Reporting on home: How journalists from rural Botswana experience covering rural development while working at the *Botswana Daily News*.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates how journalists working for state media in Botswana experience reporting on development in rural communities. It is observed that many of these journalists are members of the rural communities they report on and therefore have personal knowledge of them. Furthermore, it describes how even though Botswana is often praised for its developmental achievements, the country continues to be characterized by social inequality. The study then articulates a theoretical framework designed to engage with the normative guidelines that inform journalistic practice within the Botswana media landscape. It draws, for this purpose, on normative theories of the press. It is concluded that the Botswana media landscape is representative of an authoritarian, polarised pluralised media system in which journalists work under strict control of the state. The empirical component of the study draws on this framework by conducting life history interviews of journalists working at the *Botswana Daily News*. It examines what such journalists know from personal experience about development from rural Botswana and how such knowledge impacts on their engagement with the processes of reporting for the paper. It is concluded that journalists working for this paper have a deep commitment to representing the interests of rural communities. However, they remain constrained in their ability to act on this commitment, in context of the guidelines for reporting that frame their institutional context.

Key words: Botswana, Rural development, Journalism, Normative Theories of the Press, Botswana Daily News, State media, Media Systems, Media Landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

State media in Southern African environments generally describe themselves as contributing to development processes, with a particular focus on rural development (MISA, 2000:33-38). This tendency has also been observed in Botswana, where it is noted that the state media define their own purpose in terms of the circulation of development messages targeting marginalised communities (Mosanako, 2016:315). However, critics have noted that the approach adopted to the coverage of development issues by such media tends to marginalise the perspectives of rural communities. The focus is primarily on the dissemination of information about government projects and on foregrounding statements made by officials. In this process, the voices of members of rural communities become lost and the strategies and resources that exist within such communities for facilitating development remain unacknowledged (Rooney, 2013:12-16).

Within the context of Botswana, the assumption that state media serves primarily as a vehicle for disseminating official information about development projects is indeed embedded in state policy. The National Development Policy (NDP) states that the role of state-owned media is to raise public awareness about the governments' national development policies and objectives (Mosanako, 2016:317-318). The Hughes Report states that government owned media should communicate government policies, decisions and actions as a public relations exercise aimed at ensuring public support of the government of the day (Hughes, 1968). Critics have argued that, for these reasons, the state media in Botswana generally operates as government propaganda (Rooney, 2018:17; Tamado, 2005; Tutwane, 2004:144).

My study focuses on the way journalists working for state media in Botswana under these conditions experience reporting on development in rural environments. In my own observation, many of these journalists are members of the rural communities that they report on and therefore have personal knowledge of these social spaces. I set out to expand my understanding of the way such journalists experience working within the conventions of state media as described by the critics referred to above. I aimed to gain insight into how they engage with the emphasis on dissemination of official information and the limitations that this place on the foregrounding of the experiences of rural communities.

My focus is on journalists working for the *Botswana Daily News*. This newspaper is a key example of state-owned media in Botswana because of the degree of influence it holds within Botswana society. It is the only newspaper published daily and is readily available

across the country, also in rural areas, free of charge (African Media Barometer, 2014:24; Lesitaokana & Akpabio, 2014:218; Rooney, 2012). It therefore provides me with a relevant context in which to examine how Botswana journalists from rural areas represent development issues in their home environments.

My study is informed by the following research question: How do journalists working at the *Botswana Daily News* experience reporting on rural development in Botswana? In responding to this question, I investigate what such journalists know from personal observation about development in rural Botswana and how such knowledge impacts on their engagement with the processes of reporting for this paper.

Chapter One sets out the contextual terms of reference for this study. It focuses on the historical context of Botswana, paying attention to issues of relevance to rural communities in this country. It also discusses the media landscape of Botswana and the role that the state media play in reporting on rural development. Chapter Two maps out a theoretical framework designed to engage with these contextual issues. Chapter Three describes the research design of the empirical component of this study. It explains each of the decisions that were made in this design and then provides an evaluative discussion of the implementation of this plan. Chapter Four and Five present findings generated from the field and give a detailed analysis of these findings.

CHAPTER ONE - CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

Introduction

As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, the purpose of this study is to investigate how journalists from rural Botswana who work for the *Botswana Daily News* experience reporting on rural development in this country. This chapter establishes contextual terms of reference for such a study. Section One deals with the history of development in post independent Botswana, with the aim of identifying issues relating to rural development that are of relevance to the contemporary context. Section Two describes the history of the Botswana media landscape, with a particular focus on how this history has come to shape the relationship between media and the state. It also describes how the *Botswana Daily News* is located within this landscape. The conclusion considers the implications of the chapter as a whole for questions that should be kept in mind, in this dissertation, regarding the way in which this newspaper reports on rural development in Botswana.

1. Rural development in Botswana

Botswana, known until independence from Great Britain in 1966 as Bechuanaland, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa with borders to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. It covers an area of more than 600,000 km² and the population at the time of completion of this dissertation was estimated at just over 2.3 million (Rooney, 2018).

In academic literature, Botswana is generally praised for its developmental achievements. Commentators propose that such success can be observed in patterns of both economic growth and democratisation. The country is described as an "African success story" (Acemoglu, Johnson & Robinson, 2001), "Africa's haven of peace and harmony" (Mulinge, 2008), and "Africa's democratic success" (Sebudubudu & Molutsi, 2008). The World Bank (2016) also reports that over the past half-century, "political stability, good governance and prudent economic and natural resource management" has helped to "…secure robust economic growth" in this country (Rooney, 2018:16).

Commentators note that a key factor in the achievement of these successes has been the discovery of diamonds in the early 1970's. Before this time, Botswana was in fact one of the poorest countries in Africa (Mosanako, 2014). Now, on the strength of resources derived from mining, the government was able to change this situation around, transforming Botswana into a middle-income economy. This was achieved through investment in infrastructure such as road networks, potable water supplies and health services. Investment in education also rose

dramatically so that expenditure in this domain is now among the highest in the world at around 9 percent of GDP. This has made possible the provision of nearly universally free primary education (Rooney, 2018). As a result of such factors poverty has declined, particularly over the last three decades. A World Bank report notes that between 2002 and 2010 the percentage of people living in poverty fell from 30.6% to 19.4%, resulting in 180 000 people being lifted from poverty, 87% of them in rural areas. The report also notes that this improvement in quality of life is due to increases in employment opportunities and in agriculture-related income (World Bank, 2016).

Social commentators have argued that these achievements were made possible by the particularities of the system of governance that was put in place in Botswana at the time of independence. On one hand, this system incorporates institutions of leadership associated with modern democratic states. Botswana is a parliamentary republic with a president who is head of state and government and who has the power to appoint a cabinet. At the same time, the new structures of governance allow for the continuation of the traditional leadership systems that existed in Botswana during colonial rule (Rooney, 2018:7). Before independence, Botswana society had been structured around a hierarchy of traditional chieftainships. Afterwards, this hierarchy was incorporated into governance structures, including a House of Chiefs or Ntlo ya Dikgosi (Tsie, 1996). This is an advisory body that serves the National Assembly and it is consulted on issues such as the powers of chiefs, customary courts, customary law, tribal property and constitutional amendments (Rooney, 2018). In this way, a mixed legal system has been established which incorporates both civil law and customary law (Rooney, 2018).

It is also of relevance that, before independence, Botswana existed as a protectorate of the British Empire. This meant that although it was a dependent territory of the empire it was granted its own autonomous governing structures. In this context there had been little interference by colonial powers in land affairs so that by the time of independence land ownership largely remained communal in nature. This stands in sharp contrast to the situation that existed in neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe where the most valuable land largely ended up in private hands and in those of colonial masters. After independence, rural development in these countries was therefore strongly informed by a focus on the redistribution of land whereas in Botswana this has not been the case (Moepeng, 2013). In addition, the new government included cattle owners who formed part of the economic elite during the colonial period (Rooney, 2018). For this reason, their economic interests, which had informed leadership systems before independence, still did so within the new government.

Due to these historical factors the Botswana political elite that existed prior to independence are still involved in the communal ownership of land in rural environments. This has meant that the country's leadership has remained uniquely invested in the need to sustain rural development and the traditional social systems that exist within rural environments (Mosanako, 2014:316). Cattle owners within the political leadership have, for example, continued to support policies aimed at improving rural livelihoods in areas where their cattle are based (Mosanako, 2014:316-317).

It is thought that the balance in the Botswanan system of government between traditional and more modern interests have also brought some stability to the way in which social change is facilitated (Acemoglu, Johnson & Robinson, 2001:26). Firstly, the maintenance of the institutions of chieftainship ensure that constraints are placed on decision-making processes by government. Furthermore, there is an inclusive approach to the representation of a wide diversity of tribal groupings within the public sphere. This is because the tribal system of administration enables the assimilation of minority groups into mainstream tribes. It is argued that this leads to the establishment of a more ethnically homogeneous society (Mompati & Prinsen, 2000; Mulinge, 2008). Commentators suggest that these circumstances have helped to ensure that Botswana operates as a developmental state in which policy is geared towards broad national development to the benefit of all citizens, even though decision-making is controlled by an elite (Taylor, 2003; Tsie, 1996).

However, despite Botswana's developmental achievements, the country continues to face high levels of poverty and inequality (Rooney, 2018). As noted above, the incidence of poverty is declining but unemployment has nevertheless remained persistent at nearly 17.8 percent. Also, income inequality is measured as being one of the highest in the world (World Bank, 2016; Good, 2008; Taylor, 2003). Such inequality still operates to divide towns and cities from rural areas, where poverty remains more pronounced (Moepeng, 2013). One reason for this may be that although Botswana locates itself as a democracy, the state's decision-making processes are authoritarian in nature. Within such a political environment, a participatory approach to social development which includes the involvement of all citizens in setting the development agenda remains constrained (Moepeng, 2013). This may help to explain why, despite developmental gains, problems of inequality have persisted.

Botswana also faces other serious social problems such as a rapid rise in alcohol abuse and the presence of HIV/AIDS (Mosanako, 2014). Indeed, the country has the third highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world at approximately 22 percent of the population (Rooney, 2018). In 2015 there were an estimated 3,200 deaths from HIV-related illness and 348,900

people were estimated to be living with HIV (Rooney, 2018:15). It has been suggested that one reason for the emergence of these challenges is the speed at which processes of modernisation have occurred in this country. Such change has led to a disruption of traditional ways of life and with this an increased vulnerability to harmful social conditions (Rooney, 2018). The impact of such change is understood to apply in particular to rural environments where radical shifts have occurred with regards to population figures, infrastructural development and modes of communication (Moepeng, 2014). Urbanisation has played a particularly important role within these processes of change. In the late 1980's, nearly 90 per cent of Botswana was rural, but from the 1990's onward many inhabitants of rural areas moved to cities and towns (Moepeng, 2010; Rooney, 2013; Mosanako, 2014). This process has escalated in the past five years so that now more than 50 percent of people live in urbanised environments (Ng'ong'ola, C. 1992). Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, currently had a population of about 247,000 people in 2016, which represents more than 10 percent of the overall inhabitants of the country (CIA, 2016). This rapid process of urbanisation is understood to have disrupted established ways of life so that social systems have become less robust and therefore less able to sustain quality of life for all (Rooney, 2018). Also, although rural communities used to draw primarily on local agriculture and resources within their immediate environment, they are now increasingly dependent on support from urban environments (Rooney, 2018).

Commentators point out, however, that urbanisation has taken a unique form in this country so that aspects of the rural and urban (and with this, the traditional and the modern) co-exist in close proximity with each other. Within the contemporary context, a typical village has access to a road network, a mobile phone network and most likely the national electricity grid. The furthest distance between such a village and the capital is 24 hours (Moepeng, 2013). It is also in close proximity to at least a primary school, a clinic and a kgotla (ibid). Its inhabitants often do not have to relocate to cities to find employment because villages are now within easy commuting distance from cities. A village population is often dominated by people working in nearby towns or cities because villages near to towns are used as 'bedroom villages'. Also, even those individuals who have moved to urban environments maintain very strong socio-economic linkages with their rural homes (Moepeng, 2013:3). This is demonstrated by the fact that urban Batswana often want to be buried in their home villages even if they have spent all their adult lives in cities (ibid). This integration between urban and rural life means that aspects of the modern and the traditional coexist. It can be argued that this balance between the traditional and modern mitigates against the negative impacts of rapid change.

It should be clear from the discussion in this section that, in order to make sense of rural development as it exists in Botswana, it is important to take cognisance of the historical circumstances that have shaped this country. These circumstances have led to the establishment of a particular set of relationships between urban and rural life and between traditional and modern aspects of society. The empirical component of this study will consider the extent to which state media in Botswana, and the *Botswana Daily News* in particular, provide journalists with opportunities to engage with the complexity of these relationships.

2. The media and their relationship to rural development

The media landscape in Botswana is dominated by government–controlled media (Rooney, 2018:17). Such dominance results at least partly from the way in which the media developed in this country during the period of its establishment as an independent state. At the time of transition to independence, Radio Bechuanaland was founded as the national broadcaster and the *Botswana Daily News* as a state-owned newspaper (Nyamnjoh, 2000:34-38). Until the early 1980's the government enjoyed a media monopoly so that these two media platforms were able to consolidate their presence as authoritative systems of communication (Nyamjoh, 2000:34-38). Today they continue to be highly influential within the overall social system of Botswana. The state broadcaster now consists of Botswana TV (BTV) and Radio Botswana (RB), which includes two national radio stations. The government depends heavily on these broadcasting platforms, as well as the *Daily News*, for communication with citizens (Rooney, 2018:18-20). In addition, the Botswana Press Agency (BOPA) was established in 1981 to provide news for government-owned print media and radio (Rooney, 2018; Tutwane, 2012). This news agency receives financial support from the state and is controlled by government (Tutwane, 2014:141).

Despite the dominance of state media, some privately owned media have also been able to claim a space for themselves within the Botswana media landscape. This can be observed in particular in the context of print publications, which enjoy a degree of independence from state control (Fombad, 2011:18). The establishment of these publications became possible in the 1980s when economic growth and changes in government policy led to a liberalisation of the Botswana media landscape. This period saw the establishment of the *Botswana Guardian* (1982), the *Examiner* (1982), *Mmegi Wa Dikgang* (1982), the *Botswana Gazette* (1985) and the *Midweek Sun* (1989) (Mogalakwe & Sebudubudu, 2006). The editorial leadership of these publications argue that the independent press should represent the interests of the public by holding the government to account and by engaging critically with government policy. Their

presence within the Botswana media landscape has helped to diversify the perspectives and interests that are represented within the public sphere (Rooney, 2018)

However, when compared to the state media, the impact of the independent press on the broader social environment of Botswana remains constrained. State media is still the biggest purchaser of advertising which ensures that they have more economic power than private media. Private media is also dependent on revenue generated through government advertising and it has been observed that the government has used this dependence to curb their watchdog role (MISA, 2015:20). Furthermore, private newspapers are limited in their geographical reach with distribution restricted primarily to Gaborone and delivery to other parts of the country remaining low. The distribution of print media remains a challenge in a country with a sparsely distributed rural population. Also, privately owned newspapers tend to be published only on a weekly basis and are primarily presented in English, a language that is not widely spoken in rural Botswana. They are sold at more than the price of a loaf of bread, which places them beyond the means of the average rural citizen. In contrast, the *Daily News* is the only paper in Botswana that publishes daily and is readily available across the country. It is distributed free of charge and has a print run of 70,000, although it is not recorded how many copies are actually delivered (Lesitaokana & Akpabio, 2014:218; Rooney, 2012).

Media critics note that the state-owned media system tends to foreground uncritical coverage of the activities of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and gives far less coverage to opposition parties. When opposition parties and the private media point this out, the state media explain that their editorial guidelines require of them to give priority to cabinet ministers, the president and his deputy. Employees of BOPA also argue that they have a responsibility as public servants to explain and support government policies, cover the comings and goings of the country's leaders and generally do what the government expects (Nyamnjoh, 2000). These tendencies suggest that the relationship that exists between state-owned media and the government of Botswana is authoritarian in nature.

This authoritarian relationship is institutionalised through government legislation, which ensures that state media take direct instruction from the Office of the President (OP) (Tutwane, 2011:45). The permanent secretary is therefore able to make editorial decisions, and "top people" such as ministers can visit state media houses to approve news before it is published. In some cases, such officials have ordered news content to be replaced with "something less controversial" (African Media Barometer, 2014:48). It has been suggested that, as a result of these arrangements, the government has come to treat state-owned media as a "propaganda tool" (Tutwane 2014:144). Commentators have identified a long history of

political interference by government in state media and as part of this a high prevalence of censorship (Tutwane 2014:144).

The authoritarian relationship between government and media also stretches beyond government-controlled media platforms and into the private sector. The president has an absolute discretion to declare any publication to be prohibited that in his opinion is contrary to public interest. This applies both to state-controlled media and commercial media. (African Media Barometer, 2014:47; MISA, 2015:27). Furthermore, public servants are prohibited from disclosing the contents of any document, communication or information that has come to their notice in the course of their duties unless authorised by the minister in writing (Tutwane, 2014:141-145).

Since independence, the government has put into place a number of acts of parliament that enables such control. This includes the Corruption and Economic Crime Act of 1994, which prohibits journalists from reporting on investigations regarding government corruption while these are still in progress. This legislation is generally thought to stop the media from being able to investigate and expose corruption (Limpatlaw, 2012:141). It also includes provisions in the Public Servants Act, which have fostered a culture of secrecy in government that make it difficult for citizens and the media to access official information (Rooney, 2018). Commentators in Botswana point out that journalists' access to information is crucial to accurate reporting and thus to imparting credible information to the public. The right to information is an aspect of freedom of expression and protects the "right to receive ideas and information without interference". There is, however, no right to information law in Botswana (Rooney, 2018).

In addition, the 2012 Communications Regulatory Authority Act eliminated the possibility of community broadcasting and replaced public broadcasting with state broadcasting. This act abolished the National Broadcasting Board (NBB) and replaced it with the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) to oversee regulation of broadcasters. BOCRA only regulates private broadcasting and leaves state radio and television within the domain of government (African Media Barometer, 2014:44). Commentators in Botswana have pointed out that the constitution obliges the state to promote diversity and pluralism in the media so that freedom of expression becomes a reality. By excluding community media, BOCRA denies citizens the opportunity to use whatever medium is appropriate to their needs to share and access information and ideas (Rooney, 2018; Tutwane, 2014).

The discussion in this section demonstrates that historical developments within the Botswana media landscape have ensured that the contemporary environment is characterised by the dominance of state media. Community media is absent, and the private press remains constricted both by limitations in its geographical reach and by curtailments on its independence. In comparison, state media is relatively well resourced, with the necessary infrastructure to reach rural audiences. Furthermore, all media exists in context of an authoritarian relationship with government in which the content of publications remains strongly guided by the agendas of state officials. The *Botswana Daily News* has a prominent position within this media system as the only daily newspaper that is distributed across the nation as a whole. The empirical component of this study will consider the implications of these contextual issues for the way in which the paper reports on rural development.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this dissertation, we saw that state media in Botswana generally define themselves as contributing to development, with a particular focus on rural environments. We also saw that such contribution tends to be defined as the dissemination of official information about development projects driven by the state. Critics have pointed out that, within this approach to communication, the perspectives of rural communities tend to become marginalised. Furthermore, the strategies and resources that exist within them for facilitating development remain unacknowledged. The discussion in this chapter has helped to place this critique of dominant approaches within Botswana's state media to reporting on rural development in context.

In Section One it was explained that Botswana is often praised for its developmental achievements. We saw, in particular, that although this country has a history of successful development, it also struggles with continued levels of inequality. It was argued that such inequality may result at least partly from the authoritarian culture of governance that exists in this country. It was further proposed that such a political environment does not encourage a participatory approach to social development, which means that citizens generally have a low stake in setting the development agenda.

The description of the Botswana media landscape in Section Two helped to explain the approach to reporting on development that is likely to exist within such an environment. We saw that this landscape is dominated by government-controlled media, in the form of state broadcasting and the *Botswana Daily News* as a daily print publication. It was explained that

the government relies heavily on these media platforms for communication with citizens. Private media has also emerged within this landscape and define their own purpose as that of representing the interest of the public. As such, they have enabled a diversification of the voices that are available within the public domain. However, the state media continue to dominate, and all media remain constrained by an authoritarian relationship with the state. The empirical component of this study will explore how journalists working at the *Botswana Daily News* experience the task of reporting on rural development in this context.

CHAPTER TWO- CONCEPTUALISING THE STUDY

Introduction

In Chapter One it was demonstrated that the approach to reporting on rural development that has come to dominate the Botswana media landscape emerged as a result of the specifics of socio-historical context. In response to this insight, this next chapter focuses on theories that enable explanation of how and why a particular normative conceptualisation of the media finds articulation within a given social context. These theoretical tools are then applied to an analysis of understandings of the purpose of reporting on rural development that can be observed within the Botswana media landscape. The empirical component of the study, in later chapters, will draw on this framework in order to consider how the institutional environment of the *Botswana Daily News* is informed by such understandings.

Section One of this chapter deals with theory that applies to media landscapes at a macro level by reviewing literature dealing with the normative foundations of media systems. Section Two moves to analysis at the intermediary level by focusing on studies dealing with traditions of journalistic practice that find purchase within particular media systems. Section Three zooms in to the micro-level by considering theorisations of the ways in which journalists articulate an approach to journalistic practice and apply this within a particular institutional space. Each section demonstrates the relevance of the conceptual tools discussed to a study of journalists' experience of reporting on rural development in the context of the *Botswana Daily News*.

1. Social purpose at the macro level: the normative foundations of media systems

Discussion of theorisations of the normative foundations of media systems, in this section, begins with a review of Siebert et al's *Four Theories of the Press* because this work is generally recognised as one of the first, foundational contributions to the field. It then deals with more recent attempts to expand and improve on the foundational ideas that had been introduced in *Four Theories*. Particular attention is given to Hallin and Mancini's articulation of a more nuanced and empirically informed understanding of the way normative ideas about the media have developed in specific historical environments. The discussion considers the relevance of each of these theoretical contributions for the discussion of the normative foundations of the Botswana media system.

1.1 Media systems and their normative foundations: Siebert et al

Studies of the normative foundations of media systems are concerned with ideas about the role that media ought to play in society. They offer analyses, at a macro-level, of how such ideas come to inform particular media landscapes and they provide ways of understanding how media within these landscapes articulate their own social purpose (Fourie, 2005). The first significant contribution to such study is thought to have been made in the mid twentieth century by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, who developed a conceptual framework designed to compare the normative foundations of different media systems in the Western world. The authors identified four distinct understandings of the social purpose of media that they observe as underpinning media systems within their own historical period. They refer to three of these understandings as 'authoritarian', 'libertarian' and 'soviet communist' in nature, and a fourth as being informed by an emphasis on 'social responsibility'. They argue that the normative principles that inform each of these understandings are shaped by the social and political system within which they were articulated (Siebert et al., 1956:1). In the discussion that follows, it is demonstrated that the four approaches can also be grouped into pairs, so that each pair represents one broad approach.

Siebert et al argue that the 'authoritarian' understanding of journalism first developed within the media systems of Europe in the 16th and 17th century. In these systems, the press existed under the control of repressive regimes and the dominant understanding of journalism was one that served the interests of an authoritarian state (Siebert et al., 1956:10). The 'soviet communist' approach can be seen to be a variation on this authoritarian understanding. It applies to media in the Soviet Union in the early 20th century and it assumes that journalism operates to maintain the ascendancy of a ruling party through strict control (Schramm, 1956:121); Nerone, 1995 in McQuail, 2010:151).

The 'libertarian' understanding, which is presented as a counterpoint to the authoritarian one, is described as first emerging with the growth of democracy in England in the late 17th century (ibid:44). It is informed by the premise that truth will prevail in an environment in which the media operates in freedom of government control. It rejects the authoritarian notion that the media exist only to serve the interests of the powerful and argues for freedom of the press. Such freedom is understood to enable the media to provide citizens with information so that they can participate rationally in civil society (ibid:51). The 'social responsibility' approach emerged in mid-20th century America as an elaboration of the libertarian understanding (Peterson, 1956:75). It responded to an apparent abuse of the right to freedom of the press within this period (ibid:100). It starts from the assumption that an

independent press will not necessarily make responsible use of its right to freedom (Siebert, 1956:29). There is, therefore, a need for a system of professional self-regulation, so that freedom of the press can be balanced against other rights and responsibilities (Peterson, 1956:74). It holds that the media have responsibilities to society that accompany their freedom. One of these responsibilities is to provide meaningful information that can inform participation by citizens in civil society (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1963).

The Botswana media landscape, as described in Chapter One, can be seen to be informed by both of these broad approaches. On one hand, there is strong evidence of an authoritarian approach, as exemplified by the articulation of a relationship of strict control of media organisations by the state. The purpose of media is clearly defined as being in service of the interests of the state. Within this system, the role of journalists is mainly understood to be that of serving the interests of people in power. On the other hand, the commercial press appears to be informed by a libertarian understanding of the social purpose of media. This understanding can be observed in their investment in the principle of an independent press, and their commitment to representing the interests of the public by holding the government to account. There are, then, two conceptualisations of the purpose of journalism that stand in tension with each other within the Botswana media space. In the end, however, it is the authoritarian conceptualisation that dominates, framing the media landscape as a whole.

1.2 Building on Four Theories: the importance of historical specificity

Subsequent theorists have pointed out that "*Four Theories*" offered an oversimplified framing of history and argue that it is therefore analytical inadequate. Critics explain that it is designed to privilege the libertarian understanding of the social purpose of the media, because Siebert et al write from the perspective of classical liberalism (Nerone, 1995:18). A number of analysts have argued that further understandings of the social purpose of the media needed to be added to Siebert et al's list, in order to be representative of the full range of media systems that exist around the world. As a result of such criticism, there have been repeated attempts to modify and extend Siebert et al.'s analysis so that it can be applied with more validity to contemporary media environments (McQuail, 2010:151). Hallin and Mancini (2012) have contributed to such work through empirically grounded investigation of media systems in fourteen countries located in Europe and North America. Within each country, they scrutinised the nature of the state, the system of political parties that exists there, the pattern of relations between economic and political interests and the degree of development of civil society (Hallin & Mancini,

2004:6). Based on this research, they identified three ideal 'models' against which media systems in these environments can be measured. They refer to these models, respectively, as describing 'liberal', 'democratic corporatist' and 'polarised pluralist' media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2012).

Within the liberal model, freedom of the press becomes established early in a country's history. The resulting media landscape is characterised by the dominance of commercial media (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:75). There are high levels of newspaper circulation reaching not only an elite but also the larger majority of members of that society. There is no direct or explicit affiliation between media platforms and political parties, because the media understands itself to exist independently from political interest. In such environments, media practitioners take on the identity of 'professionals', which is understood to mean that they claim responsibility for their own regulation rather than accepting institutional regulation from the state. In general, the role of the state in the regulation of media is limited, although it is more pronounced in broadcasting, especially public broadcasting. At the same time, in many of these environments, public service broadcasting has a weak presence (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:75).

Within the democratic corporatist model, press freedom again becomes established at an early stage. There is also, again, a high level of newspaper circulation. However, in contrast to the liberal model, party-aligned newspapers are well represented, and the media also links itself with other kinds of politically defined social groupings. For this reason, significant elements of the media reflect the political divisions of society. At the same time, components of the media systems are commercialised, and here the link to political affiliation is less explicit. Such media are, however, less prominent than in the liberal model (Hallin and Mancini, 2012).

Within the polarised pluralist model, the press is not oriented toward the masses but rather aligns itself with elite members of society. Freedom of the press is a relatively new experience within media systems of this type, as is commercialisation of the media. Circulation is relatively limited so that newspapers have weak financial footing, resulting in the need for government subsidies. The state is often owner, regulator and provider of funding for the media. The electronic media system is highly centralised. The media system closely mirrors political divisions in society, and the press focuses on political life (Hallin and Mancini, 2012)

Many commentators have expressed reservations about the use of these three models for classifying media systems, fearing that it leads to overly general and hence simplistic analysis (Humphreys 2009; Norris 2007; Stromback et al 2008). Hallin and Mancini in fact share these concerns but explain that they never intended for their study to be taken as a

comprehensive conceptual framework for the comparative analysis of all media systems. It dealt, after all, with a narrow range of cases, represented by eighteen wealthy capitalist democracies in North America and Western Europe. They argue that their media models serve, rather, as a starting point for thinking about similarities and differences between media systems, and that there is a need for further empirical research of other environments. In response to this argument, other researchers have continued to add to the survey of different media environments, and in this context added further models to Hallin and Mancini's analytical framework.

Some scholars have argued that Hallin and Mancini's typology excludes developing countries because their press systems do not fit neatly into any of these three categories. These scholars offer alternative models which take account of variations in the political, economic and social conditions that exist within such environments (Hachten 1981; Lamberth 1995). They note, for example, that communicative systems in developing countries are embedded within local religion and culture (Lamberth 1995: 14; Firdaus 2012). They also acknowledge the role played by the processes through which such countries have established their own sovereignty after they gained independence. These processes are seen to involve a political and economic shift from being subservient to the interest of colonial powers to being independently responsible for their own development (Hachten 1981). Particular emphasis is placed on the existence of collaborative partnerships between the press and the government with an overarching goal of nation building (Altschull 1984:286).

It is noticeable that none of these theoretical frameworks make mention of the role that digital media plays within these media systems. This is despite the fact that Hallin and Mancini's study was first published in 2004, when the rise of digital media could already be observed in a range of international environments. Other media theorists had, by this stage, already acknowledge the global emergence of a digital era in which information and communication technologies were becoming the very foundation of political, economic, and social development (Castells, 1996; Nye, 2011). The internet is changing the way people understand power (Nye, 2011) and Hallin and Mancini's framework did not as yet acknowledge the role of digital media within different social systems. Further contributions to the expansion of Hallin and Mancini's models such as the discussion of Botswana in this study should, for this reason, take cognizance of the social significance of the digital domain.

However, even if one acknowledges these inadequacies, the models developed by Hallin and Mancini and the expansion of these models in subsequent literature can usefully be applied to the context of Botswana. A review of the Botswana media landscape, as described

in Chapter One, would suggest that the polarised pluralist model is of particular relevance to this country. This can be observed from the fact that the media is not orientated towards the interests of the public but rather those of government. Traces of political parallelism, which is usually typical of polarised democracies, can also be observed because the ruling BDP is involved in the management and editorial policies of the state media. However, the liberal model serves as an equally important point of reference, given that the private broadcast industry and commercial print media can be seen to be guided by this model. At the same time, the government continues to instill strict laws that make it difficult for private journalists to report freely, especially on critical political issues. The development model nevertheless is of relevance, given the strong emphasis on the contribution that all media should make to economic development and nation building. In the final analysis, then, it is an authoritarian, polarized pluralist, developmental model that dominates. The empirical component of this study, in later chapters, tests the validity of this analysis by exploring the extent to which journalists at the *Botswana Daily News* may be conscious of these contesting conceptualisations.

2. Social purpose at the intermediary level: traditions of journalistic practice

This section deals with theorisations of journalistic practice that are of relevance to this study. As such, it deals, firstly with Christians et al's discussion of a typology within which different traditions of such practice can be placed. It then presents a review of discussions of development journalism as a tradition of practice that is of particular relevance to the Botswana context. This work provides a conceptual language in which to talk about the approaches to journalistic practice that have found purchase within the Botswana media system and at the *Botswana Daily News* more particularly.

2.1 Christians et al: traditions of public communication and of journalistic practice

Christians et al. (2009) distinguished between four conceptualisations of public communication, each foregrounding a different social interest. Historically, specific traditions of journalism can be seen to be informed by one or another of these conceptualisations. The four conceptualisations are described as being informed, respectively, by 'libertarian' interests; by a commitment to social responsibility; by an investment in citizen participation and by 'corporatist' interests (Christians et al., 2009). The libertarian conceptualisation elevates the principle of freedom of expression to the highest point in the values hierarchy that the media

are expected to uphold (Christians et al., 2009:23). The social responsibility conceptualisation also places an emphasis on freedom but balances this with responsibility to serve the needs of developing a democratic and just society (Christians et al., 2009:21). The citizen participation conceptualisation goes even further in its commitment to social responsibility, stating that the media belongs to all members of society and should have an emancipatory purpose in service of everyone in that society. It understands the media to be engaged in some form of struggle for collective rights (Christians et al., 2009:25).

The authors also identify four alternative journalistic roles that journalism is thought to perform in a democratic society (Christians et al., 2009:121). Each of these roles can be seen to resonate with one or another of the conceptualisations of public communication listed above. They refer to these roles as 'monitorial', 'facilitative', 'radical' and 'collaborative' in nature. The monitorial role can be seen to be located within the libertarian conception of public communication. Here, journalists are expected to collect and publish information that is of public interest to audiences. The basic function of all communication is surveillance of the institutions of authority, in order to establish whether they are operating in the interest of the public (Christians et al, 2009). From this perspective, a free press should be detached from state power and also have some independence from agents of economic power (Christians et al, 2009). The monitorial role usually faces some barriers which might restrict its performance. The rights of journalists to pursue observation and inquiry are limited by claims to confidentiality or economic interests in protecting certain information (Christians et al, 2009).

The facilitative role, in turn, can be seen to be informed by an emphasis on social responsibility and citizen participation. It seeks to provide citizens with platform for expressing themselves and participating in the political process. The role of the journalist is to promote dialogue among audience members, addressing them as conversational partners and encouraging them to talk rather than sit passively as spectators before a discussion conducted by journalists and experts (Carey, 1987: 17). Citizens are thus taken seriously in clarifying and resolving public problems. Such media do not merely report on civil society's association and activities but seek to enrich and improve them by supporting participation in civil society (Christians et al, 2009).

The radical role can be seen as a more extreme elaboration of citizen participation. It insists on absolute equality and freedom of all members of a democratic society in a completely uncompromising way (Christians et al, 2009). It seeks to help minorities articulate alternative sets of goals to those of the institutions of authority, that represent the needs and just moral claims of all, especially the marginalised, the poor and the dispossessed (Christians et al, 2009).

The role of the journalist is to challenge the injustices perpetrated by hegemonic alliances and to propose instead a new order and support movements opposing these injustices. The radical role attempts to expose the conflicts of interest between those who dominate the political-economic conditions and cultural values of society and those who have little influence on these conditions (Christians et al, 2009). It supports activist movements that attempt to liberate indoctrinated people, helping them to participate in the process of democratic governance (Christians et al, 2009:180).

In contrast to these three descriptions of the role of journalism, the collaborative understanding does not foreground freedom of expression and independence. Instead, it assumes that journalism should be based on a partnership with the state built on mutual trust and a shared commitment to mutually agreeable means and ends (Christians et al, 2009:198). Such media should support the dominant institutional powers within society and can be seen to enjoy minimal autonomy (Christians et al, 2009:191). Collaboration is understood to involve an informal partnership with the state premised on a commitment by the press to play a positive role in the process of development (Christians et al, 2009:200-201). From this perspective, journalists can question and even challenge the state but not to an extent where they undermine the governments basic plans for progress and prosperity (Christians et al, 2009).

When we look at Botswana in relation to these levels of analysis, one can come to the conclusion that both the monitorial and collaborative roles can be observed to exist within its media landscape, as described in Chapter One. The monitorial role is of relevance to the commercial press, where the media understands its own purpose as that of enabling diverse social groups to express alternative viewpoints. However, this is not taken further to encourage citizen participation, nor is there evidence of the radical commitment to emancipation. So, in reality neither the private press nor the state media show evidence of a commitment to the broader empowerment of people in Botswana. On the other hand, the collaborative role can be observed in operation within state media, who understand their own purpose as that of working hand in hand with the state and disseminating news that favour those who hold political power. Furthermore, the developmental model that applies in the Botswana context is closely linked to the collaborative understanding of the role of journalism, and therefore to an authoritarian understanding of what development entails.

2.2 Development journalism

It has been argued, above, that a 'developmental' model of communication is of particular relevance to the Botswana media system. Furthermore, it was proposed that the 'collaborative' understanding of the role of journalism dominates media traditions in this country, at least in context of state media. The journalistic tradition that is most often associated with a developmental, collaborative approach to journalism is that of development journalism. For this reason, theorisation of development journalism serves as an important term of reference for the discussion of journalism in state media in Botswana.

Development journalism was first articulated as a reporting practice in Asia in the late 1960s, (Chalkley, 1980). This approach gained support both from governments and non-governmental stakeholders within newly independent states, in recognition of the role that journalism could play in contributing to social development in these environments. Development journalism therefore became closely associated with media systems that work in a collaborative relationship with the state, in order to achieve development goals (Ogan et al. 2009: 656).

Critics have, however, suggested that such collaboration with the state may impact negatively on the degree of independence that news organisations need to maintain with regards to their relationship with the state. In the absence of such independence, journalists may be required to report on social issues and events in ways that are to the advantage of the ruling party instead of operating in service of the public good (Buchanan, 2003; Djankov et al., 2002). For this reason, systems must be put in place which will ensure that development journalism address the interests of citizens (Banda, 2007:167; Wong 2004:25-40, Rumphorst, 2003; Shah 1996:143-166). In context of debate around these concerns, a spectrum of different approaches to development journalism became articulated. On one hand it is possible to identify an authoritarian approach, in which development journalism is, indeed, understood to operate primarily in service of the state. On the other, it is possible to observe the emergence of 'emancipatory' approaches which are informed by an interest in the strengthening of civil society, in service of principles of justice and social equity. These approaches draw strongly on community participation as an essential component of journalistic practice (Shah, 1996:144).

The discussion of the Botswana media landscape, as presented in Chapter One, suggests the existence of a relationship between media and the state that is reminiscent of development journalism. This relationship can be observed, in particular, in context of the partnership that exists between the government and state media. Such media pay a central role in the

government's communication strategies in support of rural development. It is, therefore, of interest to this study to establish whether journalism within the *Botswana Daily News* can be said to be informed by approaches drawn from development journalism as a tradition.

3. Social purpose at the micro-level: the experience of the individual journalist

A seminal contribution to the study of the way journalists speak about the journalistic principles that guide their practice is represented by the work of Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. In the early 2000s, these authors responded to a perceived crisis in the credibility and purpose of journalism as a profession in the United States. They argued that the normative foundations of journalistic practice should be articulated by journalists themselves, rather than by their managers. With this argument in mind, they conducted interviews with practicing journalists, asking them to speak about the values and principles that inform their work. The study revealed a cohesive set of principles or 'elements' of good practice, broadly shared amongst American journalists at this time (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). One example of such an 'element' is described as the obligation to truth, in which the purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate information that allows them to participate knowledgeably in civil society. The journalists who participated in the study understood this commitment to be core to their practice. They note that, in order play this role, journalists must maintain independence from both government- and commercial pressures and instead build a relationship of trust with their audiences (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:51-52). Kovach and Rosenstiel point out that journalists' ability to act out their commitment to such principles is constrained by the institutional cultures of the news industries in which they are located (ibid).

It is acknowledged, in journalism scholarship, that this list of journalistic 'elements' are indeed more representative of the professional norms that guide American journalists in their practice than the formal policies outlined by institutions that they work for (Deuze 2005:447). It is proposed that journalists need to be given the power to claim independence from both private and political interests, so that they are better able to act on such normative principles. The institutional guidelines of news organisations should enable journalists to negotiate with their own editorial leadership in order to make this possible. It is also pointed out that journalists become empowered to act on their own norms if these are publicly acknowledged, as in the study presented by Kovach and Rosenstiel (Deuze, 2008; Zoonen, 1998; Deuze 2005).

Guidelines for professional practice, as articulated by the American journalists in Kovach and Rosenstiel's study, are of course not of universal relevance. The way that journalists understand their own social purpose and explain how this purpose must be enacted will differ from one social environment to the next. Journalism scholars point out, in this respect, that social and political context will plays a central role in shaping such understanding (Shoemaker and Vos 2009; Mellado and Humanes 2012). It is also pointed out that individual, psychological factors can be of equal importance to journalists' understanding of their own practice (Donsbach, 2004). For these reasons, studies such as that of Kovach and Rosenstiel need to be conducted in many environments around the world, in order to tease out how different groups of journalists have come to make sense of their own practice.

Within studies of journalism it is pointed out that journalists need to negotiate the relationship between these personal understandings of their own practice and external, institutional factors, such as the editorial values and guidelines of the media for whom they work (Weaver, 1998; Beam, 1990). They will then often experience a tension between their personal conceptualisations of their practice and the 'official' version that is embedded within their institutional context. Journalists may, for example, experience frustration in the pitching, selection and editing of stories because their own news instincts run counter to that of the management or ownership structure of their news organization (Deuze, 2008; Zoonen, 1998). This tension often remains unresolved because the institutional culture of mainstream news industries requires of journalists to follow the routine that has been set in the newsroom. Within this system, acts of independence and individual conscience are often discouraged (Deuze, 2005:442-464; Deuze, 2008:110-112; Weaver, 1998).

In the empirical component of this study, this tension between the personal convictions of journalists and the official requirements of their work environment is further explored. Particular attention is paid to the way this tension plays out within the intensely authoritarian environment of the *Botswana Daily News.*

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped out terms of reference for an examination of the normative principles that inform journalistic practice as it exists at the *Botswana Daily News*. It is argued, in Section One, that at the macro level the Botswana media landscape is expressive of an authoritarian, polarised pluralist, developmental model of a media system. In Section Two, it is proposed that, given this broader context, journalism at the *Botswana Daily News* is likely to be framed

by a collaborative approach. Reporting practice is, furthermore, likely to be representative of an authoritarian tradition of development journalism, which operates primarily in service of the state. Finally, in Section Three, it was pointed out that journalists often experience a disjunction between their own normative understanding of what journalism should achieve and the approach to reporting that is endorsed by their institutional context. The empirical component of this dissertation sets out to explore the extent to which such disjunction can be seen to exist in context of the experiences of journalists working for the *Botswana Daily News*.

CHAPTER THREE: THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter deals with the research plan for the empirical component of the study. As mentioned already, the study investigates what journalists know about life in rural Botswana and how this knowledge impacts on their experience of reporting for the *Botswana Daily News.* Section One describes the research plan, mapping out the decisions that were made with regard to methodology, the choice of methods and the design of the research instruments. Section Two explains how the implementation of this plan worked out in practice. I return in this chapter to the use of the first person, which was last used in the introduction to this dissertation. I do so because this chapter represents another moment in which I examine the way that I, as the researcher, locate myself within the production of the study.

1. The research design decisions

My purpose in this section is to describe the research design that I developed for this study. I identify the research as having a case study design and provide motivations for this design choice. I also includes reflection on the use of qualitative interviewing as the key fieldwork method and describe the approach that I chose for the analysis of the resulting interviews. Finally, I deal with ethical considerations that I kept in mind in designing the study.

1.1 Methodology: Qualitative research

I located this study within the qualitative approach to social research. Such an approach is relevant to the study because I am investigating how journalists' experience of living in rural communities influence their engagement with the practice of reporting on such spaces. Qualitative research can engage with this kind of study, because it can provide complex descriptions of how people experience a given research issue, focusing on the detail of actions and events. More specifically, it lends itself to the examining such actions and events within the concrete, natural context in which they occur (Mason, 2012).

1.2 The research setting

My decision to select the *Botswana Daily News* for this study is informed by the fact that it is the only state newspaper in Botswana. Furthermore, I knew that I would be able to secure

permission from the paper's leadership to interview journalist, because they have a history of encouraging researchers to study the paper. I also attended university with some of the staff members of the paper at the University of Botswana and therefore knew that establishing relationships with potential research participants would not be difficult.

1.3 Type of research: a case study design

In the context of interview-based research, case studies are used primarily when the researcher wishes to obtain an in-depth understanding of the perspectves of a relatively small number of individuals (Patton, 1990). Such an approach is suitable to this study because it allows me, as the researcher, to see beneath the surface of the situation that exists at the *Daily News*, in order to make sense of the way journalists experience working there (Patton, 1990).

I opted for a mutliple case study design, with each research participant representing one 'case' of a journalist from rural backgrounds working for the *Daily News*. Scholars note that in a multiple case study design, there are no set rules about how many cases are required. It is nevertheless proposed that six to ten cases may be provide compelling results for a study (Yin, 1994: p. 46). For this reason, I decided to select six journalists.

1.4 Initial background research

In order to provide myself with terms of reference for the conceptualisation of my interviews, I spent time reading through news content from the *Daily News*, focusing on the coverage of rural development. It soon became clear to me that, within such coverage, certain themes can be seen to recur. There is a tendency, in particular, to foreground the way rural communities may benefit from the government's development projects. The emphasis is on providing information regarding the project aims, and on guidelines that are being followed to ensure its implementation. The main sources are government officials, while members from the communities that are supposed to benefit from the projects do not feature. When they are referenced, they are presented as passive recipients of aid. I provide some examples here, in order to demonstrate these points.

In an article entitled *Poverty Eradication Monitoring Key* (October 17, 2016) the central aim is to inform public about the way rural communities in the Kgaladi District can benefit from government-led poverty eradication schemes. The main source is Mr Patson Dibotela, who is the Kgalagadi District deputy commissioner. The article explains that Mr Dibotela aims to ensure that beneficiaries of the schemes are closely mentored. He is quoted

as stating that most beneficiaries are illiterate and “lack commitment“, which is why he recognises mentorship as an important tool for the success of the project. The article also quotes a member of the Presidential task team, Mr Peter Siele, who congratulates community members for coming forward to speak about a water crisis that exists in their village.

A second article, entitled *Radisele Project To Improve Water Supply* (5 March 2013) deals with a government project that aims to improve the supply of water in Radisele village. Mention is made of the budget that has been allocated to the project and the importance of regulating water supply to ensure the flow of water in the village. Reference is also made to the use of prepaid meters to help monitor water distributions through public stand pipes. The article features interviews with Palapye Sub-district Council chairperson, Mr Onnetse Ramogapi.

In a third article, *Kgatleng Addresses Poverty Eradication Backlog,* (16 March 2017) the focus is on a backlog that exists with regards to the allocation of poverty eradication packages, caused by lack of funds. The article highlights measures that have been put in place to clear the backlog, and indicates that community members who are on the waiting list will receive their packages in due time. Mention is made of mentoring and monitoring systems that will be put in place to insure that this happens. The article includes interviews with the chief social welfare and community development officer Ms. Chandapiwa Mpolokang and the poverty eradication officer Ms Refilwe Ramathudi. Two members of the community are quoted as saying that they have received their packages and are very happy with them.

The final article that I draw from, entitled *Kgathi Engages Residents,* (4 January 2017) aims to inform members of the community of Bobonong about infrastructural developments in their village. The article includes reference to houses that were built for victims of a local disaster; a new borderpost that is being established to ease movement and trade and clinics that are being renovated. The article draws from an interview with Member of Parliament for Bobonong, Mr Shaw Kgathi. Kgathi is quoted as saying that clinics will have maternity wards and he raises concerns about teenage pregnancy in secondary schools.

The articles read like press releases, written by public relations officers. I was struck by the absence of the voices of the members of the communities that they are supposedly targeting as their main audience. When members of such communities are mentioned, this is often in context of a quote from a government official, who describe them as passive recipients, pointing out what they lack. Reference is for example made to the ‘illiteracy‘ of such communities. I was curious to hear what my research participants would say about such representations.

1.5 Method of research: the qualitative biographical interview

I chose to make use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews because they would enable me to gain a detailed understanding of the journalists' individual perspectives of events in their own world (Lindlof, 1995:5). I aimed, more particularly, to conduct life history interviews, because this would allow the research participants to provide me with a description, in their own words, of aspects of their personal biographies. This is of interest to me because my study deals with the relationship between these journalists' experience of growing up in rural environments, and their role as journalists at the *Daily News*. Through life history interviews, I would be able to trace the participants' knowledge of rural life; then find out how they made the transition to urban life and how they explain the process of becoming journalists. As such, this fieldwork method offers a tool for establishing deep understanding of the research participants life choices (Bertaux, 1981; Olive 2014). I did not, however, intend to conduct full biographical interviews, because this would not be necessary for the purpose of the study. Instead, the focus would be on selective, significant moments in each person's life (ibid).

1.6 The design of the interview guide

I aimed, through the interviews, to explore significant events and transitions that have occurred in the participants' lives and to examine the role played by their aspirations and perceptions in the choices that have shaped their lives. As such, I grouped the questions into three stages, each dealing with a different historical moment in the participant's life (See appendix 1).

Stage One of the interview guide focused on the participant's childhood memories. The purpose was to find out what it was like for them to grow up in in rural environments; what they learnt about what these environments are like and how people living in those spaces find solutions to the problems that they face. Stage Two focused on the participants' experience of moving from those rural spaces into urban environments and the decisions they made along the way about the kind of people they would become. The aim was to find out how they survived in this new environment as individuals and how becoming journalists formed part of those 'new identities.' The final stage dealt with the participants' role as journalists. The goal was to find out what they understand their own social purpose to be, as journalists, and to also how they experience realising that purpose while working for the *Botswana Daily News.*

1.7 Conducting the interviews

I decided to interview the participants on the premises of *Botswana Daily News*. My assumption was that this would qualify as a 'natural setting', in which they would feel comfortable enough to speak about their own memories and practices (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:271). I based this decision on the fact that the participants would not have to travel to an unfamiliar place to be interviewed. I understood that I would, at the same time, have to find a private space, where the participants would be able to speak without fear of being overheard.

I also made the decision to allow the participants to speak to switch between Setswana and English, depending on which language would enable them to express themselves freely at that moment. Scholars recommend integrating languages within an interviewing process in this way, to enable better communication (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

1.8 Analysing the interviews

I knew that in analysing the interviews I would need to make decisions about which content to include and how best to group this content in my discussion. I planned, for this purpose, to make use of a process called 'constant comparisons' (Corbin & Strauss, 2015:7). As the first step in this process, I would review my fieldwork notes, made both during the interviews and immediately afterwards, in order to identify key concepts. I would then code each interview, guided by these concept, and adding new ones as they emerge (ibid). As the process continues, each new interview would be compared to the previous ones for confirming or disconfirming my analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015:13). The final analysis would then be used in the findings chapters of the study. I decided to use the qualitative data analysis programme NVIVO for this purpose.

1.9 Ethical considerations

In planning the research, I followed the Rhodes University guidelines for ethical research. I understood that I would need to obtain a letter from the university to seek permission from the *Botswana Daily News* to do this study. I would also need to obtain informed consent from research participants, in support of their right to participate voluntarily in research. I predicted that some journalists might be reluctant to participate, in fear of losing their jobs in case they reveal something confidential about the management of the paper. I intended to provide them with pseudonyms study but knew that it would not be possible to hide their identity to their employers, because all of them work at the *Daily News* and are therefore inevitably

recognisable. For this reason, I could not promise my participants complete confidentiality. I therefore resolved to inform the participants that I could not offer them complete anonymity. They would then need to decide whether they are still prepared to take part in the study.

2. Implementing the research plan

This sections deals with the way that my implementation of the research plan worked out in practice. Firstly, It provides details regarding the research participants that I finally selected to participate in the study, and comments on their relevance to the study. Secondly, it describes my experience of implementing the fieldwork plan. Finally, it discusses my experience of analysing the interview material and articulating the findings of the research.

2.1 The research participants

I had hoped to single-handedly and purposively choose my research participants but in practice that was not the case. However, upon receiving the letter asking for permission to conduct research in the premises of the *Botswana Daily News*, the Director of Information Systems insisted that he would choose the journalists. He provided me with five research participants, including four males and one female, and all of them had grown up in rural Botswana.

The aim was to interview all the participants in December 2018 at the *Botswana Daily News* but unfortunately it did not happen that way. Two journalists were transferred to other branches in Botswana, one in Lobatse (70km from Gaborone) and the other one in Mochudi (25km from Gaborone) so I had to make time to travel and interview them at their stations. After interviewing the journalist in Lobatse, I was informed by the administrative officer that there was a sixth journalist that I could interview, stationed at a new branch in Goodhope (130km from Gaborone). I therefore ended up with six journalists, four male, two females, all of whom met the criteria that I was looking for.

While conducting the interviews, it came to my attention that even though all participants came from rural background, these settings differed from each other in important ways. Three participants came from urban villages which, as explained in Chapter One, are rural areas which have some characteristics of urban areas. Two other participants came from very rural villages and the last participants grew up on the outskirts of an urban area. She did, however, gain much experience of living in rural areas in later life, and for this reason I decided to include her in the study.

2.3 The process of interviewing

Three journalists were interviewed at premises of the *Botswana Daily News* in Gaborone,while the remaining three were interviewed, respectively, in Mochudi, Lobatse and Goodhope. The three participants in Gaborone did not have their own offices, so an office was assigned to me by the Chief editor of the paper. It was my wish to have a vacant office so that the participants could be free to speak openly. Unfortunately that was not the case, since the office I was assigned to belonged to an administrative officer. The experience of intervewing participants in this environment posed some challenges, since this administrative officer was present in the room. Furthermore, their phone kept ringing, thus disturbing important moments in the interview process. I had the feeling that the interviewees were not very comfortable discussing certain issues with a third party in the room. Nevertheless, they answered as best as they could. On the positive side, the newsroom was aware that interviews were taking place and were careful not to interrupt the process. The participants work was also kept on hold for an hour while the interviews were in session. The participants stationed outside of Gaborone all had their own offices so it was very easy for me to interview them freely. I did not encounter any obstacle and all three interviews went very smoothly.

The prelminary stage of the interview process involved going through the consent form with the participant so that they could read and sign before the interview is conducted. None of the participants expressed reservations about being involved in the process, despite the fact that I could not protect their identity.

The interviews were conducted in both English and Setswana to allow flexibility. Five participants were very happy with the decision because they could express themselves freely using their mother tongue. However one participants was not very pleased with the decision. He stated that he felt very insulted by the fact that I assumed that he is not educated enough to do the interview only in English. I tried to explain the logic behind the decision but the interviewee was not happy at all and that almost ruined the interview process.

In the first stage of the interview I asked the participants to talk about their childhood memories and their life while growing up in a rural space. All the participants were caught off guard during that stage of the interview. Almost all of them laughed a lot, especially when they were talking about their childhood memories. They explained that they did not expect these kind of questions. Two mentioned that I was asking questions that were very personal but they would answer because they were enjoying the conversation and they had not spoken to anyone about home in a very long time. However the memory of home made one participant in

particular emotional as he tried very hard to hold back tears. He mentioned that the interview was not easy for him but he would try by all means to answer all the questions.

All participants proposed that their real names should be used in the study, despite the fact that they might say things that was critical of the *Botswana Daily News*. However, in practice I was struck by how uncomfortable my research participants felt in talking in a critical way about their employers. I realised that despite their willingness to be open about their identity, I would need to protect them as much as possible, by leaving out statements that could be regarded as controversial.

2.4 Analysing and writing up the interview material

The main approach to analysis involved a detailed review of the interview transcripts.. Notes and voice recordings were reviewed after each interview session. To maintain consistency in data collection, I listened for indicators of all important concepts in every interview; the ones carried over from previous analysis as well as the one that emerge from the interview. Furthermore, I read through the interview, looking for a plot and story, identifying recurring patterns, words, phrases and contradictions in the text (Doucet and Mouthner, 1998).

The transcripts were in both Setswana and English so I had to translate those in the Setswana to English. I did not encounter any problems in the translation process because I am fluent in both languages. In some instances I included the original phrasing in the source language with translation because this adds to the meaningfullness of my account. Interviews were transcribed manually using Microsoft Word, and the transcripts were then uploaded onto the NVIVO platform

Finally, I used a method of coding to organise and re-organise the data into categories that enabled me to identify relationships between and among categories. This involved creating ‘nodes�‘ and ‘subnodes‘ for each concept and organising them into logical structures. In this way, I was able to trace coherent themes within the interviews.

I drew on this coded material to produce two chapters, one focusing on the participants‘ experience of making the transition from rural environments to life as journalists in urban spaces, and one focusing on their experience of working at the *Botswana Daily News*. This enabled me to capture the main insights of my fieldwork, and as part of this to tease out the releance to the contextual and theoretical discussions that I have mapped out in previous chapters.

Conclusion

In my estimation, the design of this study as well as its implementation was successful. The original plan had been well conceived, and despite having to make some adjustments in practice, I was able to meet each of my main objectives. As will be demonstrated in the next two chapters, the quality of the resulting research material shows evidence of the reliability and validity of this design.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS I

THE JOURNEY FROM HOME

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the participants' memories of home and of leaving home to settle in urban environments. Section One provides background information about the participants, while Section Two sets out the descriptions that they offer of growing up in rural environments. Section Three focuses on the accounts that they give of making the transition from home to an urban environment. Finally, Section Four deals with their experience, within urban spaces, of tertiary education and of becoming journalists.

It should be remembered that the participants' real names were not replaced with pseudonyms because they proposed their names should be used in the study, however, I protected them as much as possible, by leaving out statements that could be regarded as controversial. Furthermore, it should be noted that the interviews were conducted in both English and Setswana. Where Setswana was used, the researcher generally translated participants' commentary into English; however, in some instances, phrases in the original Setswana have been included in the final text. This strategy was followed in instances where, in the judgement of the researcher, these phrases capture the meaning of a participants' commentary in a way that cannot be achieved through translation alone. In such instances, translation of the Setswana phrasing is also added to the text in English.

1. The participants

In Chapter Three it was noted that six journalists participated in this study and that this group included four men and two women. It was also explained that the researcher aimed to involve three different categories of participants; those who had experience of 'deep rural' contexts; those who have primarily lived in 'urban village' environments and those who grew up in an urban environment but nevertheless have substantial experience of rural life. All of the participants who were finally selected fell into one or another of these categories.

Omphile Ntakhwana, 34 years old, is a news reporter and is categorised in this study as someone who comes from a deep rural environment. Even though he was born in Francistown, he was raised in a remote village called Marobela, in the North East of the country. He had worked as a news reporter for the *Botswana Daily News* for nine years at the time of the interview. Benjamin Shapi, 46 years old, was a senior journalist at the *Daily News* who had

worked in the field as a news reporter for 24 years at the time of this study. He is also categorised in this study as someone from a deep rural environment, given that he was born and grew up in the village of Moshupa, which is located in the Southern District. Jeremiah Sejabosigo, 39 years old, had been working for the *Daily News* for nine years at the time that he was interviewed for this study. He was born in Molepolole which falls under the category of a deep rural village and spent most of his childhood there. On the other hand, Bakang Segokgo, who is 42 years old, had been working for the *Daily News* for eleven years by the time of this study. However, she is situated differently from these participants because she comes from an urban village called Tlokweng which is situated 10km from Gaborone. Thato Mosinyi is 38 years old and had worked for the *Daily News* for nine years at the time of this study. He falls into the same category as Bakang because he comes from an urban village called Mochudi, situated 20km from Gaborone. Finally, Anastatia Sibanda, 47 years old, cannot be categorised as someone who has grown up in a rural or semi-rural environment but she nevertheless has many years of experience of rural life. She was born and grew up in the urban environment of Gaborone, but later worked as a junior journalist in places like Kanako and Kutuku which are deep rural villages. She notes in her interview that this is how she was exposed to what it means to live in a rural environemt. Anastatia had been working at the *Daily News* for sixteen years at the time of this interview.

Five out of the six participants (Anastatia being the exception) left the rural environments in which they had grown up to re-establish themselves in urban spaces. This, as we saw in Chapter Three, is typical of inhabitants of Botswana, given the degree of urbanisation that this country has experienced in recent decades. Furthermore, once the participants had found their feet within urban environments, all six enrolled in educational institutions at a tertiary level and acquired degrees. Omphile, Bakang and Thato were sponsored by the Botswana government to study journalism in South Africa. Upon their return from their studies, they joined the Information Service under the Botswana Press Agency (BOPA). Benjamin, in contrast, completed his high school diploma and then proceeded to do National Youth Service or 'Tirelo Sechaba'[1]. After he completed this term of service he also joined the Information Service and started working as a news reporter for the *Daily News*. Like him, Jeremiah completed National Youth Service before proceeding to do his degree in Humanities at the University of Botswana. From there he was hired at the *Daily News* as a junior journalist.

[1] Tirelo Sechaba is a non-military community service scheme that all secondary school leavers in Botswana are required to complete after passing their O level examinations. The scheme involves young people in community-based service projects based, for example, in agriculture, health, education and community development.

Anastasia's history is more complex; she first completed her high school diploma and then her National Youth Service. After this she worked at the *Daily News*, cleaning reporters' offices. It was there that she became interested in journalism as an occupation and for this reason started doing freelance journalism. Later, she enrolled in a long-distance course in journalism offered by the University of South Africa (UNISA), where she received a certificate in journalism. She was then sponsored by the government to further her studies at the University of Botswana.

It is clear from this discussion that all the research participants have extensive experience of life in rural areas but different levels of experience of journalistic practice. Four of them (Omphile, Jeremiah, Thato and Bakang) had been working for the *Daily News* for either nine or ten years at the time of their interviews. The remaining two (Benjamin and Anastasia) had more journalistic experience, having worked for the newspaper respectively for 24 and 16 years. All the participants have also previously been sponsored by the government to further their education, which enabled them to acquire a degree.

It may also be significant that three of the participants (Anastasia, Benjamin and Jeremiah) share the experience of having completed Tirelo Sechaba, serving in rural areas away from their homes. The scheme was discontinued in 2000 (Molefe et al, 1997) which explains why the other three participants did not participate in it. The Botswana government had originally made such service compulsory not only because it ensures the availability of a labour force for rural development but also because they recognised its educational merits (Fako et al 1986; Molefe et al 1997). It was thought that participants in this scheme could deepen their insight into the realities of life in rural communities and develop competence in engaging with the problems faced in such environments (Fako et al 1986; Molefe et al 1997). It is possible that the experience of this community service scheme enriched the older participants' engagement with questions of rural development.

2. Experience of rural environments

2.1 Memories of home

From the previous section, it should be apparent that all of the participants have personal knowledge of what it is like to live in rural environments. Throughout the interviews, they all spoke very fondly of their experience of these spaces. Bakang remembers spending most of her time at a cattle post, riding tractors and fetching water from the river:

> ... when I was 7 years old, we used to go to the lands … [at first] I did not know that [it] was a safe place [but] ... we used to climb hills ... even now I see that picture of me riding a tractor going to the farm, I

> still treasure that so much, I still remember that little ... house, going to the river to get water and all that. It's beautiful, it's beautiful (Bakang, 2019).

For many of them, this feeling of fondness was linked to their relationships with the people they lived with. Omphile, for example, speaks of his relationship with his grandmother whom he lived with until he was twelve:

> I feel that the way I turned out in life is because of her mostly, growing in front of her, [observing] her challenges. What she was going through in life, her being open with me, the way she was strict but at the same [time] she was a parent (Omphile, 2019)

Anastatia describes her childhood home as a place where she was taught how to value the people around her:

> …the … deep and unconditional love … [the people back home] are full of love. We were taught how to respect people, not to undermine anyone despite … their background (Anastatia, 2019).

Thato explains that in this kind of community you treat everyone as if they are your immediate family, even when you do not personally know them:

> ... your mother is my mum, you say hi to everyone in the community, regardless of whether you know the person or not (Thato, 2019).

Within this 'family,' relationships depend on a deep sense of respect, especially for your elders. This respect is constantly reaffirmed in the way that community members address each other:

> You know greetings, in the Setswana culture it means a lot, so that's a typical Setswana community that I grew up in, whereby you greet everyone especially the elders, whenever an elder comes at your house or [when they enter a taxi] you need to stand up for them to have a sit ... (Thato, 2019).

For Benjamin, it was not just love and respect that he remembers but also close relationships of mutual dependence. Such dependence defined relationships within his family and also those that existed between families in his neighbourhood:

> …it was just a humble household. Where all members of the house performed different tasks collectively, if there was a need, we will always go to our neighbour to ask … It was just a rural community where one could go to another household and ask for some sugar to make tea (Benjamin, 2019).

Omphile also speaks about being brought up in a community where one did not make a clear distinction between close family and neighbours:

> …It was ... close-knit when it came to neighbours. In Setswana, your parents are people you live with, not just your family but neighbours as well (Omphile, 2019).

Jeremiah explains that what he remembers most vividly about his childhood was when children in his community gathered together and played sports. He says that this shared experience of play was an important aspect of his childhood:

> …I think it is playing football with my age mates in the streets because when I grew up, I loved football actually it was the only sport I played when I was growing up (Jeremiah, 2019).

Bakang states, in similar terms, that the children in her community used to play traditional games together:

> …we grew up in ... a close-knit community and even neighbours, we played with them, we played diketo, morabaraba, ma-rounders, dibeke... (Bakang, 2019).

Jeremiah also explains that there was a sense of pride and belonging in his village because people spoke the same language, and this brought about a sense of togetherness:

> …everyone is proud of their own tribes, so I am proud of being a Mokwena from Molepolole, speaking with people who speak the same dialect of Setswana with me, who speaks Sekwena (Jeremiah, 2019)

The participants' comments, as summarised above, leave no doubt as to the importance that memories of home continue to have for them. They speak of home not only as a place where they belong and are loved, but also as a space in which they were taught a way of life that is based in care for your family and community. Home is a place of unity, where everyone works together to achieve shared goals, and this is something to be proud of.

2.2 Hardship

On the other hand, the participants also talk about rural life as a space of hardship. They generally explain that such hardship resulted from a lack of access to resources. Benjamin notes that the major challenge that his community faced was shortage of food as a result of drought:

> …I remember 1982 when there was a long spell of drought, some of [the community members] lost a lot of cattle and there was a shortage of food so [we] used to survive through USAID[2] [mealie meal] from America (Benjamin, 2019).

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[2] The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency of the United States federal government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

The participants generally explain that resources were in fact often available, but poor people could not have easy access them. Many of them refer, in this context, to the example of water. Bakang explains that running water was available but most households in a small community did not have access to it on their own properties. Instead, they shared access to one communal 'standpipe[3]':

> …people didn't have standpipes in their yards [and] you would find that there would be one standpipe for the whole community so there would be long queues just to get water (Bakang, 2019).

Jeremiah recalls that his family were dependent for water from a neighbour's standpipe:

> …I remember when I was growing up there was no standpipe in our home so we would go fetch water from another home, some distance away …we always knew that we had to go fetch water after school [and] make sure that there was firewood to cook food (Jeremiah, 2019).

Bakang explains that the dependence on communal standpipes was impractical because the process of fetching water took so much time. Often one would have to wait for a whole day just to get access:

> [It] was a challenge because it was limiting, even if you wanted to use a lot of water you couldn't, looking at the queue (Bakang, 2019).

Jeremiah makes a similar point about electricity, noting again that the resource was theoretically available but not affordable to most people in context of their own homes:

> …there was electricity in Molepolole but many families couldn't afford to connect electricity in their houses. So, the issue of buying [a] TV [and] knowing what was happening around the world, we couldn't afford that because most of the families were not well off, they did not have a lot of money (Jeremiah, 2019).

Anastatia explains, in turn, that there was access to schooling, but this did not necessarily mean that children were well educated or that they could find employment after school:

> …some kids went to school and could not find any jobs, others did not do well in school resulting in them not progressing (Anastatia, 2019).

Thato explains that, in the years of his childhood, government schools offered an education in the vernacular language while learners who attended private schools were taught in English. Only the more privileged families in his community were able to afford a private school education. His family was not in this position and for this reason he attended a government school. He also explains that although there were schools, they did not in fact have the capacity

[3] A standpipe is a vertical pipe that is connected to a water supply and provides drinking water.

to fully accommodate the local school-going population. For this reason, learners had to take turns to attend class:

> … we used to have a double shift at school where some go in the morning then the next in the afternoon, so as you can see the level of education was deprived to a certain extent (Thato, 2019).

Learners also had to walk long distances, under difficult conditions:

> …there wasn't enough access to roads … schools were a bit far, there were not too many developments by then, there were no tarred roads (Thato, 2019).

Thato notes that he and his fellow classmates had to carry wood to school in order to ensure that they would be able to receive a hot meal at lunch. During winter, they carried a hot stone on the way to school so that their would not get cold during their long walk:

> …going to school with wood and a Tastic Rice bag [to carry books], a hot stone in winter and going to school in the afternoon barefoot, you know that type of thing (Thato, 2019).

He says that there was, nevertheless, a sense of camaraderie amongst his classmates. Even though your family might be able to afford to buy shoes, your friend's family cannot and for this reason you choose to go to school barefoot in solidarity with your friend:

> … so, going to school barefoot and having to cry about going barefoot just because your friend went to school barefoot. It was quite an experience (Thato, 2019).

For Thato, then, when one lives under harsh conditions, there is value in the sense of loyalty that one has towards a friend.

Omphile, in particular, refers to social problems that plagued rural communities. For him, it was the excessive use of alcohol:

> …well one of the challenges that we faced growing up was always alcohol. You know you will always see neighbours 'ba di goti[4]' (traditional beer), shebeens, fights, I think people not having anything to do just drinking beer (Omphile, 2019).

The suggestion, here is that even though Omphile's own family did not directly suffer from the impact of alcoholism, they were in close proximity to neighbours who lived with this problem. Also, as we see from this comment, excessive drinking was associated with a problem that Omphile and his family also experienced: that there was little in the way of access to leisure activities in his community.

[4] Ba di goti is a Setswana slang for people who brew illegal traditional beer in their households

The participants' comments as summarised above suggest that lack of resources was a major source of hardship in the rural environments in which they had grown up. However, they do not suggest that resources were absent from rural spaces. Instead, the problems that their families and communities experienced had more to do with the degree to which their access to certain resources was limited because they were poor. The privileged few in their communities had access to these resources because they had financial capacity. For the remainder of the community, government infrastructure was in place to provide free access to public resources, but sometimes this infrastructure was not adequate. Also, community members were required to dedicate a great deal of their time to making use of this infrastructure, so that in itself added to their hardship.

2.3 Overcoming hardship

When asked how people in their home environments overcame such challenges, the participants generally suggest that rural communities were better able to survive in the past than they are now. They explain that, on one hand, the government did play a key role in providing support. Jeremiah notes, in this respect, that there were welfare offices in his community where people could ask for assistance (Jeremiah, 2019). Benjamin explains that government support was provided in diverse ways:

> …[the] government was offering some incentives [in my community] like buying their cattle, feeding them and also some boreholes were drilled for them, for their livestock (Benjamin, 2019).

However, the participants also generally agree that people did not take such support for granted. Jeremiah explains, in this respect, that members of his home community understood themselves to be self-sufficient. They did not depend on resources and services that people would now regard as a basic right:

> … we were not used to luxury to tell the truth, so we saw it as normal living without electricity, living without gas in your house, living without running water in your house … we saw challenges as normal, I think we are not like today whereby people know a lot about right to employment, right to education (Jeremiah, 2019).

The participants further explain that in the past, people tended to look for ways to give back to their own community, rather than to wait for support from government. Thato notes, for example, that families in his area provided building materials for their school, so that it could be expanded to better serve the community as a whole:

> …I remember there was a time when we all had to bring [a small portion] of sand and gravel just to make sure that we build the extra block for students who will be attending the afternoon school so we used to contribute a lot in terms of helping out (Thato, 2019).

Bakang describes, similarly, how her community made sure that pipes were connected so that everyone could have access to water:

> …people connected their own standpipes and I remember there used to be this huge tank so when there was lack of water, people used to get water from there (Bakang, 2019).

Families would also assist each other with farming, especially during the harvesting period. In this way, they enhanced the whole community's capacity to survive:

> …the community also used to help each other in terms of working together at the fields during holidays for example if Bame's mother wants to work on her farm today my mum would go to Bame's mothers' field to help, the next day is my mother's field [and so on] (Thato, 2019).

In this way, then, communities pooled resources so that they were better able to survive together. Benjamin explains that mutual commitment was core to the identity of his community, and that this respresented one of their key strengths:

> …there was this spirit of cohesion, co-operation, which is in the community and I think this thing also somehow help us to grow knowing that as a neighbour you have to have a sense of responsibility and also care for another one (Benjamin, 2019).

A key advantage of living in such a close-knit community is that you will never be left to go without the very basics that one needs for survival, such as food:

> … you wouldn't go to bed hungry. For example if people did not have food this side, they would know that they can always come this side to get food and it was vice-versa (Omphile, 2019).

Anastatia explains, similarly, that when neighbours shared their resources, no-one could be left wanting:

> …in-fact the community I grew up in, we were like a family. You can not lack anything while your neighbour has something to offer. If you want a hammer, you can borrow from next door (Anastatia, 2019).

Jeremiah notes that this sense of mutual support is no longer something one can depend on. The rural communities he observes today are different from the one he grew up in, where people were deeply connected to each other:

> …the communities were closely knit, unlike today whereby neighbours rarely say hi to each other. Those days we are close as communities,

> neighbour would go to a neighbours house and spend maybe half a day there playing with other children and they will give you food you would eat at that house, the following day you go and play at another house you share a meal there, it was like that (Jeremiah, 2019).

The participants generally propose, then, that one of the most important resources that people had access to in their home communities was this commitment to mutual support. At the same time, they seem to suggest that such relationships of mutual support are now more fragile, so that communities can no longer depend on them for survival.

The participants also explain that subsistence farming played a major role in the survival of their home communities. Jeremiah describes such farming as a way of life that eveyone accepted as normal:

> '… Practicing farming, most families were like that ... so during the school holidays we would go to the lands, look after goats, cattle, help the parent to tender for crops, yes that was basically the kind of life we were living when I was growing up in Molepolole (Jeremiah, 2019).'

The participants explain that farming was not only a way of growing food for one's own family but also enabled people to generate a small income. Anastatia explains that most of the people in her community ran small businesses in this way, in which some would sell fresh produce and some prepared food (Anastatia, 2019). Bakang explains that even for the smallest farming operations, this was still possible:

> …my grandmother was a farmer, she had a farm inside the yard and goats ... most of the people in Tlokweng [were] the same case. Some were selling fat cakes ... the most popular business was selling oranges (Bakang, 2019).

Omphile explains that, even though his grandmother was employed as a teacher and received a monthly salary, farming was still key to her identity and core to her strategy for long-term survival:

> …my grandmother was a teacher so … that's what she did. But then again she was a farmer as well. She started farming, selling meat to butcheries, you know, that's how she survived even after leaving her formal job because of old age - through farming (Omphile, 2019).

He adds that the culture of 'working together' also applied in context of farming:

> ...planting the fields together, kids from this household helping kids from that household work at the fields, then after its done we go to that other household and help (Omphile, 2019).

The participants comment as summarised above suggest that their understanding of rural spaces now is different from how it used to be before. They note that in the past, people were more

self-sufficient and could survive on their own without extensive support from the government. However, the suggestion does not seem to be that support from government incentives was unavailable. They explain, rather, that communities looked for ways of sustaining themselves without depending heavily on such assistance. They did so by pooling resources, by working together as families and communities, and by participating in small business ventures within the local community that could contribute to the self-sustainability of its members. It is acknowledged, in this study, that these descriptions do not suggest that the participants and their communities did not receive assistance from government. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that the participants took pride in the extent to which quality of life in their home communities depended on a culture of mutual assistance and a belief in self-sufficiency.

It is worth noting that the representations of rural communities that emerge from these interviews stand in strong contrast with those that the researcher observed in context of reports on rural development in the *Daily News*. As noted in Chapter Three, those articles were primarily based on press releases and interviews with government officials, who tended to describe rural communities as passive recipients of aid. They defined such communities primarily in terms of their lack of resources and their need for guidance from government officials. The research participants, in contrast, describe people who are resilient and self-sufficient, and who are further strengthened by their support for each other. Chapter Four explores the disjunction between these two representations, by examining the participants' experience of writing such stories.

3. Transition from rural to urban

3.1 Leaving home for the city

All six participants note that they eventually had to leave home and migrate to urban environments for education and work purposes. Some of them make a point of explaining that they did not want to leave but were forced to do so by necessity. Jeremiah, for example, notes that he only left home because he needed to find work:

> …I applied and found employment at information services, the headquarters are in Gaborone, so my first employment was in Gaborone, so it wasn't my decision, a decision was taken for me by my economic needs. If it wasn't for that I don't think I would have left Molepolole (Jeremiah, 2019).

Omphile notes, similarly, that leaving his family behind was hard, but he needed to further his studies:

> …It was not by choice… I had to go to university, so I had to live by myself because none of my family members were in Gaborone at that time (Omphile, 2019).

Those who live in urban villages note that they initially commuted to work but eventually moved to the city because the stress of travelling every day was too demanding. Thato explains that he was spending too much time on the road:

> …obviously it was to be a lot closer to work because commuting can be a hassle at times, you have to leave the house early, you get back home late (Thato, 2019).

Benjamin explains in similar terms that his hometown was just too far away from his place of work:

> …I actually came to live here because of work, so I am closer to my workplace, so Moshupa I have to commute for a distance of 60km (Benjamin, 2019).'

In contrast, other participants explain that they left home in order to be more independent. Anastatia explains that living in a close-knit community was constraining her ability to find her own sense of identity:

> …I just wanted to be independent, because back home if you want to do anything you have to consult not only your family but the whole community (Anastatia, 2019).

She explains that she wanted to learn how to take her own decisions without the guidance of family and friends:

> …you know staying at home there is everything, so you become too dependent on your parents' things. And also, to learn about life… can I survive without my family? Without my community giving me sign posts, go this way go that way (Anastatia, 2019).

Bakang notes, similarly, that being away from home gave her the opportunity to grow:

> …I needed to have my own space, I didn't want to live at home anymore, I learnt how to be responsible as an individual, how to grow myself, how to develop myself (Bakang, 2019).

All of the participants note that the transition from rural to urban life was not easy. Some explain that they struggled with money and accommodation, as it was very expensive to live in the city (Benjamin, 2019). However, for most of the participants, the greatest challenge was the feeling of not being welcomed into a community. Omphile explains that people who came from rural areas were made to feel like outsiders:

> …people always look at you funny, when you move to Gaborone; they ask, 'where are you from?' And you respond, 'I'm from Marobela'. 'Where is that?' 'North East' and they laugh… 'Oho! So, you people don't even know what traffic lights are?' You know, such things … there is innocent teasing, then there is that bullying part, so those are some of the challenges I went through (Omphile, 2019).

Bakang explains that she panicked at first because in contrast to home she suddenly found it difficult to communicate with people:

> …I think because as people we are different, I had to learn different characters of people I was working with, I had to learn how to approach issues, how to communicate (Bakang, 2019).

Some of the participants note that being excluded from a sense of community was not a trivial matter, because there was more crime in the city. Anastatia explains that if you lived outside the safe circle of community support, you were more vulnerable:

> …the challenge was that in this new environment, people were not so welcoming, they don't care about who you are, we don't know each other which to me is very dangerous in this era of crime (Anastatia, 2019).

Thato notes that awareness of the threat posed by a high crime rate can permeate your whole consciousness:

> …You watch your back in the sense that obviously the crime rate is really high so [you] have to be alert all the time and you have to be streetwise for you to survive in the city unlike in the [rural area]where everything moves at a snail pace (Thato, 2019).

The suggestion, here, is also that the experience of living away from the safety of home enables you to learn new life skills.

All of the participants speak about developing strategies that enabled them to deal with the challenges of surviving in an urban environment. In doing so, they found themselves drawing on the values and ideas that they had brought with them from home. Jeremiah notes, for example, that the way he had grown up had prepared him for making his own life choices:

> …I think I was fortunate enough to be able to make decisions from a young age and I think I was grounded like that because I had a solid background growing up (Jeremiah,2019).

For this reason, he was able to make mature decisions about his lifestyle without letting the attractions of city life cloud his judgement:

> I decided that I was not going to keep a large group of friends, so even though I'm somebody who drinks, who goes out, who enjoys night life, I didn't let it go to my head (Jeremiah, 2019).

Omphile explains that life at home had prepared him to look for ways to connect with people around him:

> Well I have always been a people person … talkative and outspoken, like not being in your own cocoon, being able to interact with people, not hiding things from my parents if there was something that was not right, I would tell them everything and they would advise me (Omphile, 2019).

Bakang also mentions that survival in this new environment meant reaching out to people in order to learn from them:

> I learnt from others, how to address issues, when I am in the city, this is how I should handle myself, this is how I should dress, this is how I relate with one another, even to communication level, I learnt how to communicate with people at work (Bakang, 2019).

It would seem, then, that all of the participants felt that in order to adapt to urban life they needed to establish a close relationship with a new community. Anastatia notes that even very recently, long after she had settled in the city, she started a neighbourhood watch because she felt unsafe living in a neighbourhood in which she did not know the people around her:

> …I personally came up with an idea of neighborhood watch during the festive season, and we had to create a WhatsApp group and its progressing because already we planned a braai so that we get to know each one another (Anastatia, 2019).

Anastatia's suggestion, here, appears to be that she was still finding a way of involving people around her in the sense of community that she was familiar with from her life in rural environments.

The participants comment as summarised above suggest that there is a vast difference between life in rural environments as compared to life in urban spaces. There is a consensus amongst the participants that people living in urban spaces are not as united and supportive as people in rural areas. As a result, people living in urban areas are more vulnerable to crime – especially if they have recently made the transition to urban environments and have to exist as 'outsiders'. However, they explain that they were able to apply values and life skills that they had acquired at home within this new environment, and this helped them to adjust and survive. In this sense, then, the knowledge and experience derived from rural life remained of value, even in urban settings.

It was proposed, in Chapter One, that urbanisation has taken a unique form in Botswana, so that aspects of the rural and urban (and with this, the traditional and the modern) continue to co-exist. The participants' description of their transition from rural to urban

environments appear to support this proposal. We see, in these descriptions a continued commitment to anchoring their identity in their rural homes, and in a way of life that comes from home. Chapter Four will consider the extent to which the *Daily News* provide the participants with opportunities to acknowledge this connection to rural life in their journalism.

3.2 Initial perceptions of journalism

A number of the participants explain that, growing up, they only had a very general understanding of what journalism was. Benjamin knew that being a journalist had to do with searching for news that would be interesting to audiences:

> My understanding was that you should go out and just scout for any news which might be of interest to the public (Benjamin, 2019).

Omphile understood that the job had to do with informing people in a way that they would easily understand:

> …just to share information. Just giving people things that they don't have access to, just the information because a lot of the times there is a lot of information that people don't know how to package it (Omphile, 2019).'

Most of the participants also did not decide at an early age that they wanted to become journalists. Thato, Jeremiah and Omphile all explain that for them the journey towards journalism simply began with an interest in writing. Jeremiah notes that he excelled at writing in high school:

> I was good in writing compositions, so I passed well, languages I passed well (Jeremiah, 2019).

Thato explains that there was a teacher who encouraged him to write:

> …she really played a big role in who I am right now as a journalist, she always encouraged me to pursue the languages, especially English because I was the creme de la creme of the class (Thato, 2019).

Omphile mentions that when he was at school, he employed his writing talent to provide those around him with a service:

> …I used to like writing. I was the to go-to guy in school if you wanted to write a girl a love letter, then I charged people for it… [giggles] (Omphile, 2019).

Benjamin, on the other hand, was drawn to journalism from an early age through his exposure to news personalities on the state broadcaster:

> I was inspired by the late Ruari Mokodu and Justice Gaolekwe because the way they were reading news in radio Botswana was extraordinary (Benjamin, 2019).

When speaking about their reasons for choosing newspaper journalism as an occupation, the participants generally note that the decision to do so could virtually be equated with employment at the *Daily News*. Bakang explains that, growing up, the *Daily News* was the only newspaper that she had access to:

> Going back to my childhood, I used to read the *Daily News* … because that was the only popular newspaper back then because it belonged to the government (Bakang, 2019).

Anastatia also explains that her understanding of journalism had been shaped by what she saw in the *Daily News*. For this reason, she believed that the job of a journalist was to be a government informant. She understood this to be a position of credibility and authority:

> I saw a journalist as someone who helps to shape or sets an agenda for the government. We believed in news reporters, if a reporter speaks then we know that's the ultimate truth (Anastatia, 2019).

Bakang notes that, from a young age, she wanted to be part of the world that the *Daily News* stood for:

> … in my head, I used to see my name there. That is what really inspired me… (Bakang, 2019).

Anastatia, in contrast, notes that she became a journalist by chance. While she was working as an office cleaner at the *Daily News*, she was given the opportunity to cover a number of stories:

> …there were three events happening, a robbery, funeral and a court case and I covered all of them… (Anastiatia 2019).

This encouraged her to enroll in correspondence course in journalism:

> … there was a course offered by UNISA on community journalism, just a certificate, I applied and got admitted and I passed the course. That is when I was made a junior journalist (Anastatia, 2019).

Jeremiah suggests that his decision to become a journalist was based in a very limited understanding of what the job would involve:

> I didn't understand anything, I was just fascinated by journalism, being able to go to events, interview people, write stories, have people read what you have written (Jeremiah, 2019).

The participants' comments, as summarised above, suggest that their initial understanding of the job of a journalist was shaped by their exposure to state media during childhood. For this reason, they understood journalism to involve the transmission of information. Anastatia's

comments, in particular, suggests that such information had to do with the agenda of government. The participants' commentary suggests that they understood such work to be worthy of respect and admiration. At the same time, they do not generally describe themselves as having come to journalism out of a long-held sense of vocational commitment. Also, those participants who completed degrees that deal with journalism do not refer in any great detail to the role that such courses played in shaping their understanding of journalism. It is possible, then, that their exposure to more in-depth knowledge of what it means to be a journalist happened primarily in context of their work at the *Daily News*.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that the participants are people who are deeply embedded in a particular way of thinking about rural life, based on their experience of their own home communities. They have very positive memories of these environments, associating them strongly with the mutual care and respect. Such experience has shaped their understanding of how people in rural societies overcome the challenges of daily life. When they talk about the way such communities deal with hardship, it is exactly those aspects of communal life that they understand to be key to their survival.

When the participants describe their transition from rural to urban environments, they explain that they initially felt excluded from the sense of community and belonging that had defined their existence at home. They also suggest that they were able to overcome these difficulties by drawing on lessons that they had learned in rural spaces. Of particular importance, in this respect, was their recognition of the importance of what it means to live in a close-knit and self-reliant society. They emphasize that such relationships could be recreated in urban environments.

When the participants describe their introduction to journalism, most of them explain that their assumptions about this occupation had been shaped by their exposure to state media. It would seem, indeed, that their initial understanding of the social purpose of journalism was based on the conception of the practices that inform state-controlled media; that of a vehicle for the communication of government policy. It was argued, in the introduction to this dissertation, that this approach to journalistic practice does not lend itself to recognition of the knowledge of rural life that these participants bring with them. The next chapter explores this validity of this assertion, in context of an examination of the participants' experience of working as journalists for the *Daily News*.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS II

EXPERIENCE OF JOURNALISM AT THE *DAILY NEWS*

Introduction

This chapter deals with the participants' experience of working at the *Daily News*, with particular reference to their involvement in reporting on rural development. The aim is to gain insight into their experience of reporting on social settings that resemble their own home environments. Section One of the chapter deals with the participants' understanding of guidelines that should be applied in reporting on rural development in context of state-controlled journalism. Section Two explores their experience of putting these guidelines into practice in context of the *Daily News*. It focuses, in doing so, on the extent to which the participants are able to draw on their own knowledge and beliefs about rural life. The examination deals with the extent to which the institutional environment that exists at the *Daily News* either constrains or enables them to do so. Reference is made, where appropriate, to the relevance of normative conceptualisations of journalistic practice as discussed in Chapter Two.

1. Guidelines for reporting on rural development for a state-owned newspaper

In defining what is expected of journalists in reporting on rural development for state-controlled media, the participants refer not only to what they are required to do by their employers but also to their own conceptualisation of credible journalistic practice. A close examination of their comments reveal that guidelines drawn from these two categories can stand in contradiction with each other.

Benjamin notes that working as a journalist at the *Daily News* has been personally empowering to him:

> …[it] has positively made me to grow up, like in the past I was a shy person, but right now I can stand before you and people and express myself … I stutter when I talk, but it has helped me to somehow have confidence when I meet people (Benjamin, 2019).

Thato also speaks about feeling empowered, and in his case, this is because working directly for the state has enabled him to provide rural people with access to information about government policy:

> … the fact that I am working for a state media where we have to really push government policies it really helps me … as [a] reporter to try and empower the people of … Botswana in rural areas…

Jeremiah explains that the job of working for a state-owned newspaper in Botswana involves explaining government policy and describing how such policy is being implemented. He understands the primary audience of such content to be people who live in rural areas:

> …it is our role to write about government schemes and programs and services. What government is doing for us in the communities (Jeremiah, 2019).

Benjamin explains similarly that he is required to make rural communities aware of government projects that are put in place for their benefit:

> I … ensure that people are well informed about government policies because as a government employee you have to inform and educate people of what is going on within their communities (Benjamin, 2019).

Within Benjamin's explanation, "what is going on" in communities is equated with government projects rather than the activities and experiences of ordinary people. The emphasis remains, then, on a 'top-down' process of sharing official information. Thato adds, however, that the focus needs to include consideration of the way such projects should benefit rural communities:

> … [our focus is on] human empowerment and how best we can powerfully impact Batswana and how we can improve their livelihoods through government programs and government policies (Thato, 2019).

He adds that, as government employees, journalists are expected to create awareness within rural communities of such projects and initiatives:

> …being a state media journalist, obviously we have to push … government programmes and government policies (Thato, 2019).

Anastatia explains that this process of "pushing" requires of journalists to write stories that encourage rural communities to take on assistance from government:

> What we need to do is to write stories … that will help… we should write stories that would make people want to take on government programmes so that they can survive (Anastatia, 2019).

The participants generally accept this task as being a legitimate part of their practice and one that they embrace as a central component of the social purpose of a journalist reporting on rural development. Omphile explains that the process of awareness-raising is crucial because communities are often uninformed about assistance that is available to them:

> You find that the problems that we grew up with, for example, family planning, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and all those things are still happening there because people are not exposed to information (Omphile, 2019).

Omphile explains that, in order to raise such awareness, journalists are required to interview officials who are responsible for relevant government programmes and to include their statements in stories:

> As a journalist you talk to the people who are heading [government] departments that are aimed at improving the lives of people (Omphile, 2019).

It would seem, then, that the participants generally accept that their job description requires of them to act as spokespeople for the Botswana government with regards to the implementation of rural development projects. At the same time, however, they do not suggest that this responsibility should preclude them from holding the government accountable for the successful implementation of such projects. Indeed, Omphile understands his work as a reporter to involve a degree of critical engagement with government officials, in order to ensure that they fulfill their obligations towards rural communities:

> …you talk to them on a regular basis, making checks and balances and making sure that people are accountable (Omphile, 2019).

Bakang suggests that in addition, journalists should 'speak back' to government, providing them with information about the difficulties faced by rural communities with regards to access to basic resources:

> …reporting about such issues like water and electricity … as a journalist I have to report on such issues, so that the government is challenged to see what to do to help people in the rural areas (Bakang, 2019).

According to this view, then, journalists are not only responsible for 'top-down' communication about government programmes but also for 'bottom-up' communication to ensure that the government is made aware of conditions as they exist in rural spaces. Jeremiah argues that, in order to perform this function, journalists should have an 'insider' knowledge of life in rural communities:

> It is very important to know the culture or the lifestyle in rural areas … how to approach those people … what they go through every day. If you know [these things] it will be easy for you to be able to go into the community and come out with issues that you can write about (Jeremiah, 2019).

Journalists should, then, also act as spokespeople for communities, informing officials of their assessment of government services:

> I think it is also important for us to give feedback to the government about how the communities view the services that the government give to them (Jeremiah, 2019)

By implication, such communication is understood to include acknowledgement of the failure of government projects if they do not, in fact, improve the well-being of rural communities.

These comments suggest, then, that the participants' understanding of what is expected of them by their employers can stand in contradiction with their personal understanding of good journalistic practice. As they describe it, the task of 'top-down' communication, acting as spokespeople for government, forms part of their official job description. In contrast, the task of 'bottom-up' communication, acting as spokespeople for rural communities, is one that they have personally identified as being required if their work as journalists is to have legitimacy.

Jeremiah explains that this contradiction becomes apparent to him when the 'official' information that journalists are required to distribute do not equate with the realities that they observe within their social environment:

> First and foremost, they expect us to write about government. And this is what I am not comfortable with, but they expect us to write positively about government. Even if the issue at hand, there is nothing positive to write about, they expect us to write positively (Jeremiah, 2019).

He explains that when journalists work for the state, they forego some of their journalistic independence. This can mean that they cannot engage critically with the failures of government:

> We are not given room to write freely about what is happening. We are expected to lean more towards government because we are civil servants. So, we cannot criticise government where we think government is failing. So, these are the challenges (Jeremiah, 2019).

Anastatia explains similarly that she is not given permission to report on everything she sees in rural areas and that she understands this as being contrary to the role that journalists should be playing:

> It's not like we can report everything the way we see it. We need to leave some of the things out. Not that they are supposed to be left [out]. (Anastatia, 2019).

She explains that criticism of a government project would be interpreted, by government, as an attempt to undermine the authority of its officials:

> Today everything is too political, if you write in a certain way it would be like you are de-campaigning someone, that is where the problem is (Anastatia, 2019).

Bakang suggests that if journalists who work for the government were to write freely about what they observe, they would be breaking the law:

> You are not free to say what you want because you are restricted to obey the law. It's like you are a mouthpiece to the government, even. When you report you have to be careful (Bakang, 2019).

In Chapter, Three, in context of the discussion of Kovach and Rosenstiel's study of the personal normative guidelines followed by journalists, we saw that these guidelines often stand in tension with the institutional rules that are dominant in their environment. It is clear from this section that the research participants observe such tension between their journalistic responsibilities are conceptualised by the state and on the other hand their own conceptualisation of credible journalistic practice. From the perspective of the state, journalists are expected to act only as their spokespersons in order to ensure that rural communities are informed about the government's development projects and are invested in them. From the perspective of the participants, they should be able to combine this responsibility with that of acting as spokespeople for rural communities. They should, then, be able to engage critically with the extent to which government projects can be seen to serve the needs of these communities. They suggest, however, that the terms of their employment specifically precludes them from doing so.

The participants' description of what is required of them by the state seems representative of the normative conceptualisation of journalistic practice associated with an authoritarian and polarized pluralist model of the media, as described by Hallin and Mancini. It seems, furthermore, to be informed by a collaborative understanding of the social purpose of journalism. Within this conceptualisation, journalism works in partnership with the state in order to achieve the goals of social development. The participants' own conceptualisation of the social purpose of journalism is also collaborative, but it incorporates aspects of the monitorial role. The participants embrace the idea, in particular, that their work should involve critical surveillance of the extent to which the state succeeds in the achievement of developmental goals. The purpose of the collaborative partnership with the state is, in other words, to serve the people of Botswana and it is their responsibility to monitor the extent to which this is achieved. It is in this sense, then, that the participants own conception of journalism stands in tension with that of their employers.

The remainder of this chapter examines the participants' experience of navigating the tension between their own normative understanding of journalism and that of their employers, as part of their practice of reporting on rural development for the *Daily News*.

2. Experience of working for the Daily News

The discussion in this section deals, firstly, with the participants' description of engaging with rural communities as part of their fieldwork. It then moves to an examination of their experience of the *Daily News* as an institutional space from which to report on these communities and the environments in which they are based.

2.1 Experience of engaging with rural communities during fieldwork

The participants agree that their experience, as journalists, of gaining access to rural communities is constrained by the social conditions that exist within rural Botswana. Bakang explains that even if the newspaper itself is able to provide resources, the infrastructural problems in rural areas can remain insurmountable. This applies, for example to the poor condition of rural roads:

> Because the roads are bad, transport [is a] challenge. Even if the government has bought me a brand new car, because of the … bad roads I'm not able to reach places I want to reach (Bakang, 2019).

These conditions mean that deep rural environments can remain inaccessible to journalists:

> Sometimes you go as far as Bodikwa in Okavango and when you come back the car is spoilt because of the road. That's the major challenge. I'm not able to report on what I want to report. Even if I have a story idea, I end up giving up because of this issue of transport (Bakang, 2019).

At the same time, once one enters rural spaces, communicating from the field to the newsroom is almost impossible because of poor network services:

> Internet was really bad, every time I had to write a story I would email and sometimes it would take me two days to send an email. It was challenging (Bakang, 2019).

Omphile adds that a further challenge is that members of rural communities do not always recognise the value of speaking to journalists. The difficulties of daily survival are so dire for such communities that they do not regard journalism as a priority:

> Before you even do anything [to do with the media], you need electricity, water, you need health services, you need all those things

> and if you do not have access to [them] then who cares about reading (Omphile, 2019).

The participants also explain that the task of entering rural environments as part of their fieldwork is personally demanding. Bakang explains that she does not feel able to confront the harsh conditions that exist in rural Botswana. Having to survive without adequate nutrition is particularly hard:

> My health was compromised because I was always sick and I realised it was because I was not eating healthy. I was really suffering, it was bad for my health (Bakang, 2019).

She also finds it very taxing to negotiate environments in which she is required to communicate with people across language barriers:

> These people are Batswana yes but most of them treasure their languages. At some point I met people who don't speak Setswana, they only spoke Sehambukushu and Seherero (Bakang, 2019).

Omphile agrees that language barriers represented a key challenge:

> Well, you find that some of the areas in Botswana that are rural, some of them they don't know Setswana, they don't know English, they speak Sehambukushu, when you go up North for example Mohembo village, you find that people do not speak Setswana or English so it is very difficult to share information with them (Omphile, 2019).

Thato also speaks of the difficulties of communicating under such conditions:

> One of the challenges that I really had was the language thing, because the [people do] not speak your mother tongue, your mother language (Thato, 2019).

Omphile explains that even if one is able to overcome such barriers of communication, the fact that communities do not speak Setswana means that they are unable to read newspapers or listen to the state broadcaster. For this reason, they do not see the point of speaking to journalists:

> They just try and survive from day to day, they don't care about newspapers, they don't care about who is in power, as long as you can give them their pension money, they are fine.

This can be very frustrating to journalists, because they know that it is only through access to the media that such communities can learn about programmes that are designed to benefit them:

> People need to know about these things, but they don't know. People don't know that if you don't work and you have five kids, no employment, no revenue stream, you can apply for these programs (Omphile, 2019).

Thato adds that many people in rural communities are hesitant to communicate with journalists, as if they do not have the courage to speak openly about their circumstances:

> A lot of your sources in rural areas do not have the self-confidence to [open up to] you so you struggle to get proper news when you have to do interviews (Thato, 2019).

However, because of his own rural background, he is often able to read between the lines in order to make sense of the social experiences of the people he interviews:

> Growing up in such an environment and having to report on stuff I went through I can easily relate to that, [it] helps me to come up with a concrete story because I can relate to that (Thato, 2019).

Jeremiah also note that such knowledge of local circumstance is an important requirement for the journalist working in a rural environment. Journalists who have grown up in urban areas would struggle, because they are not familiar with the people and their way of life:

> When you come from the city without any prior knowledge of the rural areas after a week you are going to tell the headquarters that there is nothing to write about here because you don't know the lifestyle (Jeremiah, 2019).

The participants comments, as summarised in this section, suggests that even though they come from rural environments themselves, they find the process of doing fieldwork in such spaces highly demanding. Their attempts to capture aspects of the social experiences of rural communities tend to be frustrated by the harsh realities of life that exist in these environments. Furthermore, they face complex challenges in overcoming barriers of communication in order to do justice to the reporting process. It would seem, then, that even before one considers the institutional specifics of working for a state newspaper, the journalists already face serious challenges in producing journalism about rural environments that meet their personal expectations. They argue, at the same time, that they would not be able to meet these challenges without drawing on the experience of growing up in similar environments. Their prior knowledge of what it means to live under such conditions enable them to make sense of the situations that they observe, and report on them with meaning.

It is noticeable that the tension that the participants experience between their own conceptualition of journalistic practice and that of their employers does not surface in context of these descriptions of working in the field. They do speak of severe challenges, but these have to do, rather, with the difficulties involved in putting their own conceptualisation of journalism into practice in an environment characterized by poverty and cultural complexity. They do not, in other words, appear to feel frustrated in these environments by the institutional

constraints imposed on them by the expectations of their employers. As we will see, these frustrations emerge, rather, when they speak of the institutional environment of the newsroom.

2.2 The newspaper as an institutional environment

The participants agree that working for a state newspaper as reporters means entering into a set of editorial relationships that restricts their ability to speak openly about the events and conditions that they bear witness to in rural environments. Thato explains that you are restricted from doing so by an authoritarian rulebook:

> When you join an institution, you are guided by its rules and its terms and conditions. [They] somehow monitor me or they somehow restrict me to really express myself because I know there is an expectation and that's what I need to oblige to (Thato, 2019).

This rulebook is not just enforced by the editorial leadership of the paper, but in fact by any government official in a position of authority who feels the need to intervene:

> It's very difficult because politically going up, just from personal secretary to the government job, ministers … everybody is a news editor! Any minister can just call you and say, 'apparently you guys want to put something there that is not supposed to be there' (Omphile, 2019).

Furthermore, even when no direct interference takes place, the participants end up applying self-censorship because they feel the need to outguess officials with regards to what might be permissible. Jeremiah explains that, in principle, public servants are prohibited from disclosing any information that has come to their notice in the course of their duties unless authorised by the minister in writing. In practice, the need for such permission is not enacted, and instead journalists are left to work out for themselves where the line might be that they should not cross. Jeremiah notes that he sometimes feels compelled to disregard a story because it is not clear what might be expected:

> I was afraid to write that story to tell the truth … I just let the story pass without writing it. So, these are the issues; when you look back you say, 'I could have done a better job if I wasn't working for government but I'm working for government, there is nothing I can do' (Jeremiah, 2019).

The participants explain that journalists know that they cannot, in particular, report on matters that portray the state or any of its officials in a bad light. Omphile notes that this applies, for example, when readers might conclude from the description of a project that a government official has been guilty either of incompetence or corruption:

> 900 million was given to E-government[5] to connect the entire government grid to make the internet faster. Well the internet is not fast, systems are always down. But the person who is leading the project is a minister (Omphile, 2019).

Anastatia speaks of an instance in which she had clear evidence that government funds intended for the benefit of a rural community were being mismanaged by the officials in charge:

> They just give out the money and dump it there, not monitoring who is using it and how it doesn't matter (Anastatia, 2019).

She felt compelled to pursue this story in order to ensure that these officials would be held accountable:

> I wrote the first story that the funds are being misused, secondly, I wanted to find out if there are any follow up on those people who are running this (Anastatia, 2019)

However, she was told not to pursue the story because it would be damaging not only to those officials but to the government in general:

> I was told that I should not burn my fingers … [because] it would have hit back at the government that there is nothing being put in place to make sure that the funds are used properly (Anastasia, 2019).

Bakang explains that this rule applies even when the purpose of a story is simply to describe the degree of suffering experienced by rural communities due to conditions in their environment. If knowledge of such suffering may lead to criticism of the authorities, it must be obscured. She gives the example of reporting on a situation in which people were dying of malaria:

> When for example 20 people died because of malaria, you can't exactly write that. You just write, 'Malaria is a challenge in Okavango'. You can't state numbers of people who died because people will be questioning the government (Bakang, 2019).

Bakang recalls that in one instance, the degree of self censorship that she applied was extreme:

> I did not even include the part that it killed people, I remember I only included the part that said malaria is a challenge in Okavango and that's it (Bakang, 2019).

She explains that when many people die as a result of malaria, the government tends to hide such information and whoever is accountable will act only to protect themselves. When such an official instructs her to remain silent, she feels deeply frustrated:

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[5] E-government is a term used, in Botswana, to describe the delivery of government information and services through information and communications technology. The purpose is to enable the government to connect and interact with its citizens and the citizens to have full access to government for interface and service delivery.

> Sometimes I feel that it is not fair. When you work for government media, you are just an information officer (Bakang, 2019).

Jeremiah refers to an instance in which he witnessed the failure of a government official to act in the interests of local communities. He explains that in this instance, the story had to do with the rights of workers, who were being exploited by their employer:

> I was working in Selebi Phikwe when the Dikgatong dam project was being constructed in 2008, there were a lot of bad things happening between the contractor who was Chinese and the employees and they called the minister to intervene (Jeremiah,2019)

The minister did not, however, consult with the workers, in order to ensure that their interests were represented:

> When [he] went there he did not address the problem, he just went to the contractor and [left] without addressing the issues of the employees (Jeremiah, 2019).

Jeremiah explains that, as a government employee, he felt unable to report on the minister's failure to protect the rights of these workers. He suggests, furthermore, that journalists who work for private media would be better placed to play this role. This is, however, not possible in deep rural environments, where the commercial press has no presence:

> In Phikwe there were not many private reporters, so it means that the country was starved of information about what was happening there (Jeremiah, 2019).

The participants' comments as summarised above suggest that they are frustrated by the extent to which the authoritarian (and often unwritten) 'rule book' of the state newspaper constrains them from putting into practice their own normative commitment to monitorial journalism. Such restriction applies not only to any scrutiny of the actions of government officials but even to the task of simply bearing witness to the degree of suffering experienced in rural communities. As a result of such restriction, the participants find themselves having to remain silent about the realities of life in rural communities, colluding in the omission of such reality from their own journalism. However, even though they feel personally compromised by the need to follow these rules, they do not appear to consider the option of challenging them. Omphile explains that working for the state is like being employed by a parent who demands complete obedience and loyalty to family. For the journalists, the requirements of this relationship are so compelling that they take priority even over their personal commitment to the interests of rural communities:

> You can't criticise your own mother at home to the entire world. As much as [there are] balances and checks [that] you are supposed to do as a responsible journalist, you can't (Omphile, 2019).

He proposes that the helplessness that the journalists feel results from the absence of a relationship of journalistic independence between the *Daily News* and the state, and he argues that this absence is fundamentally problematic. Under such conditions, it is not possible to establish an approach to journalism that is guided by integrity:

> You can't be a referee, a player, and an opponent at the same time because that is what you are doing. You are a government, you own media, you are a journalist, but these journalists can't do balancing and checks to these programs and everything, it is always one sided, it is always positive… (Omphile, 2019)

Conclusion

We saw, in Section One of this chapter, that the participants draw a distinction between the state's conceptualisation of credible journalistic practice and their own understanding of such practice. From the first perspective, they are expected to act as spokespersons for the state, and they accept this as core to their responsibility. However, from a personal perspective, they also believe that they should act as spokespeople for rural communities by engaging critically with the extent to which government projects serve their needs. These two requirements need not, of course, be in compatible; within a classic collaborative model of journalistic practice, reporters are expected to balance the two requirements against each other. However, it would seem that in context of the authoritarian culture of a state-owned newspaper, such negotiation is discouraged.

In Section Two, we saw that when the participants enter rural environments in order to do fieldwork, they attempt to live up to the requirements of both aspects of journalistic practice, Their work can, in other words, be seen to involve a process of reporting on the activities of the state, while at the same time bearing witness to the experiences of rural communities. They describe their experience of pursuing these goals as highly challenging. This is due in part to the inadequacy of the available resources and infrastructure in rural communities and also to the complexity of working across language barriers. There is, however, the additional challenge of engaging with communities who do not see any benefit in collaborating with journalists. The participants point out, in this context, that when people are barely surviving, they are unlikely to prioritise an engagement with media. This is particularly true for people who perceive themselves as having very little access to power, and who do not feel empowered to speak about their own hardship. When the media that they do have access to is presented in a language other than their own, recognition of its value becomes even more unlikely. Under such conditions, journalists need to labour intensively in order to be able to bear witness to the

experiences of the communities that they are supposed to be representing. The participants suggest that their ‘insider’s knowledge’ of life in rural areas becomes crucial to overcoming these challenges.

It is, however, when the participants describe what it means to return from the field to the newsroom that the participants refer to the tension between the official requirements of working for a state newspaper and their personal vision. They explain, in particular, that when they write their stories, much of what they bear witness to in the context of their fieldwork becomes censored. They point out, furthermore, that much of this process of censorhip is self imposed. The ‘rule book‘ of what one can or cannot say is not an explicit one, and often the participants find themselve needing to guess as to what would be permissable. This ambiguity appears to intensify their need for restraint, so that they are on the side of caution. The participants‘ description of this process of self-censorship suggests that it makes them deeply uncomfortable. This discomfort is informed by their own commitment to representing the interests of people who live in rural communities. Nevertheless, despite this commitment, they appear to feel unable to challenge the unwritten laws that deny much of the experience of these communities. Within the authoritarian culture of a state-owned newspaper, this does not appear to be an option.

It is of interest to note that, even in the more liberated space of fieldwork, where the participants feel free to pursue the requirement of bearing witness to the social experiences of rural people, their approach to reporting remains narrowly conceived. In particular, the assumption remains that their role is to ‘speak for‘ rural communities, rather enabling such communities to speak for themselves. There is, in other words, little acknowledgement of the possibility of a ’facilitative’ approach to journalistic practice, which aims to empower citizens by involving them in participatory processes. The research participants do not speak, for example, about the need to involve members of rural communities in deliberative discussion about the achievement of social development. Even here, then, away from the constraints of the newsroom ‘rule book’, their approach to journalistic practice remains framed by an authoritarian paradigm.

CLOSING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study responded to critique, in media scholarship, of the extent to which the coverage of rural development in state-controlled media in Botswana tend to marginalize the experiences of rural communities. The study pursued this response in context of an investigation of the way journalists working for state media in Botswana experience reporting on development in rural communities. The focus was, more particularly, on their experience of the limitations that the conventions of state media are said to place on the foregrounding of their knowledge of rural life.

Chapter One provided a conceptual framework for this study, drawing on a review of literature dealing with the context of Botswana. We saw that this country generally describes itself as a developmental 'success story', particularly in the context of rural development. However, despite such success, it remains a deeply unequal country with high unemployment rate and increasing poverty, especially in rural areas. It was argued that this history of continued inequality is informed by the authoritarian approach that characterises Botswana's approach to governance. Within context of such authoritarianism, a participatory approach to development has not been possible and the process of establishing a development agenda has not been democratised. We saw, furthermore, that this culture of authoritarianism is repeated within the Botswana media landscape, which is tightly controlled by institutions of government. This has meant that coverage of rural development operates primarily as the top-down dissemination of information about government projects.

Chapter Two provided a conceptual framework for considering the way in which the *Botswana Daily News* articulates its approach to the coverage of rural development and how this is informed by its historical context. It is argued that the media landscape is expressive of an authoritarian, polarised pluralist, developmental media system. The *Botswana Daily News* is framed by a collaborative understanding of the social purpose of journalism and reporting practices are expressive of authoritarian tradition of development journalism. Finally, it proposed that journalists working for this paper may possibly experience a disjunction between their own normative understanding of what journalism should achieve and the approach to reporting that is endorsed by their institutional context.

Chapter Three discussed the research plan that guided the empirical component of this study. It was argued, in this chapter, that life history interviews would enable the researcher to explore the relationship between journalists' own experiential knowledge of rural environments, and their experience of drawing on such knowledge as part of their journalism.

Chapter Four demonstrated that all of the research participants do, indeed, have in-depth knowledge of rural environments in Botswana. Indeed, their relationship with these environments is not only based on objective knowledge but also a powerful subjective commitment to the value systems that are fundamental to survival in rural communities. They acknowledge the role that government plays in supporting such communities, but they also honour them for their culture of self-sufficiency, resilience and mutual care. It is also demonstrated, in this chapter, that despite making the transition to urban environments, the participants continue to anchor their sense of identity in this value systems of their rural homes.

In Chapter Five it was established that the participants do, indeed, ascribe to a normative conceptualisation of journalism that transcends the limitations of the guidelines for reporting that characterise state media. They accept that their role is to be spokespeople for the government, but at the same time they embrace the idea that they should represent the interests of rural communities. In this capacity, their work should involve critical surveillance of the extent to which the state succeeds in the achievement of developmental goals. We saw, however, that because of the constraints of their institutional environment, they are often unable to bear witness to what they observe in their fieldwork regarding the experiences of rural communities. They speak of their journalistic practice, in this context, as one that is defined by censorship. At the same time, is apparent that the participants' own conceptualisation of journalism remains defined by an authoritarian vision. They do not, in particular, give consideration to the need to enable rural communities to speak for themselves, by involving them in a facilitative, participatory approach to journalism.

It was pointed out, in Chapter Three, that the editorial leadership of the *Botswana Daily News* are very willing to collaborate in research projects, such as the one conducted for the purpose of this dissertation. It is, for this reason, the recommendation of the researcher that further studies be pursued with this newspaper, building on insights from this dissertation. It may, in particular, be of value to pursue a study similar to that of Kovach and Rosenstiel in the Botswana context, focusing on journalists' conceptualisation of the ideals of journalistic practice. As we have seen, the participants in this study note that their inability to challenge the reporting guidelines that constrain their practice stems at least partly from the fact that these guidelines are unwritten. It may then be that such journalists can be empowered by a research project that is officially endorsed by this newspaper's leadership, and that aims to put into words the conceptualisation of good journalism that guide the journalistic community of practice at this paper. The rule book can, in this way, become written, in consultation with journalist themselves.

It may, furthermore, be of benefit to respond to the willingness on the part of the Botswana *Daily News* to support the education of its own journalistic staff. There is, in particular, potential for a partnership between the newspaper and a tertiary institution, focusing on an enrichment of the paper's approach to journalism for development. As noted in this study, the paper's reporting practices are expressive of an authoritarian tradition of development journalism. It may be of value to expose the editorial leadership of this paper on the more facilitative, participatory approaches to development journalism, as a way of enriching the tradition of journalism that already exists within its newsroom. As part of such a project, it would be of value to explore the value of introducing languages such as Sekalaka and Sehambukushu into the paper, so that it can reach a more diverse audience. This would help to bridge the language barriers that the journalists describe, in the context of this study.

However, as noted in the introduction to this study, it was noted that the Botswana National Development Policy (NDP) stipulates that state-owned media exists only to raise public awareness about the governments' national development policies and objectives. It may then be that, until this policy is revised, interventions of the kind described above will not be supported by the state. For this reason, stakeholders in the democratisation of development in Botswana will need to lobby for the revision of this policy, before the transformation of state media can become a reality.

Outside the context of such broad transformation, one strategy that journalists working for the *Botswana Daily News* could pursue in order to bear witness to what they are observing in rural environments is by establishing their own digital platforms. Although such content would only reach an elite audience, it would still mean that a different interpretation of rural development enters the public domain in Botswana.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The interview guide

Reporting on home: How journalists from rural Botswana experience covering rural development while working at the Botswana Daily News.

- **Stage 1**

Questions that would make people want to talk about their childhood memories. I need to convey individual stories through their own words. The purpose is to find out what it was like for them surviving and living in rural environments; what they learnt about what Botswana's rural environments are like and how people living in those spaces find solutions to the problems that they face.

- **Questions**

- Could you please tell me about yourself?
- Where did you grow up?
- How was life like for you at home while growing up?
- What are your treasured childhood memories?
- What kind of community did you grow up into?
- How did people sustain their lives in your community?
- What were some of the challenges that they faced?
- How did they overcome those challenges?
- What are some of the positive aspects of your village that you can share with me?
- What was good about life and what was bad?
- What was good about life in your village and what was bad?
- How did the people in your community survive?
- We have a saying in Setswana that 'motho ke motto ka batho" a go ne go na le mowa wa bojammogo mo motseng wa gago?
- Please share with me some of those memories.
- What is it about your village that made you feel like, 'this is home?'
- What is it about home that you honour and value?

- How is it different from where you live now?
- When did you decide to leave home?
- Why did you leave home?

- **Stage 2**

I want to find out how this person experienced moving from a rural environment into an urban environment and the decisions/process that they made along the way about the kind of person they would become. I need to find out how they survived in this new environment as an individual and how becoming a journalist formed part of that 'new identity.'

Questions

- How is it that you migrated from the village into the city? Please take me through that process.
- What decisions did you make along the way? Please take me through the decision-making process.
- How did you survive in this new environment as an individual who has just migrated from the village into the city?
- What were some of the challenges that you faced in this new environment?
- How were you able to overcome those challenges?
- How has becoming a journalist formed part of that 'new identity'
- How did you learn about what it means to be a journalist?
- How did you learn about becoming a journalist?
- Before you became a journalist, how did you understand what it meant to be a journalist?
- Please take me through your journey of becoming a journalist.
- Has it always been a dream of yours to be a journalist?

- **Stage 3**

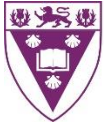
I need to find out how they now see their role in society as journalists. I want them to tell me what they understand broadly speaking to be their role as a journalist. More specifically, how they understand their role in reporting back on those sorts of environment that they come from; how they experience doing that job while working for the Botswana Daily News.

Questions

- When you think back about everything that you have told me about growing up in a rural environment, do you find that the work you do now allows you to draw on that knowledge?
- How do you understand to be your role in reporting back about the environment that you come from?
- To what extent is life back home of relevance to what you do now?
- When you think back about everything that you have told me about the things that people have to cope with to survive in rural environments, how is it that your job can help them?
- How is working for this institution (the Botswana Daily News) helped you in reporting back home?
- What are some of the challenges that you face when reporting on rural development?
- How has your experience been like being a journalist while working for the Botswana Daily News?

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Academic Research Information and Consent Form



School of Journalism & Media Studies
Rhodes University

Research project name: Reporting on home: How journalists from rural Botswana experience covering rural development while working at the Botswana Daily News.

Participant Information Sheet

We would like to invite you to take part in the above-named study but before you decide, please read the following information.

What is the purpose of this study?

The study will focus on the way journalists working for state media in Botswana experience reporting on development in rural communities.

Who is doing the study?

The study is being conducted by:

Name: Bame Dirakano lekoma
Occupation: Masters student at Rhodes University, South Africa
Nationality: Motswana
Student number: g1713077
Email: bame.lekoma@gmail.com

The study will be supervised by:

Name: Dr Jeanne Du Toit
Occupation: Lecturer at Rhodes University, South Africa
Email: j.dutoit@ru.ac.za

Who is being asked to participate?

The participants of the study are journalists working for the *Botswana Daily News* with a particular focus on individuals who come from rural backgrounds. I would like to gain insight into the way such journalists experience working within the conventions of state media, given the limitations that these are said to place on the foregrounding of the experiences of rural communities. I chose the *Botswana Daily News* because it is a key example of state-owned media in Botswana. It is the only newspaper publishing daily, it is circulated free of charge and is readily available across the country, including in rural areas.

Your rights as a research participant

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and anonymous. Information gathered during the research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and all efforts will be made to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. Please note that while your name will be recorded with the data, it will not be used in the report without your permission. All identifiable data will be stored securely on a computer with password-restricted access and only the researcher (and supervisor if applicable), and ethics committee members will have access to it. All identifiable information will be destroyed at the end of the study or after 15years.

If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You may also decide not to answer any specific question.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will be published online, hard copies will also be available for future reference but your names or any identifying information will not be on any publications unless you give consent. Before the publication you will be given an opportunity to go through the results and if you are uncomfortable with the results you can withdraw your statements at any time.

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