aspiration. At the same time, I wonder if overly nostalgic emphasis on the “Village” is an instrumental device, useful as a way to rationalize or lessen the pain of the widespread structural inequities that people in Old Naledi feel powerless to

alter or short-circuit. Similarly, I wonder too about the potential for change when confronted with the pervasive globalized consumer culture and identity powerfully embodied by Gaborone. Because the possibilities remain alluring to so many, mightn't people just as quickly turn their back on the village mentality when given the chance in favor of this new, modern, urban citizenship? Evidence from Chapter 4 on shopping and Riverwalk seems to suggest that this might indeed be the case. Or is a synthesis of the identities offered by Gaborone and Old Naledi possible? In the current climate characterized by a one-sided dissemination of rumors, stories, and the beneficial presence of poverty, I would think not. For the time being, Old Naledi will remain in Gaborone, but not of Gaborone.

Photographs



Figure 6-1. Early design for the new capital by the Department of Public Works.

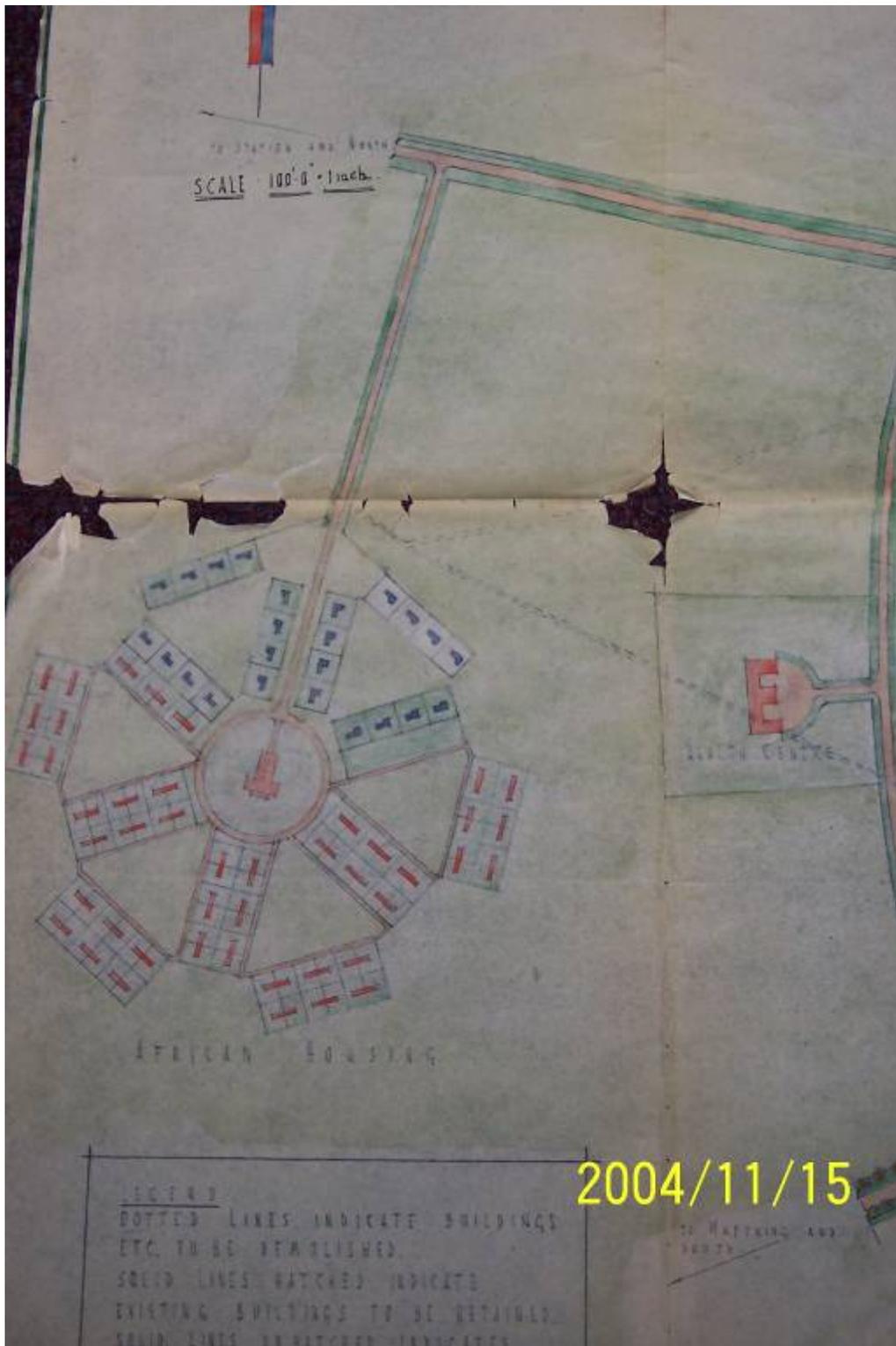


Figure 6-2. A close-up shot of the plan shown in 6-1. Of particular interest here is the African housing separated from the rest of the town.



Figure 6-3. Old Naledi Gathering and Informal Market, 1971 (Photo courtesy of Sandy Grant).



Figure 6-4. Old Naledi Street, 1971 (Photo Courtesy of Sandy Grant).



Figure 6-5. Old Naledi Street, 2005 (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-6. Old Naledi Market, 2005 (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-7. Old Naledi Market. The billboard promoting condom usage in the distance reads, “Even the best ballers take a safe dunk with it” (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-8. Old Naledi Market (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-9. One of two signs posted at the north and south edges of Old Naledi along the Old Lobatse Road (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-10. A shot of Old Naledi taken from the overpass that separates the northern edge of the area from the businesses and offices across the road (Photo: Steve Marr).

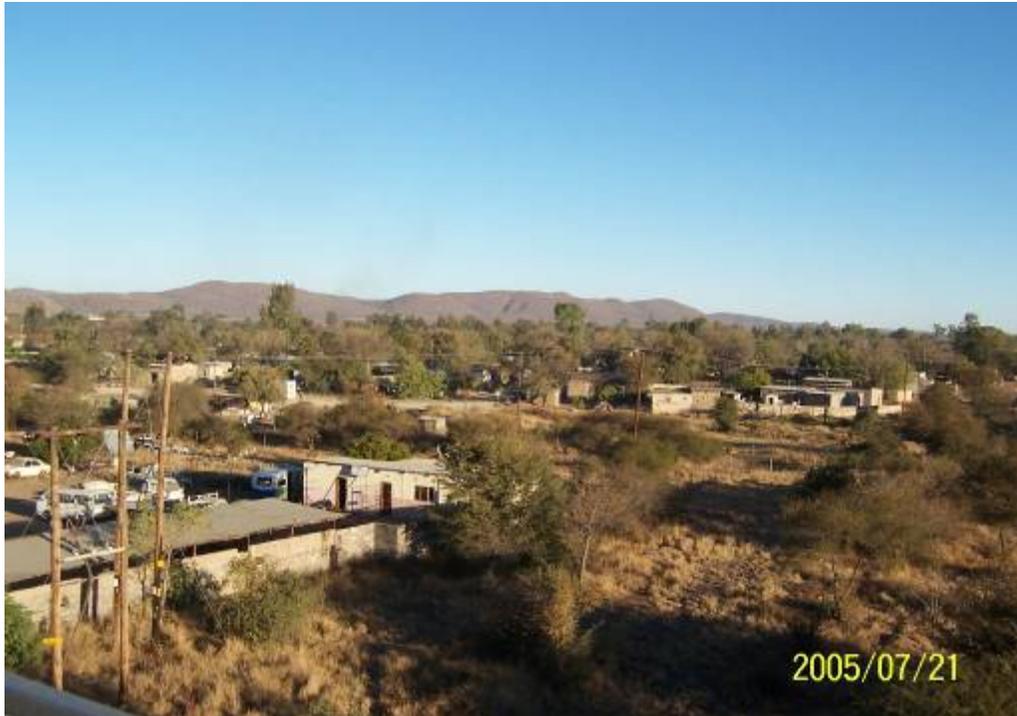


Figure 6-11. Overlooking Old Naledi (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-12. An early morning at an Old Naledi shabean (Photo: Tshepo Makgasa).



Figure 6-13. An original White City house built to house low-income workers in the last phase of Gaborone's initial construction (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-14. The still empty Central Business District in the center of Gaborone, with newly constructed government offices in the distance (Photo: Steve Marr).



Figure 6-15. An Old Naledi contractor's advertisement articulating the dreams of the residents of Botswana's new capital, 1971 (Photo Courtesy of Sandy Grant).

CHAPTER 7
BORDERS, BOUNDARIES AND PUTTING PEOPLE IN THEIR (RIGHT) PLACE:
SHAPING URBAN FRONTIERS IN BOTSWANA'S CAPITAL CITY

In this final chapter, I would like to offer some concluding remarks, along with a few theoretical speculations so as to better situate the politics of urban space in Gaborone. What should hopefully be clear by now is that references to urban space in Gaborone suggest more than concrete locations and physical geography—Riverwalk, Old Naledi, White City, Phakalane. These urban geographies—the Mall, the Slum, the Street—exist alongside more nebulous, ethereal spaces of discourse and imagination. Perhaps, too, alongside the abstract, conceptual spaces periodically proffered by government bureaucrats and urban planners over the course of Gaborone's history in the attempt to create a totalizing utopian vision of the city.

And while I might note the presence of multiple types of spaces in Gaborone, this is not to imply that they are discrete or have little interaction with one another. Instead, quite the opposite is true. Each of these various “-scapes”—to borrow Appadurai's metaphor—to varying extents, flows into, merges, supports, complements, supplements, requires, precipitates, repels, erodes, subverts, the others. Such is their level of entanglement, that it is probably impossible to precisely determine their limiting edge distinguishing one from the next. How to separate, for example, the space of Riverwalk—its shops, corridors, parking lots—from the desires of its consumer inhabitants who perceive themselves as connected to a site, a community, located in some global “out there?” Or, how to disaggregate the space of Riverwalk from the previous four decades of urban planning, which might consider the mall as the fullest realization, the purest expression, four decades in the making, of Gaborone's modernist aspirations? Or, finally, even isolating the actual locations in Gaborone into some semblance of constituent parts is no easy task. The mall and the slum, places both respectable and dangerous, don't make sense when considered apart, in decontextualized isolation. The interaction occurring at the points of

connection or intersection, the interplay at the ambiguous edges and liminal spaces, is worth exploring further. In Gaborone, the mall remains an incomprehensible space when disconnected from the slum, and vice versa.

Because of the disparate nature of the cases and examples provided throughout the preceding text, it is worth attempting to tease out any unifying patterns and themes. Not only to better wrap the ideas and narratives into a more coherent package, but to more explicitly address the “So What?” question. The remaining pages will therefore be devoted to addressing the construction of these thresholds, borders, and boundaries that have governed the making of Gaborone’s urban space in the past and into the present. Before getting too far ahead then, it is worth revisiting the manner in which we have arrived here.

In Chapter One, I presented some of the background particularities of Botswana’s democracy and economy. Described by academics and journalists as the “African Miracle” or an “exceptional” case in Sub-Saharan Africa even from its earliest post-colonial moments, there has been, in recent years, a reappraisal of the accuracy of these characterizations. Ranging from the structural—including the long-standing and extreme economic disparities between the wealthy few and the poor majority to the de facto establishment of one-party rule—to the episodic—such as the expulsion of the expatriate University of Botswana political scientist following critical comments made about the current Vice-President, soon to be President sometime during 2008—there is an increasing dissonance between the now well-circulated conventional wisdom about the successes of Botswana and its durable failures. These disjunctures are especially visible in Gaborone. And they are made all the more striking for the fact that they were not supposed to be present.

As a planned city a few years past its fortieth birthday, Gaborone was intended to represent a new kind of urbanity in (Southern) Africa. The image of Gaborone as an engine of transformation seems most apt. On the one hand, the new capital was supposed to represent, at the height of apartheid, the possibilities of harmonious race relations, to demonstrate that there was no need to construct parallel urban spaces segregated by race. Instead, Gaborone was to be a model pointing a way forward in the making of cities, founded on principles of unity and mingling, rather than division and isolation. The extent to which this vision was realized is debatable, since while the elites of differing racial background lived in close quarters, the urban poor and laboring classes were kept at arm's length, thereby replicating urban spatial practices found elsewhere throughout the region. By segregating space by economic class, planners effectively segregated Gaborone by race.

At the same time, the makers of Gaborone conceived the capital city as fertile ground from which new, modern, Batswana citizens could be cultivated. As a receptacle for—the spatial embodiment of—modern, Western values, the people of Botswana could begin to unmoor themselves from their traditional, rural, and agricultural past. Gaborone was emblematic of Botswana's future, a city of tomorrow surrounded by people grounded in yesterday. Actually constructing however, a durable representation of these utopian aspirations, proved difficult. Real life tended to outpace the blueprints and rhetoric of the colonial town planners and influential Tswana elites who composed the newly independent ruling establishment: migrants came to the city in ever-increasing numbers, money was scarce, there was no place to “put” the urban poor. These are some of the significant lessons related to the initial founding and planning of Gaborone I discuss in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three outlines some of the foundational principles guiding post-colonial urban planning in Gaborone. The shortcomings embedded in the original conceptualization of the city were evident early on. The solution to these problems could be summed up in the answer to the question, “What do we do now?” Basing their solution on Botswana’s national principles of “unity” and “social harmony,” to eradicate some of the most obvious signs of urban inequity and segregation inscribed in the space of Gaborone, the now independent government of Botswana, beginning in the 1970s, embarked on a policy of mixed density housing. The basic effect of these new regulations would be to impose residential mandates on newly constructed neighborhoods in Gaborone, Francistown, and later, other urban centers in Botswana, by insisting that each new housing project include accommodations for high and low income housing. By forcing geographical integration, the government hoped that social and economic integration would inevitably result.

Of course, though, achieving the objectives of what was then such a radical proclamation is another matter entirely. Even at the time they were announced—as well as in their later iterations—it was never entirely clear what was meant by the term mixed density housing, nor how you could enforce in practice its social engineering goals. The government could, in other words, make urban policy, but it couldn’t legislate friendship. And indeed, one seemingly unintended consequence of these government efforts to compress the geography of Gaborone was to propel residents to find alternative sites to differentiate themselves, to distinguish themselves from those they perceive to be socially, culturally and economically inferior. As I noted above, one of the foundational objectives of Gaborone was to create “modern” citizens. The achievement of this goal has been the source of much conflict over citizenship and identity in post-colonial Gaborone, as there has been a constant struggle to determine who is a legitimate,

urban resident of the city and who is not. Today, places like the mall, the street corner and the slum become the primary terrains of this conflict.

With this in mind, I divide the dissertation into two rough halves. The first half deals with the past, the ideological and physical construction of the urban space in Gaborone, and the various formal State interventions that come to frame and define Gaborone. Placed in the context of the history of the city, the latter chapters consider the lived experience of urban space in contemporary Gaborone. They juxtapose the intentions of the plans for Gaborone with what has actually transpired; they point to the legacies of these initial State planning interventions by assessing how they have reverberated into the present; and perhaps most significantly, the final three chapters demonstrate how the original urge to create a sanctified, segregated urban landscape has endured over the years, modified to fit the needs of today. Whereas in the past, these intentions required official, formalized State action and policy, they are now dependent on mechanisms and processes both more informal and organic without any obvious source of external guidance.

Following this trajectory, Chapter Four examines the prevalence of conspicuous consumerism in contemporary Gaborone. Through an ethnography of Gaborone's most popular shopping mall, Riverwalk, I argue that consumption—and its greatest exemplar, the shopping complex—constitutes one of the primary sites of struggle over the construction of urban citizenship in contemporary Gaborone. With some worry about over-stating things, I suggest that consumption now seems to equate to being modern, being a legitimate, respectable city-dweller. In other words, in order to be considered to be properly *of* the city, or even beyond into the global consumer ether, people need to maintain some sort of dual residency: both in the city and in the shopping mall. Riverwalk, as the self proclaimed “Shopping Capital of Gaborone”, is

a crucial site for the everyday performance of modernity; a place to which elites can withdraw, removing themselves from the mixed density intermingling they might find themselves elsewhere in the city. It is, then, no surprise that the borders between the shopping mall and the reminder of the city—in this case, hawkers’ stalls and a combi stop—are starkly delineated by a metal fence whose ends taper off into sharpened points. Yet, at the same time, consumerism isn’t simply the domain of the wealthy. The practice offers possibilities for insurgency by disrupting the dominant narrative about who is, and is not, a legitimate member of the urban community. For residents of Old Naledi, for example, conspicuous consumption can take the form of a “weapon of the weak,”¹ making it possible to short-circuit the discursive and symbolic topography of the city, thus providing unimpeded access to non-slum parts of Gaborone. A person equipped with a nice cell phone or automobile or adorned with appropriate fashion accessories, in other words, becomes hard to place, an urban cyborg of uncertain origin.

Chapter Five presents another aspect of the territorializing of urban space in Gaborone. But rather than depicting the struggle between elite residents of the city who seek to limit the membership of the spaces of modernity against those who aspire to enter them, the confrontations unfolding in the editorial pages of Botswana’s newspapers, as well as on the streets of the White City neighborhood directly craft the boundaries over who gets counted as a citizen and who is categorized as a stranger. Because of neighboring Zimbabwe’s economic collapse and accompanying descent into tyranny over the past decade, increasing numbers of fleeing Zimbabweans have entered the country. In Gaborone, the rise in the presence of Zimbabwean migrants is especially noticeable on a few street corners throughout the city where job seekers congregate to look for daily piecework. The heightened visibility of Zimbabweans in

¹ James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1985).

recent years has created increased animosity between Batswana and Zimbabweans, hardened the boundaries distinguishing citizen from stranger, while highlighting the government's inability to act—either to create a more efficient and functional immigration system or protect Zimbabweans from employer exploitation. The ongoing cat and mouse game between the police and the individuals gathered on the street, neither of which seem particularly enthusiastic about the performative aspects of the “chase”, only serves as an explicit daily reminder of the State's inability to manage the space of the city or follow through on its quest to better deal with transgressors of urban space. Because of these failures, both Zimbabweans and Batswana have constructed their own guidelines governing the usage of urban space—to answer the question, “who can be where?”. This informal boundary making represents an attempt to mark off the space of Gaborone with more distinct, less permeable borders.

And finally, Chapter Six incorporates components from each of the preceding sections. It narrates the life of Gaborone's oldest and largest slum. Beginning in the colonial period while Gaborone was in the earliest phases of its construction, Old Naledi originated as a squatter camp for the laborers employed to build the city. Laying outside the formal city limits—both in practice and in the original planning blueprints for Gaborone—the growth of Old Naledi was neither expected, nor desired. Indeed, it was hoped by many city officials at the time that the workers would leave the area following the construction's conclusion. Though lasting into the mid-1970s, these hopes eventually faded and Old Naledi finally became an officially sanctioned settlement. Today, it is Gaborone's largest, as well as its poorest, neighborhood. And no longer does it reside beyond the bounds of the city—a growing Gaborone long ago engulfed the settlement.

Surrounded on all sides by office buildings, a commerce park, industrial sites and Gaborone's major dam, the presence of Old Naledi remains a problem for the image of the city's residents. Throughout its existence, Old Naledi has been a blank slate—a dumping site for the fears, anxieties, tensions, desires and longings for residents who lived in other parts of the city. And not only does Old Naledi represent a site of danger and immorality, but it also represents the past. It is a site that exists both apart and before the rest of the city; Old Naledi is perceived to be a backwards spot emblematic of Botswana's traditions and history, which has no role, no place, in a modern, developed Gaborone that represents the “after” in this temporal pairing. These feelings have been amplified in recent years as Old Naledi-as-slum sits centrally embedded in the urban space of Gaborone. As with the mixed density housing policy of the government, the terrain of Gaborone is compressed—the supposed binaries of slum and city are confronted with one another every second of every day. At these leading edges of interaction and confrontation, the construction of physical, geographic space, takes a backseat to the discursive, symbolic, imaginative realms. To maintain some semblance of distant—and thus, difference—entire narratives are created about the slum and its inhabitants by outsiders, and conversely, inside the confines of Old Naledi, counter-narratives are produced that talk about the places and people outside the slum. In other case though, both sides take the stark slum-city, before-after binaries for granted, merely weighing them differently. Conceptualized this way, things like rumor and talk and imagination spatialize the city in ways geography cannot. What happens both behind and within this threshold space becomes crucially important for our understanding of the making of urban space in contemporary Gaborone, and, perhaps, urban environments elsewhere in the region and elsewhere on the globe.

The story of urban space in Gaborone tells the story of the construction of borders and boundaries. From the earliest debates about where to put the urban poor to more contemporary concerns about how to best differentiate from them. In practice, then, Gaborone is a partitioned city. I must emphasize, though, that these borders and divisions aren't permanent, durable or impermeable. Instead, they are potentially elastic, fuzzy, and their contours can change over time—perhaps, for example, the shopping mall will no longer be the urban citadel of modernity and citizenship, but rather these aspirations might someday be exhibited or practiced elsewhere in attempted seclusion. Because of their mutability, I'm hesitant to characterize these sites of contact and interaction as borders or boundaries, since that suggests something not just hard, but readily verifiable. These spaces in Gaborone aren't immediately identifiable—not lines on a map or stark distinctions that obviously separate one place, person or time from another. To account for this ambiguity, I would suggest instead that we employ the concept of an urban frontier. A nebulous zone of exchange, transformation and creation that can be crossed, that serves as a conduit connecting different times and realms and spaces. Such an image might better account for older urban planning divisions between the high-cost, modern part of the city and its low-cost, slum counterpart—the civilized and the savage, in typical frontier terminology. At the same time, the notion of frontier also provides a new way to examine the acts of insurgency, the blurring of spaces and places—real and imagined—that have been, and to continue, to shape the making of Gaborone. If the space of Gaborone is dominated by partitions, frontiers can perhaps help us understand what happens at the moments of contact, of confrontation, how an individual moves through, and between, one realm and the next.

Admittedly, this might seem like an odd assertion to make. Especially considering that invocation of the “frontier” brings to mind something more along the lines of cattle drives across

vast expanses of land, imperial encounters with the Other, or the imposition of a new hegemonic power over a newly defeated people. And of course, too, the frontier also suggests the dividing line between the wilderness and civilization—where the forces of man conquers nature. In this sense, the frontier, isn't just a particular place—although its geography is uncertain and is likely better grasped intuitively—but it is also a moment, a period of transition. The frontier can never last long. It is an ephemeral thing: eroded and eventually ended at one time and place, only to be resurrected or reborn as confrontations get underway somewhere, some-when else.

Further complicating things, is the fact that I am attempting to use the concept of frontier not just in Africa, but also in an urban setting. In its conventional use the frontier seems better suited to applications involving pioneers in wagon caravans heading westward, across the Rockies, perhaps to Oregon, rather than discussions of slums and shopping malls in a smallish African capital city. Still, at least occasionally, frontier imagery has been used to describe the cultural and social disjunctures present in Botswana. On one level, this comparison is understandable: the western edges of the Kalahari are home to cowboys and ranchers and open ranges and enormous herds of cattle. It seems then, barely a stretch to apply the term here. Even towns have been characterized as having a frontier feel. In a series of laudatory articles on Botswana in the December 1990 issue of *National Geographic*, an author describes the northern town of Maun, on the southern fringe of the Okavango delta in the following way:

. . . Much of Maun is really an extended village. Music blares from cinderblock speakeasies. Hunters, guides, pilots, and the drifting human kaleidoscope of a frontier town gather on the terrace of Riley's Hotel, or under the fans of the Duck Inn. . . .

It is possible to bog a four-wheel-drive vehicle in the soft sand of downtown Maun's shopping mall. Every item in its stores has traveled 600 miles from the South African border along a mostly unpaved road.

Such casual chaos binds a startling array of unrepentant individualists into a loose community of the bush. There's more than a touch of the Wild West in Maun, where the

Duck Inn's proprietress, Bernadette Lindstrom, can serve a Swiss fondue with South African wine or punch a deserving hunter off his bar stool, when either occasion demands.²

The standard Western tropes are obvious: rampant, rugged individualism; a mish-mash of unsavory characters; a spunky female barkeep; a town far from civilization (South Africa), whose desolation is never far from sliding into desperation. Reading like a pulp novel description of any Western town, you could swap out "Maun" for "Tombstone" and not miss a beat.

So while utilizing the frontier as an adjective might not be entirely foreign to Botswana, with reference to Gaborone, I'd like to move beyond these easy connotations. Despite its difficulties, the frontier has much to offer in the story of urban space in Gaborone. Aware of these difficulties, and in spite of them, to better illustrate what I mean here, I begin with Tocqueville's 2-week trek into the Michigan wilderness.

The Civilized and the Savage? Navigating American and African Frontiers

Beginning with Tocqueville seems a reasonable place to start, since he provides an exceptionally vivid evocation of the frontier. Tocqueville's journey takes him and a companion on two-week trip on horseback across the state of Michigan, to the village of Saginaw, on the shores of what has now long been named Lake Michigan. Why Saginaw? At the time of the trip, Saginaw represented the furthest expansion westward of the American pioneers, it was, Tocqueville wrote, to "be considered an outpost, a sort of sentry box positioned by the whites in the heart of the Indian nations."³ Much like Conrad's depiction of Marlowe's search for Kurtz in the Congo, Tocqueville assumed he would be able to find his way back into the past to conduct a kind of reverse history of the world: traveling into the wilderness, he expected to trace "a lengthy

² Douglas B. Lee, 'Okavango Delta: old Africa's last refuge', *National Geographic*, **178**, 6 (December 1990), p. 64.

³ Alexis de Tocqueville, translated by Gerald E. Bevan, 'Two weeks in the wilderness' in *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America* (Penguin Classics, New York, NY 2003), p. 915.

chain whose links stretched from the wealthy city patrician right down to the savage in the wilderness.”⁴ After beginning his ride to Saginaw however, Tocqueville admits his assumption was faulty. Instead, he tries to discern, to understand, the sharp line between what he characterizes as the wilderness and its civilizational assailant. Contrasting, for example, the destruction and death wrought on the forest by the pioneer’s axe with the gentle, almost timeless process of decomposition and subsequent reproduction:

Several generations of dead trees lie side by side. Some of them in the final throes of their decay appear to one’s gaze as only a long trail of red dust marked upon the grass. Others are already half wasted away by the weather yet still preserve their shape. . . . In the midst of these various remains, the work of reproduction continues without ceasing. Saplings, climbing plants, grasses of all kinds seek the light through all obstacles. . . . Here life and death come face to face; they seem to have wished to mingle and meld together their works.⁵

Wild, savage nature, in Tocqueville’s characterization seems eternal, outside history, completely severed from the works and creations of civilization. Indeed, the only connection between those occupying the wilderness, the frontier outpost, seems to be the occasional diffuse whisper or story or rumor, “resembl[ing] the echo of sound of which the ear can no longer discern either the nature or the source.”⁶ This isolation won’t last for long, however. As he remarks during a final canoe journey down a river near Saginaw, a gunshot breaks the silence, inscribing the moment with the knowledge that he may be the last to see these wild places in their “original splendor.”⁷ Commentators have continued to lament this passing, the rise of civilization at the expense of wilderness. The trajectory of this thinking, perhaps culminating in Paul Virilio’s point that not only has the space of civilization severed our connection to nature, but that because of the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 880.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 907.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 915.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 923.

vertical ascendancy of the city, we no longer even have any connection to the ground. To paraphrase Virilio, the hill, those earthy mounds of dirt and grass have been supplanted by towers of steel and glass.⁸

Tocqueville makes two relevant points. On the one hand, he writes quite explicitly about the oppositional nature of wilderness and civilization—there is boundary between the two that seems beyond transcending. You can have wilderness, nature and eternity, or you can have civilization, artifice, and history, but you can't have both. We should not be surprised Tocqueville invokes this pairing; an amorphous human artifice falling under the rubric of “civilization,” and an equally vague notion of “wilderness,” that is seemingly outside the direct grasp of human comprehension, knowable only through oblique, peripheral references—like Tocqueville describes, we can only know we are in the wilderness when we encounter the grains of red dust that were once living trees, which mark the presence of an uninterrupted nature.

In an essay on the origins of the mythology of wilderness, Hayden White notes that these symbolisms have been carried through the various moral and intellectual histories of the West, from the Romans and Greeks to the Hebrews and Christians. Like Tocqueville, White emphasizes the ambiguity of concepts like civilization and wilderness. Suggesting that while we might not be able to adequately define them, we occupants of civilization are able to state with certainty that we are not wild.⁹ Referring to the more recent history of usage of the conceptualization of wilderness, White goes on to argue that it possesses a certain radical-ness or utopian implication, that it is used as a critique of the corruptions present in the societal status

⁸ Paul Virilio, translated by Julie Rose, *City of Panic* (Berg, New York, NY, 2004), pp. 16-17.

⁹ Hayden White, ‘The forms of wildness: archaeology of an idea’, in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in cultural criticism* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1978), p. 151.

quo—there is more than a hint of this, too, in Tocqueville’s writing—rather than invoked as a catch-all designation of the unknown.¹⁰

And while this might be true in some cases, I would suggest that perhaps something else is occurring in the dynamic interplay between the Planned City and the Slum—Gaborone and Old Naledi—I presented in Chapters Two and Six. In this instance, both in the past and into the present, there remains a boundary—however imprecisely drawn and permeable—between the supposedly wild slum and the rest of Gaborone. White writes,

The gradual demythologization of concepts like ‘wildness,’ ‘savagery,’ and ‘barbarism’ has been due to the extension of knowledge into those parts of the world which, though known about (but not actually known) had originally served as the physical stages onto which the ‘civilized’ imagination could project its fantasies and anxieties.¹¹

In the urban landscape of Gaborone however, this frontier mythology is still very much spatialized. As frequently noted elsewhere, Old Naledi still represents an unknown place on the map of Botswana’s capital where in some sense, the well-known phrasing of medieval mapmakers still holds true: in Old Naledi “There be Monsters.” Efforts to paint the poor as almost non-human are replicated elsewhere, as well. Writing of the Victorian city in England, urban boundaries not only separated the slum from the “civilized,” but crossing from one realm to the next blurred “the boundaries which separated the human from the animal.”¹² In Old Naledi’s winding, unlit and unmarked streets and paths—its incarnation of urban wilderness—you have a manifestation of the fantastical Labyrinth, which White notes is the quintessential

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹² Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1986), p. 132.

“representation of a savage or a wild city,”¹³ the opposite of the knowable and planned space that Gaborone is considered to represent.

The second point I’d like to make about Tocqueville is that he offers a somewhat conflicting view regarding the dichotomous relationship between civilization and wilderness. In particular is his discussion about what actually transpires at the meeting point of these two realms. Tocqueville implies that people who reside in this inter-zone between civilization and wilderness become hybrids, mutants who are no longer distinctly of the wilderness (as the Indians, in Tocqueville’s formulation, might have been before contact with Europeans) or firmly grounded in civilization (as the European). Instead, they are somehow transformed by crossing these thresholds, moving from one place to another in expressly geographic or physical terms seems to shape mental and imaginative space. Various, Tocqueville writes of tainted Indians contaminated by contact with Whites—“stray offshoot[s] of a wild tree which has grown from the mud of our towns”,¹⁴ encounters with strange European men at the frontier borders who have adopted the lifestyle and behaviors of the Indians¹⁵ or with members of the population of an “unusual race of half-castes which inhabit all Canadian boundaries as well as part of the United States.”¹⁶ Elsewhere he reports on the dichotomous mindset of the half-caste occupant of the frontier:

. . . the half-caste constitutes a mixture which is as inexplicable to others as it is to himself. When the images of the world come to be reflected upon his crude brain, they appear to him as a chaotic muddle from which his mind cannot extricate itself. Proud of his European beginnings, he despises the wilderness; yet he loves the wild freedom that prevails there. He admires civilization and cannot entirely submit to its power. . . . He

¹³ White, ‘The forms of wildness’, p. 170.

¹⁴ Tocqueville, ‘Two weeks in the wilderness’, p. 877.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 900.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 911.

adopts conflicting ways; he prays at two altars. . . . He reaches the end of his career without being able to unravel the dark problem of his existence.¹⁷

While Tocqueville seems to lament the internal muddle, the ontological dilemma produced by this mental hybridity, the image of straddling both worlds, of movement, of constant transitions within and between them, also offers insight into how we might consider the lines and networks of life in the city, in Gaborone. These conclusions hint at what might be the real, lived experience of people in the city—as opposed to the more generalized civilization-wilderness spatial overlay described above. The resident of Old Naledi doesn't only inhabit, or even occupy, the space of slum, in spite of efforts to contain her there; similarly, for example, the shopper at the mall, oscillates between Gaborone and the world beyond. Frontier city spaces act as zones of hybridity, as transformative portals offering connections to other places. But I get ahead of myself.

In order to flesh out the concept of frontier, it is worthwhile to explore some of its other occurrences and uses. Not the least of which, is perhaps its most famous iteration in the form of the Turner Thesis, where Frederick Jackson Turner enfolds the history of America into the history of the frontier. The basic gist of the story proposed by Turner towards the end of the 19th century is well known to even passing observers, and thus probably doesn't require an expansive summary. In his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Turner writes that both the particularities, and, perhaps even the peculiarities, of the American experience—its democracy, the individuality and self-reliance of its—citizens was born out of the frontier. The interaction between the pioneer, the so-called rugged frontiersman, and the landscape had such profound effects, that, Turner in a later essay confidently asserts, "American democracy was born of no theorist's dream. . . . It came out of the American forest, and it gained new strength

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 919.

each time it touched a new frontier.”¹⁸ The frontier, as conceived by Turner, is not delineated by any sort of straight line or readily identifiable markers, but rather, can be seen as an ambiguous zone of contact that advances more quickly in some spots, than it does in other areas—a fuzzy boundary of westward expansion that might be seen as a series of crests and crevices overlaid across the map of the United States.

Just as Tocqueville’s notion of the frontier suggested the combustible contact of two moral and cultural extremes, Turner’s conceptualization also hinged on the established binary of civilization and savagery. Bluntly stating, for example, “the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization”¹⁹ and that “American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line. . . .”²⁰ What seems clear in Turner’s interpretation is that the frontier is specifically, and perhaps entirely, embodied in space, and thus carries little of the intellectual or imaginative or identity energies or power dynamics that might be found in other applications of the frontier in the US and elsewhere—indeed the fact that he fails to account for, or address at all, the violence or consequences of conquest that occurred as a direct result of this expansion stands as one of the main veins of criticism directed against Turner.²¹ And though he does suggest that out of the frontier, America and her citizens emerge forever transformed, even

¹⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, ‘The West and American ideals’, in *The Frontier in American History* (Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY, 1920), p. 293.

¹⁹ Frederick Jackson Turner, ‘The significance of the frontier in American history’, in *The Frontier in American History*, p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²¹ For an in-depth survey and analysis of some critical approaches, see: Kerwin Lee Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ word, or being and becoming postwestern”, *Pacific Historical Review*, **65**, 2 (May 1996), pp. 179-215.

after its closure,²² his notion of frontier absent this interaction is completely territorialized. He speaks in terms of geographical barriers impeding the progress of expansion²³ or how the scale of civilization is indelibly inscribed on the landscape. That is, to know your physical location on the landscape is to know your level of development—“line by line as we read this continental page from West to East we find the record of social evolution.”²⁴ Klein thus notes that to Turner, “The meeting point of savagery and civilization represented the convergence of two chunks of history, the past and the future. Turner did not empty Native America of people, but he placed it in the past.”²⁵ Therefore, the cities of the Eastern seaboard representing the apex of civilization and human activity, the frontier trader and farmer representing civilization’s first halting steps. But I wonder if we can push these remarks further, since implicit in Turner’s is the suggestion that the wild, the primitive, the Indian, stand outside history, they are somehow beyond it, and only falling into history the moment the first tree is felled, the first settler cabin built.

Clarifying this bit of nuance is perhaps a minor point. Instead, what is more important, and certainly more relevant here is Turner’s dual characterization of the frontier zone. His understanding seems to insist that we define the frontier both in terms of its spatial characteristics, as well as a marker of time. Considering the spatio-temporality of the frontier adds a further dimension to the study of urban space in Gaborone underway here. Thus, not only does the notion of the urban frontier suggest a confrontation between civilization and savagery,

²² Frederick Jackson Turner, ‘The significance of the section in American history’, in *History, Frontier, Section: Three essays by Frederick Jackson Turner* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1993), p. 94.

²³ Turner, ‘The significance of the frontier in American history’, pp. 7; 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁵ Klein, ‘Reclaiming the ‘F’ word’, p. 186.

but it also suggests a sometime barrier, sometime conduit, between the past and the future. The perception that Gaborone exists in multiple fields of time should by now come as no surprise. In fact, much of the history of urban planning in Gaborone has been premised on this idea. The concept city drawn out on paper by Protectorate officials and afterwards has been positioned as existing after the present, at some indeterminate not-now emblematic of a desirable future. Similarly, Gaborone's slums and unplanned settlements have been contrasted as embedded in the past, relics of a bygone age. Even today, these temporal narratives remain, as residents of Old Naledi describe themselves as living in an urban "village" and in possession of traditional Batswana values, which are forgotten and ignored elsewhere in Gaborone. It is equally possible to locate this disjunctive time continuum in Gaborone's shopping malls, as well. Whereby Riverwalk and the other sites of aspiration are oriented outward in space and forward in time, serving as temporary renunciations of the supposed "African-ness" or "Batswana-ness" present everywhere else in the city.

At this point, it is probably worth pointing out that the concept of the frontier is not the domain solely of European philosophers or historians of the American West in order to relocate the geographical focus of the discussion. Indeed, the concept of frontier has been employed across a variety of circumstances and geographies within Africa. Some studies have sought direct comparisons between the transformation of the American expansion westward and what appear to similar historical trajectories in Africa. One collection of essays, for example, juxtaposes the American frontier experience of pioneer conquest with the white trekker/settler movement across South Africa.²⁶ Leonard Thompson and Howard Lamar note the parallel experiences of both frontier locations as they describe the ebb and flow, opening and closure of

²⁶ Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson (eds), *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1981).

frontier zones across the landscape, along with a shared historical chronology of expansion, from the moment of discovery to the movement outward from an original beachhead settlement.²⁷ Though, not without their contrasts, including, for example, the smaller level of European migration to the Southern African frontier, Thompson and Lamar suggest that we need to connect these frontier zones in to a broader, more global context propelled by the requirements of an increasingly worldwide capitalist system—though, again this was more true of the American experience—rather than conceiving of them simply as sites of transformation and conflict occurring on a local scale.²⁸

Also bringing the metaphor of frontier to Southern Africa, Jean and John Comaroff, too, adopt a global perspective in their sweeping discussion of cultural change and interaction along the South African frontier. They argue that not only was missionary engagement in Southern African critical to the importation—the attempt, anyway—of Victorian morals and quotidian behaviors into this new African terrain, but, at the same time, the “encounter with Non-Europeans was central in the development of Western modernity.”²⁹ Going so far as to conclude, “the colony was not a mere extension of a modern society. It was one of the instruments by which that society was made modern in the first place.”³⁰ The “dialectic”—to borrow the Comaroffs’ phrase—of creation and blending occurring along the frontier took a variety of forms. Yet, they move beyond the tendency to privilege the frontier as a specifically spatial form, focusing instead on the linkages between space and thinking, space and behavior.

²⁷ Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, ‘The North American and Southern African frontiers’, in Lamar and Thompson, *The Frontier in History*, pp. 14-15.

²⁸ Lamar and Thompson, ‘The North American and Southern African frontiers’, p. 27.

²⁹ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Volume 2: the dialectics of modernity on a South African frontier* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991), p. 277.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

In their frontier zone of contact, it wasn't so much about a conquest of territory or space, but a conquest of minds. By altering the ways in which the Tswana people lived day to day, from modes of dress to the houses they built and the furnishings they bought to fill them, British missionaries expected turn them into good Victorian-era Christians, transforming "local spaces" into "Christian scapes."³¹ Consequently, considered in this context, the closing of the frontier meant something different than the imposition of a hegemonic dominance of one group over another, but instead represented a passage across time, from an African past to a Christian present embodied by the adoption of Victorian principles of domesticity.³²

These distinctions however, between African and colonial or missionary realms was never so stark in practice. In this work on the dialectics of modernity, the Comaroffs note the frequent mingling and merging of these two worlds. Paul Landau, too, in his history of missionary involvement in early colonial Botswana, demonstrates that King Khama applied Victorian principles of temperance and prohibition to further his own political and power interests.³³ The hybridity and creative possibilities emanating from frontier contact speaks powerfully of the effort to conceptualize this space as an indeterminate, permeable zone of "interpenetration"³⁴ rather than a definitive line etched across the physical, mental and moral landscape.

Other studies have moved beyond the region of Southern Africa to examine frontiers and boundary zones across the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa. Two decades ago, Igor Kopytoff jumpstarted African frontier studies in his essay on the internal African frontier. In his analysis,

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 282.

³³ Paul Stuart Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, gender and christianity in a Southern African kingdom* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1995). See Chapter Four, 'Women, beer and the making of a new community'.

³⁴ Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, 'Comparative frontier history', in Lamar and Thompson, *The Frontier in History*, p. 7.

Kopytoff doesn't see the frontier as a boundary moving across the African landscape, rather, he interprets the frontier as encompassing the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting that Africa is a "frontier continent"³⁵ in which "established societies were surrounded by large tracts of land that were open politically or physically, both. Together, these tracts made up a continent-wide interstitial network of thousands of potential local frontiers."³⁶ What these frontiers represent is the possibilities of cultural and political reproduction by providing a framework to explain the replication, as well as the continuities present across pre and post-colonial African polities. Through the metaphor of the frontier, Kopytoff shows how new political societies were established, older ones were weakened, subordinated or perhaps overrun, and the means by which people could make claims to a particular area or territory. As such, "the frontier is above all a political fact, a matter of a political definition of geographical space."³⁷ And further, a space that was in some sense constantly under construction—boundaries shifted through expansion or contraction, shriveled and disappeared, or were eventually segmented and diverted into new frontiers. The map of frontier Africa was, therefore, always in flux.

Beyond the movement of people from African metropolises into frontier areas, the other critical component of the frontier was the encounters with difference, as a "zone of interaction,"³⁸ that it produced. These interactions produced new hierarchies, new understandings of leadership, ownership (of land), loyalty and subjugation as one group attempted to assert authority over the other(s). It was easy to move to a new area, the difficulty

³⁵ Igor Kopytoff, 'The internal African frontier: the making of African political culture', in Igor Kopytoff (ed), *The African Frontier: The reproduction of traditional African societies* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1987), p. 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁸ David A. Chappell, "The nation as frontier: ethnicity and clientelism in Ivorian history", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22, 4 (1989), p. 674.

arose following the arrival of a new group. How to answer, that is, the “What now?” question. In the context of the African frontier described by Kopytoff, but similar to the justifications used by American settlers and pioneers, African frontiersmen invoked the imagery of “empty” land so as to justify their presence.³⁹ On the African frontier, in the pre-colonial period and later, the establishment of these border zones was as much a matter of social construction, of creating a privileged narrative of legitimacy—of “being first” in the cases Kopytoff describes—as it was anything else. So not only does the frontier lend itself to the social construction of new societies born out of the fringes of existing polities as Kopytoff notes,⁴⁰ but they also present opportunities for new hierarchies, as well as relations of inequality and dominance to be forged. Relations on an ever-changing frontier become ultimately about birthing—and, possibly, the subverting of—a new circulation of power.

Others working off of Kopytoff’s model have elaborated on the apparent links between the construction of identity, power and the frontier. Writing of post-colonial Benin, Pierre-Yves Le Meur argues that the imagery of the frontier provides insight into the trajectory of state formation in Benin as it tells us how previously independent village communities grapple with “encounter and otherness” that inevitably occurs along frontiers premised on the movement of people.⁴¹ Following contact, subsequent efforts to determine a scale of autochthony—who is a citizen, who is a stranger—seek to embed people in their proper place so as to grant “specific economic and civic rights as well as social obligations within a shared moral community.”⁴² The frontier

³⁹ Kopytoff, ‘The internal African frontier’, p. 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴¹ Pierre-Yves Le Meur, “State making and the politics of the frontier in central Benin”, *Development and Change*, **37**, 4 (2006), p. 895.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 896.

boundaries, as suggested here, implies a certain level of tension between integration and distinction. In these spaces of confrontation, new hierarchies are crafted as some people assert their position as legitimate occupants of a particular location, while others need to struggle for space within “a shared moral community.” We can read a similar tale of frontier conflict between occupants of the Shangani Reserve and those who were forced to relocate there during the colonial occupation of Zimbabwe. Worth noting in this case described by McGregor and Alexander, since it points to the specific aspects in which these frontier processes unfolded, is that the struggle hinged on a discursive and imaginative narrative in which those who were resettling into the area saw themselves as carriers of modernity and progress while those already established in the Reserve were deemed traditional and backwards.⁴³ By asserting their higher level of development and civilization, the new arrivals were often able to supplant established customs and authority with their own. In this case, not only did frontier boundaries influence the making of political and cultural communities, but they also conditioned the way in which identity was structured to the benefit of one group and to the detriment of another.

A more extreme example of the connection between identity and borders occurs along the Nigeria-Benin national boundary in which the frontier does not exist as an external to a person’s identity, but rather that the frontier and identity become inseparable from one another. The possibilities for hybridity and for the ability to transgress—perhaps transcend?—official spatial demarcations of territory, citizenship and nationality means that individual identity merges with the border. “By emphasizing their ‘deep placement’ as borderlanders, local residents from both nations have forged a border identity that emerges primarily in contexts of exchange across the

⁴³ Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, “Modernity and ethnicity in a frontier society: understanding difference in northwestern Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **23**, 2, Special Issue for Terry Ranger, (June 1997), pp. 187-201.

border.”⁴⁴ This is, perhaps, the critical point, as it alludes to the difficulties of containment along the frontier. While the state tends to move towards simplifications and easily determined understandings of bounded places and people,⁴⁵ the ambiguities of the frontier provides opportunities for people to move back and forth, from where they “ought” to be, to where they would like to go. This is likely true when speaking of national boundaries such as the border between Benin and Nigeria, as well as the urban landscapes and imagination found in Gaborone. The stark divisions inscribed on the urban planner’s blueprint are never so clearly drawn in practice.

At the same time however, it is important to point out that frontier zones aren’t simply synonymous with the subversion of authority or of the state, but rather, are also potentially useful in crafting new forms of state power and sovereignty. Brenda Chalfin’s study of cross-border trading in Ghana agrees with the conceptualization of frontiers and borders as fluid and ever-shifting, she also suggests that this instability also provides opportunities to the authorities to establish new forms of relationships of power and official dominance.⁴⁶ The frontier, then, seems to offer possibilities for both insurgency, as well as the furthering of state power and governmentality. Recognizing the presence of these two potentialities means that we can’t dismiss the moral, spatial, political divisions inherent in the notion of frontier and borders. These hierarchies aren’t meaningless social constructions that we can immediately dismiss or wish away, but rather, they do carry some weight in “real life”. It does matter to some degree,

⁴⁴ Donna K. Flynn, “‘We are the border’: identity, exchange, and the state along the Benin-Nigeria border”, *American Ethnologist*, **24**, 2 (1997), p. 325.

⁴⁵ James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1998).

⁴⁶ Brenda Chalfin, “Border zone trade and the economic boundaries of the state in north-east Ghana”, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, **71**, 2, Markets in a New Era, (2001), pp. 203; 219-220.

then, on which side of the frontier you find yourself, the civilized or the savage, the gated community or the slum. What is therefore worth exploring, then, is what determines when one potentiality is activated instead of another. When does the frontier promote insurgency, and when it does it support the official divisions promoted by political and economic elites?

Having provided a brief review of the frontier concept, what conclusions can we take away from this discussion and subsequently apply to a more specific analysis of the African urban frontiers found in Gaborone. We can identify a few trends in the frontier metaphor that seem to be operational in the urban spaces of Botswana's capital city. In the works of Tocqueville and Hayden White, the frontier represents a division between the realms of wilderness and human society, the chasm between savagery and civilization. Tocqueville further adds the caveat that though these divisions are in some sense intractable, when the two worlds meet on the fringes, there are opportunities for fusion, creativity and hybridity. Second, Frederick Jackson Turner's notion of frontier in the American west also depends on a similar binary opposition. Though he seems to go one step further by adding a temporal aspect to his definition, meaning that the frontier exists along two dimensions, as an element of physical and temporal space. These conclusions seem to support Todorov's contention, for example, that the history of encounter occurs along axes of time and space.⁴⁷ Todorov goes on to say that we have often focused on the spatial axis and its "necessary distinctness,"—crossing an ocean by ship, moving across a Southern African plain by cart and horse, moving from the slum side of the street into the proper city on the other—rather than emphasize the temporal aspect, which is "blurred by countless transitions."⁴⁸ Perhaps, though, in the space of Gaborone, the temporal boundaries are more

⁴⁷ Tzvetan Todorov, translated by Richard Howard, *The Conquest of America: The question of the other* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 1984), p. 247.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

clearly drawn as we move from the map of the concept city to the real city of the unplanned settlement, or, in the edificial form of Gaborone's brightest beacons of the future, its shopping malls. There may still be indiscernible gradations between the plan, the slum and the mall, but at the very least, they provide quite visible signposts with which to guide our narrative of lived space in Gaborone.

In the African frontier examples, two points are worth further elaboration. First, is the notion of dialectic that the Comaroffs employ to describe the sort of interaction occurring on the Southern African frontier between the Tswana people and the European missionaries. Noting this relationship we can see an alternative form of frontier fusion and hybridity emerging out of these encounters. Furthermore, the frontier image suggests interdependence in which knowledge of self requires knowledge—misinformation?—about an other. That is, for example, how is a resident dwelling in the respectable places of Gaborone to interpret their own place in the city without making reference to the so-called backwards, primitive, wild landscapes? Or, for that matter, how is a person to even know that they live in the “respectable” part of the city without a contrast to some less desirable state of affairs? These same tendencies apply in the citizen-stranger dynamics occurring on Gaborone's White City streets, as well as in the conspicuous consumption competition unfolding in the pursuit of the 3 C's (cash, car, cell phone). And, secondly, the theorizing of Kopytoff and others points to the crucial role that frontiers and borders play in shaping identities, hierarchies and new dynamics and circulations of power. In the bounded, finite space of the city, drawing distinctions between a center and periphery becomes a matter of everyday practice. And, just as much as these categories exhibit some real quotidian force in support of the political, social, and economic establishment, the ambiguity and fluidity of these zones makes room for play and disruption within them, as well as in the cracks,

fissures and liminal spaces between them. The urban frontier, then, can both reify the functioning of power, as well as subvert it.

Spaces of Aspiration, Liberation and Exclusion: Making Sense of Gaborone's Urban Frontiers

The establishment of zones of difference has been a concern of urban dwellers, not to mention the State, for probably as long as there have been urban centers. Demonstrative of this tendency to boundary-making, Peter Marcuse's survey of the "partitioned city" moves from the properly divided city conceived by Plato and the Greeks to the Fordist city—and beyond—whose spatial organization is dictated by the requirements of capitalism.⁴⁹ Elsewhere, writing of the colonial context, Frederick Cooper argues that while European governments attempted to install a neatly ordered, clearly marked social and economic order that set the bounds for both time and space of the African worker population, these efforts were never fully successful.⁵⁰ Similarly, by the time Friedrich Engels embarked on his tour of urban Manchester, this Victorian city was already functionally divided between the spaces of work and residence, wealth and poverty.⁵¹ More recently, though, others have pointed to a fuller, more successful, if not insidious, imposition of the divided city, such as in the work of Mike Davis in his critique of Los Angeles as a starkly drawn "fortress city"⁵² or in Loic Wacquant's description of the American hyperghetto.⁵³

⁴⁹ Peter Marcuse, 'The partitioned city in history', in Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen (eds), *Of States and Cities: The partitioning of urban space* (Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2002), pp. 11-34.

⁵⁰ Frederick Cooper, 'Urban space, industrial time, and wage labor in Africa', in Frederick Cooper (ed), *Struggle for the City: Migrant labor, capital, and the state in urban Africa* (Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA, 1983).

⁵¹ Steven Marcus, 'Reading the illegible', in H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds), *The Victorian City: Images and realities, volume 1* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973), p. 260.

⁵² Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles* (Vintage, New York NY, 1992).

⁵³ Loic Wacquant, "Deadly symbiosis: when ghetto and prison meet and mesh", *Punishment and Society*, **3**, 1 (2001), pp. 95-134.

Perhaps, though, the greatest exemplar of the starkly divided city is today found in post-war Baghdad described in Rajiv Chandrasekaran's book on the site of the government of Iraq, the Green Zone, the Emerald City.⁵⁴ Equal parts fortress, miniaturized and reconstituted America and perpetual pool party, the Green Zone largely stands disconnected and distinct from its surroundings; its walls providing a substantial barrier, insulating the (perception of) order and stability inside from the wilderness of chaos and violence outside. Even here, though, the spatial barriers—not too mention the realms of space and fantasy also present within those walls, represented for example, by the prevalence of American fast food eateries and conveniences available—aren't impenetrable, but rather, remain susceptible to aerial mortar assaults. The space of the citadel is defensible in two dimensions, not three.⁵⁵ What this may show is that the construction of totally sanctified, protected spaces remains an impossible task, even when the full resources of the world's largest economy and military are called to action.

Of course though, the machinery of boundaries requires more than top-down, State interventions, and can just be as effectively created and maintained by more subtle means of informal talk and the performance of everyday life. Even so, perhaps the erection of barriers, rather than stasis and separation, implies movement and connection. Marcuse aptly notes, "The building of walls to create or enforce divisions may be as much a reflection of the instability of underlying relationships as of the hardness of divisions within them."⁵⁶ And, conversely, efforts to blur boundaries, as in Gaborone's post-colonial move towards mixed density housing, can

⁵⁴ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, 2006).

⁵⁵ Virilio makes a parallel point by noting that the locus of control in today's cities resides in the airport. See: Virilio, *City of Panic*, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Marcuse, 'The partitioned city in history', p. 15.

organically reproduce borders elsewhere in an attempt to decompress the space of the city that the State tried to force together via the techniques of urban planning.

The notion of fluidity across and between spatial frontiers has been increasingly recognized in a wide variety of contexts. Eric Worby describes the difficulty experienced by authorities in Zimbabwe as they attempted to anchor ethnic groups to a particular location in the process of colonial mapmaking. Despite their inaccuracies, efforts to connect people to spaces continue into the post-colonial period. Worby concludes that “the name on the map still operates to imbue what is in fact an unruly frontier region with the illusory aura of ethnographic and political certainty.”⁵⁷ Speaking of globalization, James Ferguson suggests that modernity isn’t simply about a temporal movement during which time Africa moves from developing to developed, but also includes a vertical component of reaching upward and outward.⁵⁸ This suggests that modernity, along with the aspirations and imaginations it induces, are inevitably spatialized in a shifting, elusive frontier topography. Carrying this imagery to its conclusion, Zygmunt Bauman makes the grand conclusion that our current existential circumstances are best described by a metaphor of fluidity, as we navigate the era of “liquid modernity.”⁵⁹

On the one hand, this spatial liquidity is amenable to the production and maintenance of authority. Again, Bauman is instructive. In one book, he suggests, for example, that mass migration helps to cleanse the machinery of capitalism by labeling people—immigrants, strangers, refugees—as disposable humans who have little use now that the “world is full.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Eric Worby, “Maps, names, and ethnic games: the epistemology and iconography of colonial power in northwestern Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **20**, 3 (September 1994), p. 392.

⁵⁸ James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2006), p. 32.

⁵⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000).

⁶⁰ Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its outcasts* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004), p. 5.

Elsewhere, Bauman writes more directly of the new power engendered by mobility and the transcendence of borders: “In the post-space-war world, mobility has become the most powerful and most coveted stratifying factor; the stuff of which the new, increasingly world-wide, social, political, economic and cultural hierarchies are daily built and rebuilt.”⁶¹ In this new world, though perhaps too, in the old one as well, the ability to move connotes power, as does the ability to consign people to a certain bounded space in an attempt to immobilize them where they are said to belong, on a map, on a blueprint.

Based on the Gaborone experience of urban practice, it might seem that Bauman goes to far, that mobility across borders and partitions, into and through frontier space, entering one way and coming out transformed upon exit, isn't always employed in the service of hegemonic power. In Chapter Four I relayed the story of my research assistant and the cell phone. I described how upon giving him, this old, bulky, clunky-looking device—the digital equivalent of a rotary phone—he lightly chastised me for not just bringing it to him, but for expecting him to use it. He proceeded to explain all the reasons why he couldn't be seen using such a phone. Its by now outdated form—being one of the first models introduced into Botswana—not only implied poverty, the inability to afford something better, it also put him on par with the Zimbabwean immigrant, who might well use such a phone because of its cheap availability. Moreover, by using this older cell phone, people might infer that my friend was backwards, somehow disconnected from the broader universe of Gaborone, even global, consumers, who had some knowledge of what was cool, who “got it,” and therefore comported themselves

⁶¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The human consequences* (Columbia University Press, New York, NY, 1998), p. 9.

accordingly.⁶² Here, ownership of a phone wasn't the primary issue. Instead, it was the need to be seen using it, participating in the public performance of capitalism in the urban theatre of the everyday.⁶³ Although my friend didn't own a cell phone, the solution to this dilemma wasn't found in acquiring any old model, since people would witness him using it: the cell phone, the car, etc, becomes a cyborgian extension of the body in which self and accessory become indistinguishable in some sort of ontological merger. Better not to have one at all, so as to keep onlookers uncertain of your position, both in terms of your proper location in the city—are you a slum-dweller or an ostensible resident of Riverwalk?—and your status.

Beyond the visible performance of consumption that was so important in this instance, I would like to suggest one further reason to emphasize the significance of visible consumption, particularly at the supposed periphery of urban space in Gaborone. Public acts of consumption create portals granting access to other parts of the city. In Igor Kopytoff's "cultural biography of things" he offers the possibility that commoditization is "best looked upon as a process of becoming rather than as an all-or-none state of being."⁶⁴ I would like to further this possibility by suggesting that commodities aid a similar "process of becoming" in people. Conspicuous consumables function as conduits to elsewhere, short-circuiting the dominant narrative about who/what constitutes a resident of Old Naledi, a Zimbabwean stranger on the streets of White City. Equipped with a stylish phone or stationed behind the wheel of an X5, a person on the

⁶² For a parallel account of these types of consumer aspirations, but with reference to upper class youths in Sao Paulo, please see Teresa P. R. Caldeira's important work on boundaries, democracy and urban space: Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, segregation, and citizenship in Sao Paulo* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2000), p. 317.

⁶³ It's appropriate here to mention, in further support of this contention, the girl who explained to me the reason behind this behavior, "no one can see if your belly is empty," as well as the pervasive stories of guys in Gaborone owning luxury cars, but living in servants' quarters "off-stage," to borrow imagery from James Scott.

⁶⁴ Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process', in Arjun Appadurai (ed), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), p. 73.

margins can cross-over from who or where they are to who or where they would like to be. Aspirations are realizable in and along the contours of the urban frontier, which represents a space of becoming as much as it functions as a space of separation and division. These transitions are rarely permanent, but they do point to the subtle possibilities of insurgency, along with the mutability and adaptability of the boundaries of urban space.

The potential for hybridity stored in the interstitial spaces of Gaborone's frontiers is dangerous to authority, to the establishment of hard and permanent distinctions between people and places. Writing of hybrids straddling the bounds of high and low culture, but making a point applicable here, Stallybrass and White, tell of the threat posed by these cultural mutants, "they transgress domains, moving between fair, theatre, town and court, threatening to sweep away the literary and social marks of difference at the very point where such differences are being widened."⁶⁵ In Gaborone, the distinction between transgression and transcendence is entirely relational and is dependent on the perspective of the person or observer or authority making the judgment. The cell phone and the automobile harbor either possibility, as does immigration paperwork. Near the end of Chapter Five, I tell of an episode in which the police accosted a Zimbabwean friend during one of their periodic sweeps of the White City streets. My friend confidently boasted of her ability to fool the Batswana policeman by showing him documents obtained in Zimbabwe that authorized her to enter and stay in Botswana—which is obviously vastly different than carrying papers acquired *in* Botswana that might say the same thing. By showing the police officer this collection of papers, she felt that she would be able to pass as a Motswana, if only for the duration of this encounter. And indeed, although the officer examined them, he eventually let us remain where we were and moved on. What this episode demonstrates

⁶⁵ Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 114.

is that even the frontier between citizen and stranger is negotiable, however ephemeral this transformation might turn out to be. So, while my friend might have transgressed the law by moving outside the discursive-legal space of the illegal immigrant, she was able to transcend it, if only for as long as we remained stationary, sitting on the curbside White City stoop.

The fluid frontier topography of urban space in African cities has been the subject of previous comment, which provides a more dynamic understanding of the circulation of people and spaces than what might have been earlier available. When, for example, someone could write that working class occupants of a slum existed in some sort of absent space disconnected from the rest of the city. Speaking of Manchester for instance, “thus generations of human beings out of whose lives the wealth of England was produced, were compelled to live in wealth’s symbolic, negative counterpart.”⁶⁶ Similarly, James Scott describes the dark underbelly of the modern city, in which the poor—Paris, in his example—are expelled to a peripheral zone, the obverse of the rest of the city, whose insurrectionary potential must be both isolated and controlled.⁶⁷ While James Holston explores the presence of squatter “shadow communities” outside Brasilia,⁶⁸ noting that the “passage between center and periphery is uncompromisingly stark.”⁶⁹ The experiences of other African cities, including Gaborone, however, suggests a greater amount of dynamism in the ability of people to not only create, but also cross, urban frontiers.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Marcus, ‘Reading the illegible’, p. 266.

⁶⁷ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 63.

⁶⁸ James Holston, *The Modernist City: An anthropological critique of Brasilia* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1989), p. 296.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁷⁰ In opposition, for example, to the emphasis on emplacement and stability that characterized the urban planning of apartheid cities during the colonial era. See Chapter Two on the making of Gaborone for further details.

Set against the backdrop of the diamond frontier located along the border contours of Angola and the Congo, Filip de Boeck explains that the frontier landscape “provides a physical *and* [author’s italics] mental landscape in which local and global imaginaries meet and, eventually, merge.”⁷¹ Thus it “deconstructs and dissolves” stark distinctions between the center and the periphery,⁷² producing instead a world of fluid margins rather than fixed boundaries. These realms of indistinction seem replicable across the terrains of urban Africa: new spaces of transport carved out by South African taxis brings a “transformation of the township from an order of fixity and familiarity to one of eros and unknowability [which] has produced major upheavals and anxieties,”⁷³ while the collapse of the state in the Congo has required people subsist, indeed survive, entirely in and around the margins of a flexible, ad-hoc conglomeration of urban space in Kinshasa.⁷⁴

And though the transformations may not be as dramatic as in Johannesburg, or as dire as in the Congo, movement, accompanied by urban anxieties, still reverberate along the edges of Gaborone’s frontiers. Who can claim to be a legitimate resident of the city? Who is modern? Who is backwards? Who is a citizen? A stranger? Who is rich and who is poor? And by what criteria can that judgment be made? These questions represent the primary sites of contestation in contemporary Gaborone—though one can trace their trajectories from the city’s 1966 founding and perhaps before. The tensions generated in pursuit of answers seems more intense in recent years, as the answers to them appear to be more ambiguous than in the past. When

⁷¹ Filip de Boeck, “Borderland breccia: the mutant hero in the historical imagination of a central African diamond frontier”, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, **1**, (2000), no page numbers.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Thomas Blom Hansen, “Sounds of freedom: music, taxis, and racial imagination in urban South Africa”, *Public Culture*, **18**, 1 (2006), p. 186.

⁷⁴ Theodore Trefon (ed), *Reinventing Order in the Congo: How people respond to state failure in Kinshasa* (Zed Books, New York, NY, 2004).

boundaries are transgressed, transcended daily, at the most mundane level of everyday behavior, what can difference mean, how can distinctions in status be maintained? Knowing one's place becomes difficult, if not impossible, when all spaces are permeable, when cell phones and BMWs and Riverwalk lunches at Nandos and forms of Zimbabwean documentation all represent mechanisms of becoming. If only for a moment, urban space and the boundaries that define them, are elastic. The city becomes synonymous with fields of insurgency—"a war zone"⁷⁵—in which citizenship is produced, emphasized, elaborated, and defended in forms and forums far outside the typical purview of the official state bureaucracy.⁷⁶ And just as much as those on the margins can struggle for access, for legitimacy, "the dominant classes meet the advances of these new citizens with new strategies of segregation, privatization, and fortification."⁷⁷ The struggle for urban space in Gaborone amounts to a struggle for recognition aided by the dissolution of the hard and fast boundaries of the concept city into the ambiguously lived urban frontiers of the quotidian city. In which the spectral city, the concept city, the real city and all points in-between offer sites of creation and transformation, whereby "the city is the conjunction of seemingly endless possibilities of remaking."⁷⁸

The narrative of Gaborone, then, is a story of state planning interventions, of crafting the urban spaces of geography, imagination and discourse. Running parallel to—and often

⁷⁵ James Holston, 'Spaces of insurgent citizenship', in James Holston (ed), *Cities and Citizenship* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1999), p. 170.

⁷⁶ For more on the performative aspect of citizenship in the city, in the context of post-apartheid Johannesburg, please see: Antoine Bouillon, 'Between euphemism and informalism: inventing the city', in Okwui Enwezor et al. (eds), *Under Siege: four African cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos* (Hatje Cantz Publishers, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2002), pp. 81-98.

⁷⁷ Holston, 'Spaces of insurgent citizenship', p. 170.

⁷⁸ AbdouMaliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African life in four cities* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2004), p. 9. See also: AbdouMaliq Simone, 'The visible and the invisible: remaking cities in Africa', in Enwezor et al., *Under Siege*, pp. 23-43.

bisecting—these currents is the informal city produced through practices of everyday (urban) life. One version of the city posits hard and impassable distinctions, the other suggests fluidity, dynamism and change. From the perspective of the poor, urban frontiers present opportunities for insurgency, for inserting themselves more visibly, and on their own terms, in the urban life of the city, while from the vantage point of elite populations, urban frontiers offer a chance to create the idealized, sanctified, defensible spaces in which access is limited and which, for the most part, the official arms of the state have been unable to provide. The collision between these two visions of the city, and the citizens who make them, demonstrates the possibilities for both liberation and exclusion in contemporary Gaborone, as well as the anxieties and tensions produced by an urban space that is better characterized by placelessness than by fixity. Marshall Berman suggests that modernity means to “experience personal and social life as a maelstrom.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, he adds,

To be modernist is to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom, to make its rhythms one's own, to move within its currents in search of the forms of reality, of beauty, of freedom, of justice, that its fervid and perilous flow allows.⁸⁰

And so it is, too, for the inhabitants of Gaborone who traverse its urban frontiers in these, the years just following the fortieth anniversary of the city's birth.

⁷⁹ Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The experience of modernity* (Simon and Schuster, New York, NY, 1982), p. 345.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

REFERENCE LIST OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- Abani, Chris, *Graceland* (Picador Press, New York, NY, 2004).
- Abu-Lughod, Janet L., *Rabat: Urban apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1980).
- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, 'An African success story: Botswana' (CEPR Discussion Papers 3219, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London, 2002).
- Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998).
- Alexander, Jocelyn and JoAnn McGregor, "Modernity and ethnicity in a frontier society: understanding difference in northwestern Zimbabwe", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **23**, 2, Special Issue for Terry Ranger, (June 1997), pp. 187-201.
- Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Verso, New York, NY, 1991).
- Anderson, Warwick, "Excremental colonialism: public health and the poetics of pollution", *Critical Inquiry*, **21**, 3 (Spring 1995), pp. 640-669.
- Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1996).
- Appadurai, Arjun (ed), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988).
- Appadurai, Arjun, "Spectral housing and urban cleansing: notes on millennial Mumbai", *Public Culture*, **12**, 3 (2000), pp. 627-651.
- Arnold, David, 'Public health and public power: medicine and hegemony in colonial India', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and society in Africa and India*, pp. 131-151.
- Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1994).
- Baudrillard, Jean, *The Consumer Society: Myths and structures* (Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1998).
- Bauman, Zygmunt, *Globalization: The human consequences* (Columbia University Press, New York, NY, 1998).
- Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid Modernity* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000).
- Bauman, Zygmunt, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its outcasts* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004).

- Beaulier, Scott A., 'Lessons from Botswana: Africa's economic dynamo', (The Independent Institute, Washington DC, 2005)
<<http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=1628>> (27 July 2006).
- Berman, Marshall, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The experience of modernity* (Simon and Schuster, New York, NY, 1982).
- Best, Alan C. G., "Gaborone: problems and prospects of a new capital", *The Geographical Review*, **LX**, 1 (1970), p. 1-14.
- Bloch, Ernst, "Nonsynchronism and the obligation to its dialectics", *New German Critique*, **11** (Spring 1977), pp. 22-38.
- Bouillon, Antoine, 'Between euphemism and informalism: inventing the city', in Okwui Enwezor et al. (eds), *Under Siege: four African cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, pp. 81-98.
- Bozzolli, Brenda, "Why were the 1980s 'millenarian?' style, repertoire, space and authority in South Africa's black cities", *Journal of Historical Sociology*, **13**, 1 (March 2000), pp. 78-110.
- Briggs, Charles L., "Theorizing modernity conspiratorially: science, scale and the political economy of public discourse in explanations of a cholera epidemic", *American Ethnologist*, **31**, 2 (2004), pp. 164-187.
- Brooks, Lisa Allette, *Music and HIV/AIDS in Botswana: Rearticulating relationships through song* (Yale University, unpublished MA thesis, 2006).
- Burchell, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in governmentality with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991).
- Caldeira, Teresa P. R., *City of Walls: Crime, segregation, and citizenship in Sao Paulo* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2000).
- Carter, Gwendolen M. and Philip E. Morgan (eds), *From the Frontline: Speeches of Sir Seretse Khama* (Rex Collings, London, 1980).
- Céline, Louis-Ferdinand, *Journey to the End of the Night* (New Directions Books, New York, NY, 1983).
- Chalfin, Brenda, "Border zone trade and the economic boundaries of the state in north-east Ghana", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, **71**, 2, Markets in a New Era, (2001), pp. 202-224.
- Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, 2006).

- Chappell, David A., "The nation as frontier: ethnicity and clientelism in Ivorian history", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, **22**, 4 (1989), pp. 671-696.
- Clover, Jenny, 'Botswana: future prospects and the need for broad-based development' (Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2003), p. 2
<<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/current/botswanaasep03.pdf>> (1 August 2006).
- Collins, John, "Lusaka: the myth of the Garden City", *Zambian Urban Studies*, **2** (1969), pp. 1-32.
- Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudolf, "Architectural conspicuous consumption and economic change in the Andes", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, **96**, 4 (December 1994), pp. 845-865.
- Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff, "Alien-nation: zombies, immigrants, and millennial capitalism", *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, **101**, 4 (Fall 2002), pp. 779-805.
- Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff, "Goodly beasts, beastly goods: cattle and other commodities in a South African context", *American Ethnologist*, **17**, 2 (May 1990), pp. 195-216.
- Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Volume 2: the dialectics of modernity on a South African frontier* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991).
- Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff, "Naturing the nation: aliens, apocalypse and the postcolonial state", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 3 (September 2001), pp. 627-651.
- Cooper, David, 'An overview of the Botswana urban class struggle and its articulation with the rural structure: insights from Selebi-Phikwe', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 245-255.
- Cooper, Frederick, 'Colonizing time: work rhythms and labor conflict in colonial Mombasa', in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed), *Colonialism and Culture*, pp. 209-245.
- Cooper, Frederick (ed), *Struggle for the City: Migrant labor, capital, and the state in urban Africa* (Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA, 1983).
- Cooper, Frederick, 'Urban space, industrial time, and wage labor in Africa', in Frederick Cooper (ed), *Struggle for the City: Migrant labor, capital, and the state in urban Africa*, pp. 7-50.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catherine, *The History of African Cities South of the Sahara: From the origins to colonization* (Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, NJ, 2005).
- Curtin, Philip D., "Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa", *The American Historical Review*, **90**, 3 (June 1985), pp. 594-613.

- Czegledy, Andre P., 'Villas of the highveld: a cultural perspective on Johannesburg and its 'northern suburbs'', in Richard Tomlinson et al. (eds), *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the postapartheid city*, pp.21-42.
- Davis, Mike, *City of Quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles* (Vintage, New York NY, 1992).
- Davis, Mike, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the imagination of disaster* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1999).
- Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums* (Verso, New York, NY, 2006).
- de Boeck, Filip, "Borderland breccia: the mutant hero in the historical imagination of a central African diamond frontier", *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, **1**, (2000), no page numbers.
- de Certeau, Michel, translated by Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, Los Angeles, CA, 1984).
- de Tocqueville, Alexis, translated by Gerald E. Bevan, *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America* (Penguin Classics, New York, NY 2003).
- de Tocqueville, Alexis, translated by Gerald E. Bevan, 'Two weeks in the wilderness' in *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America*, pp. 875-927.
- Demissie, Fassil, "Controlling and 'civilising natives' through architecture and town planning in South Africa", *Social Identities*, **10**, 4 (2004), pp. 483-507.
- Denbow, James R., 'The Toutswe tradition: a study in socio-economic change', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 73-86.
- Dirks, Nicholas B. (ed), *Colonialism and Culture* (The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI, 1992).
- Dodson, Belinda, "Are we having fun yet? leisure and consumption in the post-apartheid city", *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, **91**, 4 (2000), pp. 412-425.
- Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966).
- Dyos, H.J. and Michael Wolff (eds), *The Victorian City: Images and realities, volume 1* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973).
- Engels, Dagmar and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and society in Africa and India* (British Academic Press, London, 1994).

- Engels, Friedrich, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999).
- Enwezor, Okwui et al. (eds), *Under Siege: four African cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos* (Hatje Cantz Publishers, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2002).
- Fardon, Richard et al. (eds), *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of globalization, consumption and development in Africa and beyond* (EIDOS, Leiden, 1999).
- Ferguson, James, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian copperbelt* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1999).
- Ferguson, James, *Global Shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2006).
- Fincher, David, *Fight Club* (1999).
- Flynn, Donna K., “‘We are the border’: identity, exchange, and the state along the Benin-Nigeria border”, *American Ethnologist*, **24**, 2 (1997), pp. 311-330.
- Frederiksen, Bodil Folke, “Popular culture, gender relations and the democratization of everyday life in Kenya”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **26**, 2 (June 2000), pp. 209-220.
- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1977).
- Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: an introduction* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1990).
- Foucault, Michel, ‘Of other spaces: utopias and heterotopias’, in Neil Leach (ed), *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in cultural theory*, pp. 350-356.
- Foucault, Michel, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976* (Allen Lane, London, 2003).
- Fugard, Athol, *Tsotsi* (Grove Press, New York, NY, 1980).
- Geschiere, Peter and Francis Nyamnjoh, “Capitalism and autochthony: the seesaw of mobility and belonging”, *Public Culture*, **12**, 2 (2000), pp. 423-451.
- Geschiere, Peter and Stephen Jackson, “Autochthony and the crisis of citizenship: democratization, decentralization, and the politics of belonging”, *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), pp. 1-7.
- Gewald, Jan-Bart, “El Negro, El Niño, witchcraft and the absence of rain in Botswana”, *African Affairs*, **100** (2001), pp. 555-580.

- Gilman, Sander L., "Black bodies, white bodies: toward an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine, and literature", *Critical Inquiry*, **12**, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 204-242.
- Gondola, Ch. Didier, "Dream and drama: the search for elegance among Congolese youth", *African Studies Review*, **42**, 1 (April 1999), pp. 23-48.
- Good, Kenneth, "At the ends of the ladder: radical inequalities in Botswana", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **31**, 2 (June 1993), pp. 203-230.
- Good, Kenneth, 'Bushmen and diamonds: (un)civil society in Botswana' (Discussion Paper 23, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2003).
- Good, Kenneth, "The state and extreme poverty: the San and destitutes", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **37**, 2 (June 1999), pp. 185-205.
- Good, Kenneth and Skye Hughes, "Globalization and diversification: two cases in southern Africa", *African Affairs*, **101**, 402 (2002), pp. 39-59.
- Good, Kenneth and Ian Taylor, "Presidential succession in Botswana: no model for Africa", (University of Botswana's Department of Political and Administrative Studies' Politics Seminar, 2005).
- Good, Kenneth and Ian Taylor, 'Unpacking the 'model': presidential succession in Botswana', in Roger Southall and Henning Melber (eds), *Legacies of Power: Leadership change and former presidents in African politics* (HSRC Press, Johannesburg, 2006) <<http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/index.asp>> (15 August 2006).
- Grant, Sandy (ed), *Sheila Bagnall's Letters from Botswana, 1966-1974* (Leitlho Publications, Odi, Botswana, 2001).
- Greenway, Paul, *Lonely Planet: Guide to Botswana* (Lonely Planet Publications, Oakland, CA, 2001).
- Gulbrandsen, Ornulf, "The king is king by the grace of the people: the exercise and control of power in subject-ruler relations", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **37**, 3 (July 1995), pp. 415-444.
- Gwebu, Thando D., "Environmental problems among low income urban residents: an empirical analysis of Old Naledi—Gaborone, Botswana", *Habitat International*, **27** (2003), pp. 407-427.
- Hansen, Thomas Blom, "Sounds of freedom: music, taxis, and racial imagination in urban South Africa", *Public Culture*, **18**, 1 (2006), pp. 185-208.
- Hardie, Graeme John, *Tswana Design of House and Settlement: Continuity and change in expressive space*. (Boston University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1981).

- Henk, Dan, "The Botswana Defence Force: evolution of a professional African military", *African Security Review*, **13**, 4 (2004)
<<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/13No4/EHenk.htm>> (30 January 2007).
- Herwitz, Daniel, *Race and Reconciliation: Essays from the new South Africa* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2003).
- Hitchcock, R. Renee and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape* (The Botswana Society, Gaborone, 1982).
- Holm, John and Patrick Molutsi (eds), *Democracy in Botswana: The proceedings of a symposium held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988*. (The Botswana Society, The University of Botswana and Ohio University Press, Gaborone and Athens, OH, 1989).
- Holston, James, "Autoconstruction in working class Brazil", *Cultural Anthropology*, **6**, 4 (November 1991), pp. 447-465.
- Holston, James (ed), *Cities and Citizenship* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1999).
- Holston, James, *The Modernist City: An anthropological critique of Brasilia* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1989).
- Holston, James, 'Spaces of insurgent citizenship', in James Holston (ed), *Cities and Citizenship*, pp. 155-173.
- Home, Robert, "From barrack compounds to the single-family house: planning worker housing in colonial Natal and Northern Rhodesia", *Planning Perspectives*, **15** (2000), pp. 327-347.
- Jackson, Stephen, "Sons of which soil? The language and politics of autochthony in Eastern D.R. Congo", *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), pp. 95-123.
- Jeremiah, Koketso, *Junior Secondary School Students' Recognition of Kagisano/Social Harmony, the National Philosophy of Botswana* (Florida State University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2005).
- Kalia, Ravi, *Chandigarh: The making of an Indian city* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999).
- Kasfir, Nelson (ed), *State and Class in Africa* (Frank Cass and Company, London, 1984).
- Kokorwe, Mogopodi H., 'The kgotla and the freedom square: one-way or two-way communication?', in John Holm and Patrick Molutsi (eds), *Democracy in Botswana: The proceedings of a symposium held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988*, pp. 216-230.
- King, Anthony D., *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, social power and environment* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976).

- Kipling, Rudyard, *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Stories* (Books Inc., New York, NY, n.d.).
- Klein, Kerwin Lee, "Reclaiming the 'F' word, or being and becoming postwestern", *Pacific Historical Review*, **65**, 2 (May 1996), pp. 179-215.
- Kopytoff, Igor (ed), *The African Frontier: The reproduction of traditional African societies* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1987).
- Kopytoff, Igor, 'The internal African frontier: the making of African political culture', in Igor Kopytoff (ed), *The African Frontier: The reproduction of traditional African societies*, pp. 3-84.
- Kopytoff, Igor, 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process', in Arjun Appadurai (ed), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, pp. 64-91.
- Kuper, Adam, 'Social aspects of Kgalagari settlement', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 258-263.
- Lamar, Howard and Leonard Thompson, 'Comparative frontier history', in Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson (eds), *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared*, pp. 3-13.
- Lamar, Howard and Leonard Thompson (eds), *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1981).
- Lamar, Howard and Leonard Thompson, 'The North American and Southern African Frontiers', in Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson (eds), *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared*, pp. 14-40.
- Landau, Loren B., "Transplants and transients: idioms of belonging and dislocation in inner-city Johannesburg", *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), pp. 125-145.
- Landau, Paul Stuart, *The Realm of the Word: Language, gender and christianity in a Southern African kingdom* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1995).
- Larsson, Anita, *Modern Houses for Modern Life: The transformation of housing in Botswana* (Department of Building Functions Analysis, School of Architecture, University of Lund, Sweden, 1990).
- Larsson, Anita, "Old Naledi: the intergration (sic) of an upgraded area into the capital city of Botswana", *African Urban Quarterly*, **2**, 3 (August 1987), pp. 311-320.
- Larsson, Anita and Viera Larsson, *Traditional Tswana Housing: A study in four villages in eastern Botswana* (Swedish Council for Building Research, Lund, Sweden, 1984).

- Le Corbusier, translated by Frederick Etchells, *The City of To-morrow and its Planning* (The Architectural Press, London, 1971).
- Le Meur, Pierre-Yves, "State making and the politics of the frontier in central Benin", *Development and Change*, **37**, 4 (2006), pp. 871-900.
- Leach, Neil (ed), *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in cultural theory* (Routledge, New York, NY, 1997).
- Lefebvre, Henri, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1991).
- Leith, J. Clark, 'Why Botswana prospered' (Canadian Economics Association Thirty-Fourth Annual Meetings, University of British Columbia, 2000), <http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/economics/faculty/Leith/Botswana.pdf> (26 January 2008).
- Low, Setha, *On the Plaza: The politics of public space and culture* (University of Texas Press, Austin, TX, 2000).
- Mabin, Alan and Dan Smit, "Reconstructing South Africa's cities? the making of urban planning 1900-2000", *Planning Perspectives*, **12** (1997), pp. 193-223.
- Marcus, Steven, 'Reading the illegible', in H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds), *The Victorian City: Images and realities, volume 1*, pp. 257-276.
- Marcuse, Peter and Ronald van Kempen (eds), *Of States and Cities: The partitioning of urban space* (Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2002).
- Marcuse, Peter, 'The partitioned city in history', in Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen (eds), *Of States and Cities: The partitioning of urban space*, pp. 11-34.
- Marshall-Fratani, Ruth, "The war of "who is who": autochthony, nationalism, and citizenship in the Ivoirian crisis", *African Studies Review*, **49**, 2 (September 2006), pp. 9-43.
- Masire, Quett Ketumile Joni, Stephen R. Lewis Jr. (ed), *Very Brave or Very Foolish?: Memoirs of an African democrat* (MacMillan Botswana Publishing, Gaborone, 2006).
- Maudeni, Zibani, *Mapping Local Democracy in Gaborone City* (Botswana Association of Local Authorities and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Gaborone, 2004).
- Maudeni, Zibani, "The politics of poverty in Botswana", *Botswana Notes and Records*, **23** (2003), pp. 99-109.
- Mbembe, Achille and Sarah Nuttall, "Writing the world from an African metropolis", *Public Culture*, **16**, 3 (2004), pp. 347-372.

- Mogae, Festus, 'Botswana's Developmental Experience' (Address given by President Festus Mogae, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, 21 February 2005) <<http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001114/index.php>> (11 August 2006).
- Molefi, Rodgers Keteng K., *A Medical History of Botswana: 1885-1966* (The Botswana Society, Gaborone, 1996).
- Molutsi, P.P., 'The ruling class and democracy in Botswana', in John Holm and Patrick Molutsi (eds), *Democracy in Botswana: The proceedings of a symposium held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988*, pp. 103-116.
- Morrison, J. Stephen, 'Botswana's formative late colonial experiences', in Stephen John Stedman (ed), *Botswana: The political economy of democratic development*, pp. 27-49.
- Morton, Christopher, 'Fixity and fluidity: chiefly authority and settlement movement in colonial Botswana', *History and Anthropology*, **15**, 4 (December 2004), pp. 345-365.
- Motzafi-Haller, Pnina, 'The duiker and the hare: Tswapong subjects and Ngwato rulers in pre-colonial Botswana', *Botswana Notes and Records*, **25** (1993), pp. 59-71.
- Mukhopadhyay, Bhaskar, 'Crossing the Howrah Bridge: Calcutta, filth and dwelling—forms, fragments, phantasms', *Theory, Culture & Society*, **23**, 7-8 (2006), pp. 221-241.
- Mwangi, Meja, *Kill Me Quick* (Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1973).
- Nangati, Fanuel, 'Early capitalist penetration: the impact of precolonial trade in Kweneng (1840-1876)', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 140-147.
- Nas, Peter J. M. (ed), *Urban Symbolism* (E. J. Brill, New York, 1993).
- Nuttall, Sarah, 'Stylizing the self: the Y generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg', *Public Culture*, **16**, 3 (2004), pp. 430-452.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis B., 'Local attitudes towards citizenship and foreigners in Botswana: an appraisal of recent press stories', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 4 (December 2002), pp. 755-775.
- Orwell, George, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (Harcourt, New York, NY, 1933).
- Packard, Randall M., 'The 'healthy reserve' and the 'dressed native': discourses on black health and the language of legitimation in South Africa', *American Ethnologist*, **16**, 4 (November 1989), pp. 686-703.
- Papastergiadis, Nikos, 'The invasion complex: the abject other and spaces of violence', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, **88**, (December 2006), pp. 429-442.

- Parnell, Susan, "Creating racial privilege: the origins of South African public health and town planning legislation", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **19**, 3 (September 1993), pp. 471-488.
- Parnell, Susan and Deborah Hart, "Self-help housing as a flexible instrument of state control in 20th century South Africa", *Housing Studies*, **14**, 3 (1999), pp. 367-386.
- Parson, Jack, 'Inclusion/exclusion and the health of liberal democracy in Botswana', (Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Washington DC, 2005).
- Parson, Jack, 'The trajectory of class and state in dependent development: the consequences of new wealth for Botswana', in Nelson Kasfir (ed), *State and Class in Africa* (Frank Cass and Company, London, 1984), pp. 39-60.
- Parsons, Neil, 'Settlement in east-central Botswana circa 1800-1920', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 115-128.
- Parsons, Q. N., 'The evolution of modern Botswana: historical revisions,' in Louis Picard (ed), *The Evolution of Modern Botswana*, pp. 27-39.
- Pegg, Scott, "Presidential succession and academic freedom: Botswana deports leading political scientist Kenneth Good", *PS Online*, (October 2005), pp. 829-831.
- Picard, Louis A. (ed), *The Evolution of Modern Botswana* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 1985).
- "Political Developments in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," *International Bulletin: A Monthly Publication of the Africa Institute*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1964), pp. 42-53.
- Prah, K.K., 'Notes and comments on aspects of Tswana feudalism in the precolonial period' (Working Paper No. 15, National Institute for Research in Development and African Studies Documentation Unit, Gaborone, 1977).
- Procacci, Giovanna, 'Social economy and the government of poverty', in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in governmentality with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, pp. 151-168.
- Rajaram, Prem Kumar and Carl Grundy-Warr, "The irregular migrant as homo sacer: migration and detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand", *International Migration*, **42**, 1 (2004), pp. 33-63.
- Rantao, Paul, *Independence: Pimples and pay-offs* (Botswana Cooperative Union Ltd., Gaborone, 1984).
- Reid, Andrew et al., "Tswana architecture and responses to colonialism", *World Archaeology*, **28**, 3 (February 1997), p. 370-392.

- Ross, Andrew, *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, liberty and the pursuit of property value in Disney's new town* (Ballantine Books, New York, NY, 1999).
- Rostow, W.W., *The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-communist manifesto* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967).
- Samatar, Abdi Ismail, *An African Miracle: State and class leadership and colonial legacies in Botswana Development* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1999).
- Samatar, Abdi Ismail, 'Leadership and ethnicity in the making of African state models: Botswana versus Somalia', *Third World Quarterly*, **14**, 4 (1997), pp. 687-707.
- Saugestad, Sidsel, *The Inconvenient Indigenous: Remote area development in Botswana, donor assistance and the First People of the Kalahari* (Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden, 2001).
- Schapera, Isaac, "The social structure of the Tswana ward", *Bantu Studies: A Journal Devoted to the Scientific Study of Bantu, Hottentot and Bushmen*, **9** (1935), pp. 203-224.
- Schapera, Isaac, *Tribal Innovators: Tswana chiefs and social change 1795-1940* (University of London, The Athlone Press, London, 1970).
- Schapera, Isaac, *The Tswana* (International African Institute, London, 1953).
- Scheld, Suzanne, "The city in a shoe: redefining urban Africa through Sebago footwear consumption", *City and Society*, **XV**, 1 (2003), pp. 109-130.
- Scott, James C., *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1998).
- Scott, James C., *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1985).
- Silitshena, R.M.K., "Chiefly authority and the organization of space in Botswana: towards an exploration of nucleated settlements among the Tswana", *Botswana Notes and Records*, **11** (1979), pp. 55-67.
- Silitshena, R.M.K., 'Population movements and settlement patterns in contemporary Botswana', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 31-43.
- Sillery, Anthony, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1952).
- Simone, AbdouMaliq, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African life in four cities* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2004).
- Simone, AbdouMaliq, "On the worlding of African cities", *African Studies Review*, **44**, 2 (September 2001), pp. 15-41.

- Simone, AbdouMaliq, 'The visible and the invisible: remaking cities in Africa', Okwui Enwezor et al. (eds), *Under Siege: four African cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, pp. 23-43.
- Southall, Roger and Henning Melber (eds), *Legacies of Power: Leadership change and former presidents in African politics* (HSRC Press, Johannesburg, 2006)
<<http://www.hsrbpress.ac.za/index.asp>> (15 August 2006).
- Slaughter, Carolyn, *Before the Knife: Memoirs of an African childhood* (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 2002).
- Solway, Jacqueline S., 'Navigating the 'neutral' state: 'minority' rights in Botswana', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 4 (December 2002), pp. 711-729.
- Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1986).
- Stedman, Stephen John (ed), *Botswana: The political economy of democratic development* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 1993).
- Stephens, Betsy, "Urban migration in Botswana: Gaborone, December 1975", *Botswana Notes and Records*, **9** (1977), p. 91-100.
- Swanson, Maynard W., "'The Asiatic menace': creating segregation in Durban, 1870-1900", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*", **16**, 3 (1983), pp. 401-421.
- Swanson, Maynard W., "The sanitation syndrome: bubonic plague and urban native policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909", *The Journal of African History*, **18**, 3 (1977), pp. 387-410.
- Taylor, Ian, "The limits of the 'African Miracle': academic freedom in Botswana and the deportation of Kenneth Good", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, **24**, 1 (January 2006), pp. 101-122.
- Taylor, Ian and Gladys Mokhawa, "Not forever: Botswana conflict diamonds and the Bushmen", *African Affairs*, **102** (2003), pp. 261-283.
- Tevera, D. S., "Dump scavenging in Gaborone, Botswana: anachronism or refuge occupation of the poor?", *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, **76**, 1 (1994), pp. 21-32.
- Tlou, Thomas, "The nature of Batswana states: towards a theory of Batswana traditional government—the Batawana case", *Botswana Notes and Records*, **6** (1974), pp. 57-75.
- Todorov, Tzvetan, translated by Richard Howard, *The Conquest of America: The question of the other* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 1984).
- Tomlinson, Richard et al. (eds), *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the postapartheid city* (Routledge, New York, NY, 2003).

- Trefon, Theodore (ed), *Reinventing Order in the Congo: How people respond to state failure in Kinshasa* (Zed Books, New York, NY, 2004).
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, *History, Frontier, Section: Three essays by Frederick Jackson Turner* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1993).
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, *The Frontier in American History* (Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY, 1920).
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, 'The significance of the frontier in American history', in *The Frontier in American History*, pp. 1-38.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, 'The significance of the section in American history', in *History, Frontier, Section: Three essays by Frederick Jackson Turner*, pp. 93-116.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, 'The West and American ideals', in *The Frontier in American History*, pp. 290-310.
- Truschel, Louis, "Political survival in colonial Botswana: the preservation of Khama's state and growth of the Ngwato monarchy", *Transafrican Journal of History*, **IV**, 1 and 2 (1974), pp. 71-93.
- Vale, Lawrence J., *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1992).
- van Binsbergen, Wim, 'Making sense of urban space in Francistown, Botswana', in Peter J. M. Nas (ed), *Urban Symbolism*, pp. 184-228.
- van Binsbergen, Wim, 'Mary's room: a case study on becoming a consumer in Francistown, Botswana', in Richard Fardon et al. (eds), *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of globalization, consumption and development in Africa and beyond*, pp. 179-245.
- van der Post, Laurens, *The Lost World of the Kalahari* (William Morrow and Company, New York, NY, 1958).
- van Nostrand, John, *Old Naledi: The village becomes a town: an outline of the Old Naledi squatter upgrading project Gaborone, Botswana* (James Lorimer and Company Publishers, Halifax, 1982).
- Vaughn Megan, 'Health and hegemony: representation of disease and the creation of the colonial subject in Nyasaland', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, pp. 173-201.
- Virilio, Paul, translated by Julie Rose, *City of Panic* (Berg, New York, NY, 2004).
- Wacquant, Loic, "Deadly symbiosis: when ghetto and prison meet and mesh", *Punishment and Society*, **3**, 1 (2001), pp. 95-134.

- Wareus, Jan, 'The traditional Tswana village: a neglected planning prototype' (Gaborone, no date).
- Wass, Peter, "Initiatives to promote civil society in Botswana in the late 1960s: a personal memoir", *Botswana Notes and Records*, **36** (no date), pp. 74-81.
- Werbner, Richard, "Introduction: challenging minorities, difference and tribal citizenship in Botswana", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **28**, 4 (December 2002), pp. 671-684.
- Werbner, Richard, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The public anthropology of Kalanga elites* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2004).
- West, Michael O., *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2002).
- White, Hayden, 'The forms of wildness: archaeology of an idea', in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in cultural criticism* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1978), pp. 150-182.
- White, Luise, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in colonial Nairobi* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1990).
- Willoughby, W.C., "Notes on the totemism of the Becwana", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, **35** (July-December 1905), pp. 295-314.
- Wilmsen, Edwin N., 'Exchange, interaction, and settlement in north-western Botswana: past and present perspectives', in R. Renee Hitchcock and Mary R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The historical development of a human landscape*, pp. 98-109.
- Wilmsen, Edwin N., *Land Filled with Flies: A political economy of the Kalahari* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1989).
- Winstanley, George, *Under Two Flags in Africa: Recollections of a British administrator in Bechuanaland and Botswana, 1954-1972* (Blackwater Books, Colchester, UK, 2000).
- Worby, Eric, "Maps, names, and ethnic games: the epistemology and iconography of colonial power in northwestern Zimbabwe", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **20**, 3 (September 1994), pp. 371-392.
- Wright, Gwendolyn, "Tradition in the service of modernity: architecture and urbanism in French colonial policy, 1900-1930", *The Journal of Modern History*, **59**, 2 (June 1987), pp. 291-316.

REFERENCE LIST OF NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

- Baaitse, Francinah, 'The sex that could divide nations', *Mmegi*, 6 December 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/December/Tuesday6/7066970501838.html>> (6 December 2006)
- Banda, Alice, 'Getting high with ease', *Mmegi*, 9 July 2004, p. 8.
- Banda, Alice, 'New Francistown mall won't satisfy unemployed', *Mmegi*, 22 April 2004, p. 9.
- Banda, Alice, 'New police station offers hope to Tshesebe residents', *Mmegi*, 27 April 2004, p. 4.
- Baputaki, Chandapiwa, 'OP [Office of the President] denies Mogae bribed Basarwa', *Mmegi*, 17 June 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/June/Thursday17/10134044261.html>> (15 June 2007).
- Baputaki, Chandapiwa, 'Suspected Zim trickster on the prowl', *Mmegi*, 22 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Wednesday22/583611235294.html>> (22 November 2006).
- Baputaki, Chandapiwa, 'The underdevelopment of Tlokweng', *Mmegi*, 25 November 2005
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/November/Friday25/9406363171363.html>> (25 November 2005).
- Baraedi, Chenjelani, 'Zim women admit stealing underpants', *Mmegi*, 14 April 2004, p. 2.
- Bechuanaland Daily News*, 'Prime Minister addresses African Studies Association in U. S. A.', 2 November 1965, p. 1.
- Botswana Gazette*, 'Crawl back to your mother's land', 28 April 2004, p. 11.
- Botswana Gazette*, 'Man cut into pieces over a toy', 28 April 2004, p. 6.
- Brown, John, 'Immorality raids Gaborone . . . sign of the times?', *Kutlwano*, **33**, 9 (September 1999), pp. 42-43.
- Carroll, Rory, 'Botswana erects 300-mile electrified fence to keep cattle (and Zimbabweans) out', *Guardian Unlimited*, 10 September 2003
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article/0,2763,1039033,00.html>> (27 January 2007).
- Charlton, Pat, 'Did you know?', *Kutlwano*, **2**, 4 (April 1963), pp. 4-5.
- Daily News*, 'The academic world—Botho as an ingridinet (sic) of elections', 22 October 2004
<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20041022&i=THE_ACADEMIC_WORLD_-_BOTHO_AS_AN_INGRIDINET_OF_ELECTIONS> (1 August 2007).
- Daily News*, 'Deep concern about Naledi delinquency', 29 September 1975, p. 1.

- Daily News*, 'Gaborone bus ranks eyesore', 4 April 2006 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20060404&I=Gaborone_bus_ranks_eyesore> (4 April 2006).
- Daily News*, 'Gaborone to expand into Kweneng', 15 August 2006 <<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20060815>> (15 August 2006).
- Daily News*, 'Intelligence and security bill vital', 14 December 2006 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20061214&I=Intelligence_and_Security_Bill_vital> (14 December 2006).
- Daily News*, 'Intelligence bill loose, vague Mabiletsa', 14 December 2006 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20061214&I=Intelligence_bill_loose_vague_Mabiletsa> (14 December 2006).
- Daily News*, 'Naledi now to be made a permanent settlement', 23 April 1976, p. 2.
- Daily News*, 'National unity, respect vital', 2 February 2007 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20070202&i=National_unity_respect_vital> (2 February 2007).
- Daily News*, 'Riverwalk complex to house Pick 'n Pay', 4 May 2001 <<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20010504>> (2 November 2006).
- Daily News*, 'Squatters haunt Phakalane Estates', 16 November 2005 <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20051116&i=Squatters_haunt_Phakalane_Estates> (2 October 2006).
- Dingake, Michael, 'The bill smells more politics than security', *Mmegi*, 14 November 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Tuesday14/4255980721431.html>> (14 November 2006).
- Dithato, Donny, 'Gaborone Cllrs condemn anti-immunisation foreigners', *Mmegi*, 26 May 2004.
- The Economist*, 'Diamond country', **346**, 4 April 1998, pp. 53-54.
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'The 'ghetto' that is Somerset East', *Mmegi*, 9 July 2004, p. 6.
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'Illegal immigrants campaign launched', *Mmegi*, 26 October 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/October/Thursday26/997635794793.html>> (26 October 2006).
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'The new meaning of window-shopping', *Mmegi*, 13 July 2004, p. 5.
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'Zim cattle rustlers terrorise Bobirwa residents', *Mmegi*, 22 November 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Wednesday22/2479209671554.html>> (22 November 2006).
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'Zim cattle spread FMD in Botswana', *Mmegi*, 19 May 2004, p. 2.

- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'Zim criminals give police tough time', *Mmegi*, 7 April 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Wednesday7/238845680850.html>> (24 January 2007).
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'Zim rustlers threaten Botswana cattle industry', *Mmegi*, 13 April 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Tuesday13/2090817271129.html>> (27 January 2007).
- Gabathuse, Ryder, 'Zimbabweans terrorise Babirwa?', *Mmegi*, 6 June 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/June/Tuesday6/746019155871.html>> (6 June 2006).
- Gabotlale, Bester, 'Bus rank business counts losses after 'war'', *Mmegi*, 6 May 2004, p. 9
- Gaothlobogwe, Monkagedi, 'Brick association wants squatters out', *Mmegi*, 9 March 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/March/Thursday9/26647110169>> (9 March 2006).
- Grant, Sandy, 'Gaborone: symbol of independence', *Botswana Magazine*, **1**, 2 (no date), pp. 6-15.
- Khama, Seretse and Arthur Douglas, 'Two views on race relations', *Kutlwano*, **1**, 9 (September 1962), pp. 16-17.
- Konopo, Joel, 'AG admits error in Good deportation', *Mmegi*, 12 July 2005
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/July/Tuesday12/295147307293.html>> (25 January 2007).
- Kutlwano*, 'From Mafeking to Gaborone', **4**, 3 (March 1965), p. 2.
- Kutlwano*, 'Old Naledi: a Setswana village grappling with urban problems', **38**, 3 (March 2000), pp. 12-13.
- Kutlwano*, 'The word to remember is progress', **4**, 3 (March 1965), p. 1.
- Leagajang, Batlhalefi, 'Botswana's Roots are Embedded in Land', *Botswana Gazette*, 23 June 2004, p. 3.
- Lee, Douglas B., 'Okavango Delta: old Africa's last refuge', *National Geographic*, **178**, 6 (December 1990), pp. 38-69.
- Legodimo, Chippa, 'Kanye residents warned against harbouring illegal immigrants', *Mmegi Monitor*, 15 March 2004, p. 4.
- Legodimo, Chippa, 'KDC boss wants to change citizenship laws', *Mmegi*, 10 March 2004, p. 4.
- Letsididi, Bashi, 'Corry—wrong caste, right script', *The Botswana Guardian*, 19 March 2004.
- Mabiletsa, Lesego, 'CKGR row pits uncle against nephew', *The Botswana Guardian*, 19 March 2004.

Maleke, Lerato, 'Merafhe concerned about Zim allegations', *Mmegi*, 31 March 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/March/Wednesday31/4493554961732.html>> (1 February 2007).

Mmegi, 16 April 2004, Advertising Insert, p. 2.

Mmegi, 16 April 2004, Advertising Insert, p. 3.

Mmegi, 23 April 2004, Style Guide, p. 1.

Mmegi, 'Gaborone West police station—a disgrace', 29 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Wednesday29/5836117951446.html>> (29 November 2006).

Mmegi, 'Government must ensure equality in land question,' 27 September 2005
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2005/September/Tuesday27/122392864409.html>> (27 September 2005).

Mmegi, 'Is this xenophobic behaviour?', 13 May 2004, p. 10.

Mmegi, 'Learn from the Lesetedi Commission', 29 June 2004, p. 9.

Mmegi, 'The neighbourly-burden that is Zimbabwe', 26 October 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/October/Thursday26/9976358061774.html>> (26 October 2006).

Mmegi, 'Police ill-equipped to win war on crime', 19 May 2004, p. 7.

Mmegi, 'This xenophobic behavior must stop', 5 May 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/May/Wednesday5/10680060701279.html>> (24 January 2006).

Mmegi, 'UNDP crime report shocking', 28 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Tuesday28/5836116621297.html>> (28 November 2006).

Mmegi, 'We should act now', 24 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday24/58361142723>> (24 November 2006).

Mmegi, 'What's good for them is also good for us', 6 February 2007
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2007/February/Tuesday6/157.php>> (6 February 2007).

Mmegi Monitor, 'There is so much intrigue', 11 July 2005, p. 16.

Modikwa, Onalenna, 'Anti-illegal immigrant operation starts', *Mmegi*, 6 July 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/July/Thursday6/32695696961777.html>> (6 July 2006).

- Mohr, Charles, 'Botswana offers a promising contrast in Africa', *New York Times*, 7 June 1970, p. 2.
- Molabe, Dichaba, 'Government could brush communications 101 on CKGR', *Mmegi*, 19 March 2004, p. 10.
- Mooketsi, Lekopanye, 'Police nab food vendors in G-West blitz', *Mmegi*, 8 December 2006 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/December/Friday8/733419847722.html>> (8 December 2006).
- Moore, Comrade, 'Alternatives to the 'yellow monster'', *Mmegi*, 6 April 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Tuesday6/238845590352.html>> (15 June 2007).
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'A life that could have been', *Mmegi*, 6 July 2004, p. 4.
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'In the heart of the hood, pt. 1', *Mmegi*, 15 June 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/June/Tuesday15/1009491627870.html>> (2 June 2007).
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'In the heart of the hood, pt. 2', *Mmegi*, 16 June 2004, p. 6.
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'In the heart of the hood, pt. 3', *Mmegi*, 17 June 2004, pp. 4-5.
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'In the heart of the hood, pt. 4', *Mmegi*, 18 June 2004, pp. 9-10.
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'Of football passions', *Mmegi*, 23 June 2004, p. 6.
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'Old Naledi spawns first kraal of city breed', *Mmegi*, 6 January 2006 <<http://mmegi.bw/2006/January/Friday6/819492207632.html>> (30 July 2006).
- Motlogelwa, Tshireletso, 'Where the streets have no names', *Mmegi*, 22 October 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday22/365689801957.html>> (1 June 2007).
- Nkepe, Shirley, 'Human rights campaigners support children in anti-Polio drive', *Mmegi*, 27 May 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/May/Thursday27/677378399130.html>> (26 January 2007).
- Nkepe, Shirley, 'The human side of demolitions', *Mmegi*, 30 March 2004, p. 6.
- New York Times*, 'A new life begins in Bechuanaland: Protectorate transforming hamlet into capital', 25 January 1965, p. 80.
- Nkala, Gideon, 'BDP to dole out 57 campaign cars,' *Mmegi*, 19 April 2004 <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Monday19/943789545805.html>> (15 February 2008).
- Nkala, Gideon, 'Corry finds no lions in the den', *Mmegi*, 18 March 2004, p. 1.

- Nkala, Gideon, 'Intelligence Big Brother is coming', *Mmegi*, 7 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Tuesday7/437967177180.html>> (7 November 2006).
- Nkala, Gideon, 'Most Batswana live on P12 a day', *Mmegi*, 24 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday24/583611393977.html>> (24 November 2006).
- Nkala, Gideon and Tuduetso Setsiba, 'Mogae summons opposition leaders', *Mmegi*, 4 August 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/August/Friday4/1005123522994.html>> (4 August 2006).
- Phala, Morongwa, 'Out of the shadows', *Mmegi*, 14 September 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/September/Monday13/7462308801906.html>> (2 June 2007).
- Philips, Barnaby, 'I'm beautiful and HIV-positive', *BBC News Online*, 3 March 2005
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4311807.stm>> (27 July 2006).
- Piet, Bame, 'Crime goes down in Naledi', *Mmegi Monitor*, 7 June 2004, p. 12.
- Piet, Bame, 'I was forced to have sex—witness', *Mmegi*, 13 November 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Monday13/42559793521.html>> (13 November 2006).
- Piet, Bame, 'Intelligence bill meant to avoid security pitfalls—Skelemani', *Mmegi*, 12 December 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/December/Tuesday12/7334201411167.html>> (12 December 2006).
- Piet, Bame, 'Mogae wants modern chiefs', *Mmegi*, 2 February 2007
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2007/February/Friday2/83.php>> (2 February 2007).
- Rantao, Paul, 'Blue print to upgrade Naledi squalid status', *Kutlwano*, **10**, 1976, pp. 8-11.
- Saleshando, Dumelang, 'What is the worth of our independence?', *Mmegi*, 8 May 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/May/Monday8/274371337117.html>> (8 May 2006).
- Seboni, Barolong, 'Long road to independence', *Mmegi*, 15 October 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday15/953987629926.html>> (1 August 2007).
- Seboni, Barolong, 'Motherless city fathers', *Mmegi*, 8 October 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday8/761976391420.html>> (1 August 2007).
- Sereetsi, Tomeletso, 'F/town police make appeal on rising crime', *Mmegi*, 14 July 2004, p. 5.
- Sereetsi, Tomeletso, 'The filth of Francistown', *Mmegi*, 7 July 2004, p. 5.

- Sereetsi, Tomeletso, 'Location of frustrated dreams', *Mmegi*, 22 October 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Friday22/365689781565.html>> (28 May 2007).
- Setsida, Tuduetso, 'Consult us on land—Ledumadumane residents', *Mmegi*, 14 August 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/August/Monday14/62510827634.html>> (14 August 2006).
- Setsiba, Tuduetso, 'Good was terrible—Mogae', *Mmegi*, 26 June 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/June/Monday26/10650409261.html>> (26 June 2006).
- Setsiba, Tuduetso, 'Opposition parties claim ignorance on CKGR', *Mmegi*, 10 August 2006
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/August/Thursday10/4232063021144.html>> (10 August 2006).
- Siphambili, Meekael M., 'Alarm as Serowe crime wave soars', *Mmegi*, 10 March 2004, p. 6.
- Siphambili, Meekael M., 'Zim prostitutes: blessing for hot-blooded men in Botswana', *Mmegi*, 15 April 2004, p. 6.
- Sunday Standard*, 'Botswana, South Africa deport 140,000 Zimbabweans in 2006, police', 29 January 2007 <<http://sundaystandard.info/print.php?NewsID=929>> (29 January 2007).
- Sunday Standard*, 'Neighbours from Hell', 30 October 2006
<<http://sundaystandard.info/print.php?NewsID=593>> (30 October 2006).
- Tutwane, Letshwiti, 'BNF supports Basarwa relocation—Molefabangwe', *Mmegi*, 16 April 2004
<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/April/Friday16/9437894371144.html>> (7 November 2006).
- 'Wish you were here?', *BBC News Online*, 26 April 2005
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4464293.stm> (27 July 2006).

REFERENCE LIST OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL
PUBLICATIONS AND ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- Atkinson, G. S. L., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'District Commissioner's Notice, 7 July 1961' (Collected Files, 'Crown Lands, Township; from the District Commissioner of Gaborones, 1956-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number DCG. 15/13, Gaborone, 1961).
- Bailey, J. T. A., Republic of Botswana, 'Memo from J. T. A. Bailey, Commissioner of Police, 19 December 1966' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1966).
- Bailey, J. T. A., Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from Commissioner of Police to the Permanent Secretaries of Home Affairs, Local Government and Lands, Labour and Social Services, and the Town Clerk, 10 January 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Alienation of Land: Question of Preventing Sale of Land to Natives in the Gaborones Block, 1936-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.435/4, Gaborone, 1936-1938).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Beer Halls: Production and Distribution of Local Beer, December 1963-September 1964', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.399/16, Gaborone, 1963-1964).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters—Headquarters Development Sub-Committee Minutes, June 1962-April 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/10, Gaborone, 1962-1963).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: High Density (or low cost) Housing, January-June 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: Town Plan, November 1962-April 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaborones New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963-1964).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Township Authority: Affairs, January 1965-February 1966', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Unit Number MLGL 5, Box Number 24, Gaborone, 1965-1966).

- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaberones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, 1934-1938).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaberones, 1947-1960', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Town Planning, Gaberones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.74/1, Gaborone, 1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaberones Village, December 1960-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/2, Gaborone, 1960-1963).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Bechuanaland Protectorate, Statute Law, Vol. XLVIII* (Mafeking Mail, Mafeking, 1964).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaberones Township Report' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *High Commissioner's Proclamations and more Important Government Notices, from 1st January to 31st December 1934* (Mafeking, 1935).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Housing for the Lower Paid Inhabitants of the New Town of Gaberones', (Collected Files, 'Housing African non-Governmental Employees: Gaberones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Housing Low Income Group Workers—Extract from the Minutes of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Council Meeting held in December 1961' (Collected Files, 'Housing African Non-Government Employees: Gaberones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly: Official Report (Hansard 14): First Session, Second Meeting: Sittings from 5th to 14th July 1965* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 824, Gaborone, 1965).

- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly Official Report (Hansard 15): First Session, Third Meeting, Sittings from 6th to 14th December 1965* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 826, Gaborone, 1965).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Assembly Official Report (Hansard 17): First Session, Fifth Meeting, Sittings from 14th to 21st March 1966* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 827, Gaborone, 1966),
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 1): Debates of the First Meeting of the First Session of the First Legislative Council: Sittings from 20th and 21st June, and 26th June-3rd July 1961* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 811, Gaborone, 1961).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 2): Debates of the Second Meeting of the First Session of the First Legislative Council: Sittings from 26th and 27th September, 1961* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number 328.6883 NAT, Gaborone, 1961).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 9): Third Session, First Meeting: Sittings from 18th to 26th November 1963* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 819, Gaborone, 1963).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, *Legislative Council Official Report (Hansard 12): Fourth Session, Second Meeting: Sittings from 16th to 19th November, 1964* (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 822, Gaborone, 1964).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Letter to Mrs. E. M. Norman of the Botswana Red Cross Society' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Meeting about Shanty Towns Naledi and Ditakana, 26 November 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Memorandum for Discussion on 6 July: Low Cost Housing, Gaborones 1962' (Collected Files, 'Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes from a Meeting with the G.S. [Government Secretary], 3 May 1956' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaborones, 1947-1960', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of a Meeting Held in the Courtroom, Gaborones on 20th October 1958, on the subject of the proposed plan for Gaborones Township' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaborones, 1947-1960', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Racial Discrimination Select Committee, 19 February 1963-23 December 1964' (Collected Files, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.591/1, Gaborone).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Advise on Medical Administration in [the] Bechuanaland Protectorate' (Collected Files, 'Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, no date).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from Acting Director of Public Works to the Government Secretary, 22 November 1962' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters Town Plan, November 1962-April 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from Acting Director of Public Works to Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, 20 February 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: Town Plan', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/8, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the D.C. at Gaborones to the Administrative Secretary at Mafeking 17 December 1963' (Collected Files, 'Beer Halls: Production and Distribution of Local Beer, December 1963-September 1964', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.399/16, Gaborone, 1963-1964).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from Director of Public Works to the Member for Local Government, Social Services and Commerce, 24 November 1961' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Summary of Discussions in Government Secretary's Office, 15 May 1962' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: Headquarters Development Committee Minutes, 1961-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/9, Gaborone, 1962).

Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Visit to Johannesburg—Messrs. Matthews and Davies, 18th-21st June 1962' (Collected Files, 'Housing African Non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.589/9, Gaborone, 1962).

- Bent, R.A.R., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'A Minute from R.A.R. Bent, Member of Natural Resources and Industries Department to the Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Dated April 16, 1962' (Collected Files, 'Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Botswana Democratic Party, 'Raising a Nation: Botswana Democratic Party: 1962-2002: Commemorative Brochure' (Front Page Publications, Gaborone, 2002).
- Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute, "Ethics: the concept of Botho", *Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute Quarterly*, **1**, 1 (2003), p. 3.
- Cardross-Grant, P., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Squatters in Gaborones, 11 March 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Commissioner of Police, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Commissioner of Police to the P.S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 26 August 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Commissioner of Police, Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from Commissioner of Police, Gaborones to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, P. S. Ministry of Labour and Social Services, P. S. Ministry of Local Government, Immigration Control Officer, 6 December 1966' (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).
- Department of Agriculture, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Report from the Department of Agriculture to be used for preparation of High Commissioner's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly, 29 June 1962' (Collected Files, 'Legislative Council Meetings: General Correspondence, 'State of the Nation' Speech, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.550/4, Gaborone, 1962).
- Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Africa, Proposed New Capital City: A Town Planning Architectural and Sociological Study of the Proposal for the Guidance of the Professional Development Team and the Architectural Association School of Tropical Architecture, Bedford Square, London' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1100, Mafikeng, South Africa, 1962).
- Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaborones Capital Project: Draft Town Plan Report' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1098, Mafikeng, 1962).

- Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaberones Landscaping' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).
- Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing—Bechuanaland Protectorate, Paper No. 2, 5 April 1962' (Collected Files Entitled, 'Housing African Non-Government Employees: Gaberones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing—Bechuanaland Protectorate, Paper No. 2, 4 May 1962' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).
- Department of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Town Planning Layout—Gaberones' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaberones Village, December 1960-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/2, Gaborone, no date).
- Department of Town and Regional Planning, Swedeplan, Republic of Botswana, 'Physical Planning Handbook for Botswana' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1997).
- Director of Medical Services, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Memo on Gastro-Enteritis—Gaberones, 13 October 1964' (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaberones New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).
- Director of Medical Services, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram to the Member for Tribal Affairs and Social Services, 21 October 1964' (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaberones New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).
- Director of Public Works, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing: Bechuanaland Protectorate: An Appreciation by the Director of Public Works, Paper No. 1, 22 My 1962' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaberones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1962).
- District Commissioner of Gaberones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Crown Lands, Township: from the District Commissioner of Gaberones, 1956-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number DCG. 15/13, Gaborone, 1956-1963).
- District Commissioner of Gaberones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Dispatch to the Principal Health Officer in Mafeking, 22 August 1936' (Collected Files, 'Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, 1936).

- District Commissioner Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from D.C. at Gaborones to Administrative Secretary at Mafeking, 17 December 1963' (Collected Files, 'Beer Halls: Production and Distribution of Local Beer, December 1963-September 1964', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.399/16, Gaborone, 1963).
- District Commissioner Gaborones, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from District Commissioner of Gaborones (D.A.T. Atkins) to Government Secretary at Mafeking, 9 May 1960' (Collected Files, 'Crown Lands, Township: from the District Commissioner of Gaborones, 1956-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number DCG. 15/13, Gaborone, 1960).
- Egner, E. B., 'Report on a Preliminary Survey of the Bontleng Self-Help Housing Scheme, Gaborone, 28 July 1971' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 10,672, Gaborone, 1971).
- European Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Extract from Minutes of [the] 21st Session of the European Advisory Council, 19-23 October 1936' (Collected Files, 'Alienation of Land: Question of Preventing Sale of Land to Natives in the Gaborones Block, 1936-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.435/4, Gaborone, 1936).
- European Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Extract of Minutes of the European Advisory Council, 22 August 1938' (Collected Files, 'Alienation of Land: Question of Preventing Sale of Land to Natives in the Gaborones Block, 1936-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.435/4, Gaborone, 1938).
- Fuller, Charles Edward, 'A Study of the Squatter Population in Gaborones: Undertaken for the Town Council of Gaborones July-August 1967' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 5316, Gaborone, 1967),
- Gaborones Town Council, Republic of Botswana, 'A Housing Problem at Gaborones, Botswana—and a Remedy, 12 December 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).
- Gaborones Township Executive Officer, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from Township Executive Officer, Gaborones to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, 11 March 1965' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Township Authority: Affairs, January 1965-February 1966', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Unit Number MLGL 5, Box Number 24, Gaborone, 1965).
- Gaborone City Council, 'Record of the Proceedings of the Workshop Held with the Gaborone City Council on Old Naledi Upgrading Project, 24 April 2001' (Gaborone City Council, Gaborone, 2001).

- Gaborone Town Council, Republic of Botswana, (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1966-1968).
- GHK International, 'Gaborone Urban Poverty and Housing Needs Assessment: Final Report for the Gaborone City Council' (GHK International, Gaborone, 1999).
- Government Secretary, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Government Secretary to: Director of Public Works, Director of Medical Services, Divisional Commissioners North and South, DC's of Gaborones, Francistown, Lobatsi, Ghanzi, 24 January 1952' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning Gaborones, 1947-1960', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/2/1 (Folder 1 of 2), Gaborone, 1947-1960).
- Haas Consult, 'Old Naledi: Infrastructure Planning and Engineering Study: Feasibility Report: Executive Summary and Recommendation' (Haas Consult, Tlokwen, Botswana, 2002).
- Hansford, P., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Medical Officer of Health (Dr. P. Hansford) to the Member for Townships, Works and Communications, 14 March 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: High Density (or Low Cost) Housing, First Half of 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).
- Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: Headquarters Development Committee Minutes, 1961-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/9, Gaborone, 1961-1963).
- Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee held at Lobatsi, Tuesday 28 May 1963 at 9:30 am' (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaborones New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1963).
- Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the Headquarters Development Committee at Gaborones, 13 June 1962' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: Headquarters Development Committee Minutes, 1961-1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/9, Gaborone, 1961-1963).
- Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Headquarters Development Committee, Friday 14 December 1962' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).
- Headquarters Development Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Report of a meeting held at Lobatsi on Tuesday 10th April 1962' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961-1962).

Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the Headquarters Sub-Committee, 17 April 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaberones Headquarters—Headquarters Development Sub-Committee Minutes, June 1962-April 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/10, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

Headquarters Development Sub-Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Headquarters Development Committee, 9 July 1962' (Collected Files, 'Gaberones Headquarters—Headquarters Development Sub-Committee Minutes, June 1962-April 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/10, Gaborone, 1962-1963).

Immigration Control Officer, Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from Immigration Control Officer to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, P. S. Ministry of Labour and Social Services, P. S. Ministry of Local Government, Commissioner of Police, 2 December 1966' (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1966).

Khama, Sir Seretse, Dr. Q. K. J. Masire, and A. M. Dambe, 'Development in Botswana: Speeches by Sir Seretse Khama, Dr. Q. K. J. Masire and Minister of Agriculture Mr. A. M. Dambe' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 2121, Gaborone, no date).

Large, W. T. W., Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from the Town Clerk [at] Gaberones to All District Councils, Town Council [at] Francistown, Town Council [at] Lobatsi, 16 April 1968' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1968).

Large, W. T. W., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Town Clerk, Gaberones to P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, 10 January 1966' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).

Large, W. T. W., Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram from Town Clerk, Gaberones to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Office of the President, Ministry of Home Affairs, 21 June 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

Large, W. T. W., Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram to P. S. Ministry of Local Government and Lands, P. S. Ministry of Home Affairs, Commissioner of Police, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Water Affairs, 6 January 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).

- Large, W. T. W., Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, 2 November 1966' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1968).
- Larsson, Anita, 'Naledi, Gaborone District Plan Proposal, 12 March 1976' (Gaborone Town Council, Gaborone, 1976).
- Larsson, Anita, 'Naledi Squatter Area in Gaborone: First Report to the Steering Committee, 18 November 1975' (Gaborone Town Council, Gaborone, 1975).
- Larsson, Anita, 'Survey and Interviews in Naledi, Gaborone, December 1975' (Gaborone Town Council, Gaborone, 1975).
- Legislative Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Legislative Council Meetings: General Correspondence, 'State of the Nation' Speech, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.550/4, Gaborone, 1962).
- Masire, Quett Ketumile Joni, 'Speech by the Honorable Q.K.J. Masire, Vice-President of Botswana, to Francistown Residents on the 17th May, 1971' (Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 6785, Gaborone, 1971).
- Masire, Q. K. J., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Security—Disturbances Gaborone Township, 9 November 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Mannathoko, R., Republic of Botswana, 'Letter from the Botswana High Commissioner in Lusaka, Zambia, R. Mannathoko to Archie Mogwe, Secretary for External Affairs, 17 January 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).
- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'National Development Plan 1973-1978: Part I: Policies and Objectives' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 2085, Gaborone, 1973).
- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'National Development Plan 1976-1981' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1977).
- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'National Development Plan 7: 1991-1997' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1991).
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Gaborone City Council, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'Gaborone City Development Plan (1997-2021)' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2001).

- Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'Broadhurst: Stage Two: Volume 1' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1975).
- Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, 'Francistown: First Stage Housing' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 4501, Gaborone, 1971).
- Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, 'Francistown: Planning Proposals' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 4500, Gaborone, 1970).
- Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, Department of Town and Regional Planning, Republic of Botswana, 'Development Control Code, 1995' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1995).
- Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, Republic of Botswana, 'Review of the National Policy on Housing' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1997).
- Ministry of Local Government, Social Welfare Division, Republic of Botswana, 'Revised National Policy on Destitute Persons' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2002).
- Murray-Hudson, Hugh, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Slum Conditions—Gaberones, 27 October 1962' (Collected Files Entitled, 'Gaberones New Town, General Correspondence, 12 August 1963-10 October 1964', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series, Secretariat, Box Number S2, Unit Number S2/7, Gaborone, 1962).
- Native Advisory Council, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Minutes of the 18th Session of the Native Advisory Council, 4-6 March 1937' (Collected Files, 'Question of Application of Sanitary Scheme to all Native Townships and Villages, 1934-1938', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.404/1, Gaborone, 1937).
- Norman, E. M., 'Letter to the Minister of Local Government, 20 May 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Oxfam, 'Global military spending set to top Cold War high as conflict causes record hunger', 22 September 2006
<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/press/releases/un_gen_ass220906.htm?searchterm=botswana+military> (2 February 2007).
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, Republic of Botswana, 'Savingram to District Commissioners of Mochudi, Molepolole, and Gaberones, 13 January 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).

- Racial Discrimination Select Committee, Bechuanaland Protectorate, (Collected Files, 'Racial Discrimination Select Committee, 19 February 1963-23 December 1964', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.591/1, Gaborone, 1963-1964).
- Renew, Ray, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Gaberones Township Layout—Scheme B: Survey Branch Submission, 18 May 1962' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning, Gaberones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.74/1, Gaborone, 1962).
- Renew, Ray, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Savingram from the Surveyor-General at Mafeking to the Town Clerk at Gaberones, Regarding Control of Peri-Urban Development at Gaberones, 6 October 1965' (Collected Files, 'Gaberones Township Authority: Affairs, January 1965-February 1966', Botswana National Archives, Archival Series Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Unit Number MLGL 5, Box Number 24, Gaborone, 1965).
- Republic of Botswana, (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967-1968).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Annual Budget Speech 2006' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2006).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Community Relations in Botswana, with Special Reference to Francistown: Statement Delivered to the National Assembly by his Honour the Vice-President Dr. Masire on Monday 13th of September 1971' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1971).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Discussions Between Representatives of the Botswana and South African Governments on Matters Relating to the Documentation and Movement of Botswana Citizens Between South Africa and Botswana and Other Incidental Matters, 6 March 1967' (Collected Files, 'Squatter Problem, Naledi, 1967-1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number, Division C, HA. 21/19, Volume 1, Gaborone, 1967).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Gaborone Planning Proposals' (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 5340, Gaborone, 1971).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday, 11 January 1967 at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Gaberones, to Discuss the Squatters at Naledi' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1967).
- Republic of Botswana, *National Assembly Official Report (Hansard 38): Second Session (Second Parliament) Fourth Meeting: Sittings from 13th to 22nd September, 1971* (The Government Printer, Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number BNB 1903, Gaborone, 1971).

- Republic of Botswana, *National Assembly: Official Report (Hansard 54): First Meeting of the Second Session of the Third Parliament, Sittings from 24th November to 5th December, 1975* (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1975).
- Republic of Botswana, 'National Development Plan, 1968-1973' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1968).
- Republic of Botswana, 'National Development Plan 9: Part I—Policies and Objectives' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2002)
<<http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001172/index.php>> (20 August 2007).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Land Allocations in Gaborone' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 2004).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Report of the Presidential Commission on Housing Policy in Botswana' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1981).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1966).
- Republic of Botswana, 'Vision 2016: A Framework for a Long-Term Vision for Botswana' (The Government Printer, Gaborone, 1997)
<http://www.vision2016.co.bw/html/publications_publications.shtm> (10 April 2006).
- Republic of Botswana, Central Statistics Office, *2001 Population and Housing Census*, 'Table 1.6 'Distribution of Population in Urban Settlements: 1971-2001 Censuses'
<<http://www.cso.gov.bw>> (1 August 2006).
- Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Low Cost Housing at Gaborones, 5 April 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaborones Headquarters: High Density (or Low Cost) Housing', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).
- Secretary Townships, Works, and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Note by Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications on Housing in Gaborones and the Protectorate in General, 22 May 1962' (Collected Files, 'Housing African non-Government Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Secretary for Townships, Works and Communications, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Note on Housing Loan Scheme' (Collected Files, 'Housing African non-Governmental Employees: Gaborones New Township, 1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 589/9, Gaborone, 1962).
- Taylor, A. H., 'Aided Self-Help Housing, December 1961' (Collected Files, 'Town Planning: Gaborones: New Township, 1961-1962', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.73/3/1-2, Gaborone, 1961).

- UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 'Botswana General Profile'
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/GEN/countryProfile_en.aspx?code=720>
(February 8, 2008).
- United Nations Development Program, *Botswana Human Development Report 2005: Harnessing science and technology for human development* (UNDP, Gaborone, 2005).
- United Nations Development Programme Botswana, Summary of Anti-Poverty Projects in Botswana <<http://www.unbotswana.org/bw/undp/poverty.html>> (11 August 2006).
- Watts, Kenneth, 'Letter from Kenneth Watts to Ray Renew of the Department of Public Works in Mafeking, 9 April 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaberones Headquarters: High Density (or low cost) Housing, January-June 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).
- Watts, Kenneth, 'The Planning of Gaberones, the New Capital for Bechuanaland: Report of an Advisory Visit: January 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaberones Headquarters: Town Plan', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S. 592/8, Gaborone, 1963).
- Williams, M. R. B., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Memo from P.S. Local Government to P.S. Ministry of Labour and Social Services, 18 June 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Williams, M. R. B., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Squatters within the Gaberones Township, 12 March 1965' (Collected Files, 'Squatters: Gaborone Town Council, 10 August 1966-2 May 1968', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number MLGL 1 Box 27—Ministry of Local Government and Land Audit Department, Gaborone, 1965).
- Windsor, K. J., Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'Note on High Density Housing, 26 March 1963' (Collected Files, 'Gaberones Headquarters: High Density (or low cost) Housing, January-June 1963', Botswana National Archives, File Reference Number S.592/11, Gaborone, 1963).
- World Bank Group, *World Development Indicators*
<<http://devdata.worldbank.org/wdi2006/contents/cover.htm>> (11 August 2006).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Stephen D. Marr was born in Rochester, Michigan in 1976. He graduated from Rochester High School in 1995 and the University of Notre Dame in 1999. He began his studies at the University of Florida beginning in August 1999 and finished in 2008 after earning his PhD. Stephen currently teaches political science at Haverford College in Haverford, PA.