

Religious explosion in media: a capture of the society of Botswana⁵⁰

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Abstract

Recent years have witnessed a phenomenal growth of religious activities in all communication media. This phenomenal and explosive development is seen in free satellite television broadcasts, free radio space even in national radio, public crusades and indoctrinating school services. An observer would worry about the fanaticisation of the nation through religion and the desecration of the Christian theology through miracle performances. There are now more churches in a locality than schools. Religion is now commercialised, and TV and radio programmes are becoming effective advertising agents for this commodity. If this phenomenon pleases the uncritical, it should worry social observers as this religious explosion can be the onset of social vicissitudes and cultural disintegration. Mainline churches have lost religious authority and have been put out of any role in guiding a managed religious spirituality. Traditional African religions are now an anathema. From a postcolonial theory and the social phenomenological interpretations, the paper argues that the religious explosion in our society will have nefarious consequences such as losing the fabric of culture, putting out of currency African beliefs, and evacuating Badimo from among Batswana. The antithesis of this condition is a society that has no identity nor developmental direction.

Keywords: *religious explosion; religious social capture; religious deculturalisation*

Introduction

The paper adopts the metaphor “religious explosion” with the view to put into perspective a phenomenal growth of religious activities in Botswana. The explosion also suggests that these multiplication of religions and or religious societies became uncontrollable. This disproportionate growth has also recently worried the government, who has now raised from fifty to two hundred and fifty the number of congregants to register a church. And Mmegi,

⁵⁰ This paper contains some portions from Chebanne (2013) and benefitted from the inputs of Malebogo Kgalemang who read it at the BOLESWA Conference 2019.

(November, 2015) carried a story, "More Churches register despite new law". Christianity in Botswana or in the African continent is no longer just little turfs of denominational expression or religions persuasion. Christianity has slowly but surely usurped African culture by knitting and ramifying its influence into the African cultural values' fabric (Mijoga, 2002). The arguments put forth in this paper should not be construed to paint all faith institutions with one brush nor are they intended to label religious practices as agents of doom. However, when a religion takes its hold on a culture, it first annihilates it, alienates tenants of such culture, and when it is completely in control it defines and controls the emerging culture. When Africans of Christian or Islamic faiths think they are talking African culture, they are misguided as they are looking at the parochial elements of culture, but the fundamental matters of their authentic cultures are cast away and trampled upon. While it is true that we cannot yet talk of theocracy in Southern Africa with regards to Christianity, the truth is that Christianity has now institutionalized and Christians undertake their religious beliefs in exercise of state functions as if there were in a theocracy (Sanneh, 2001).

What emerges from the gloomy and pitiful condition of what we call Setswana culture is that it is factually downtrodden, despised, and without conscious political remedy, it is dead. Setswana culture is not even a subaltern, but a non-entity in the life of a Christian individual. This observation is most fitting in that, of necessity, if one agitates for a cultural revival or renaissance as is not the timorous purpose of this discussion, politics must shun religion. None of the major religions are African, and they can never be construed to build an African identity - unless if this identity is not important to Batswana. It is like it was not enough, one may add parenthetically, to break the shackles of colonialism and left the African soul in the embrace of European civilisation values embodied in Christianity. If African identity is important, generally, and if Setswana identity is necessary, specifically, then it is important to critically determine by what means it could be promoted and sustained in the process of modernizing the Botswana society. Christianity has certainly created a cultural schism and deculturalisation within the Botswana's religious and spiritual setup as Barrett (1968, reprint 1970) has argued; and therefore the renewal of culture will never be African culture, but Christian culture as the new churches seem to prove (Mijoga, 2002).

Religion in Botswana has now created a fertile ground for its growth and influence. It has completely domesticated politics. Even self-style Marxists, women and men of the left, are now professing Christians. Not national or cultural event starts without Christian prayer

services. Even the national radio and television media becomes vehicles of this religious fanaticisation ideology. One has a lot to wonder at, to see journalists on television and to hear them on radio, and other media having invited religious people to comment on social morals and social ideals under the pretext that they are talking for the Batswana culture; and this is the highest of transgression to the indigenous culture of Batswana. Can't Setswana culture talk for itself? Does Setswana culture need a religion to speak for the social values of Batswana? Under the new churches, especially as they are in variance with the founded churches, the cultural and spiritual violations are far reaching as it constitutes deculturalisation. The new churches integration into the Botswana society is fraught with everything alienating and annihilating. Culturally, this is damaging and in the end, Batswana have completely lost their cultural values reference, in culture and in religion (Chebanne, 2013). All these have the effect of shifting cultural power from the tradition of the people to religious practice of Christianity (Sanneh, 2001). As the intolerance and despising of the indigenous Botswana culture are let loose, the people effectively have no culture of their own. They are left with a religion or religions that they even do not have the full knowledge of or means to manage to observe them – Batswana are lost in a pitiful way, and this is most regretted. Indirectly and in a pervasive manner, and without even decreeing it, the Government gives religious movements platforms to administer to Batswana doses of the religious opium on the cultural order. This is happening in the manner that religion has free access even in Government mass media.

A postcolonial Interpretation of the Religious explosion in Botswana

Religion in Botswana has been an agent in perpetuating colonial and exotic influences which have impacted indigenous cultures in an explosive way resulting in cultural hybridisation, assimilation, indoctrination, deculturalisation, and altogether capture of the society. Postcolonial theory can be used to interrogate colonial social transformation assumptions and expectations that are entrenched in Christian interpretation and regulation of African society. Before the European civilisation's advent into Southern Africa, or rather, when Europeans came into Southern Africa, when they did not see cathedrals and temples, they deceitfully believed that southern African societies had no religion, or that they did not know God. African societies were therefore treated as Heathens and primitive beings. This created the view that European civilisation and religion were superior and anything African was inferior. Let us start by considering this 19th Century view by Europeans, succinctly captured by Wessels (2008: 44) where the written media was a conduit.

The Bushman convicts are recorded in the Breakwater prison records as having no religion. People of the bush, almost wild animals, they were thought incapable of it. Wilhelm Bleek, the initiator of the project that resulted in the celebrated Bleek and Lloyd collection of !Xam Bushman materials, would not have concurred. He observed of Bushman rock art, for example, that it represented an “attempt, however imperfect, at a truly artistic conception of the ideas which most deeply moved the human mind, and filled it with religious feelings” (Bleek 1874: 13). Bleek believed also, as a matter of science rather than religion, no doubt, that, like all Khoisan peoples (‘Hottentots’ in his vocabulary), the /Xam worshipped the sun, moon and stars. This view, mistaken as it turned out, led him to concentrate on traditional stories which featured the celestial bodies (Bank 2006: 159). Mathias Guenther (1996: 89) has suggested that Bleek’s view of Bushman religion was predetermined by the influence on his thought of reading the work of Max Müller, who saw evidence of sun worship behind every traditional tale.

The European pseudo-historians and their narratives started interpreting African history since the time of adventurers, traders and settlers, and painted it black and the continent of African, which was labelled the Dark Continent. And these were the ideas that justified slavery and Christian religious crusades (Wessels, 2008; Sanneh, 2001; Oduyoye, 1979). This is how Africans were viewed in this history by Europeans. The European Missionaries then felt justified to drive and force their faith on Africans, and therefore with regards to these violations no African should acquiesce and remain complacent.

The European history about Africa is there crucial in the discussion of religious explosion in Botswana. What is of import also is to provide an interpretative theory that will provide a better framework for the phenomenology of Christianity in Botswana. The postcolonial theory is used by various scholars in various disciplines as a tool for interpreting social phenomena of political, cultural or economic nature. After Africa’s independence, religious movements became social agents that determinedly or insentiently expedited colonial and imperial establishment in African societies (Rukundwa (2008: 339). The postcolonial theory employs a constructive engagement with these social phenomena to allow for a better account and understanding of how past realities of the society evolved to current realities that perpetuate colonial value systems beyond colonialism. In postcolonial theory, religion is a cultural product

or construct, which in Africa religion, took the lofty role of a determinant of cultural values, even the formulations an applications of laws (Rukundwa, 2008). Here is what Wessels (2008: 47) states from a postcolonial perspective of religious views on Africa:

It is my view that the investigation of the question of spirituality and religion in relation to the !Xam can best be conducted in the course of a close examination of the !Xam texts. Such an enquiry must begin with the analysis of individual narratives, if general and, often, self-fulfilling statements about Bushman spirituality are to be evaded. This approach accords, in my view, to some degree with those aims of postcolonial analysis which attempt simultaneously to interrogate Western categories of thought, highlighting their local or colonial provenance in order to question their ability to comprehend the products of other cultures, and to allow the categories of indigenous thought and exegesis to emerge.

The above quotation is to the point as an illustration of the civilisational and religious conflict that have occurred, and that have resulted in the subjugation of the African mind, if one considers the religious transformation of Africa in the post colony (Rukudwa, 2008; Wessels, 2008). In this regard, Botswana considers herself a religious nation, generally, but specifically a Christian nation, if prayers performed in major national events (parliament, even at schools) are anything to allude to. Haron (2016: 2), extrapolating from the Botswana Census of 2001 has this to say about the national attitude on religion.

Botswana's government commends its communities for being religiously oriented and, as supported by IRFR 2015, it treats each religious tradition with the utmost respect. In addition, the government not only grants an individual the right to change religion if he/she so desires but it also permits individuals and groups to propagate their respective religious beliefs and practices to others. One may confidently argue that Botswana adopted a set of religious friendly policies such as *Vision 2016* – that has since been replaced by *Vision 2036* on the 30th of September 2016 when Botswana celebrated its 50th anniversary - for its citizens who are, in the main, Christians as reflected in the BC 2001 and BC 2011 censuses; these citizens have, however, been assisted in building the country with the support of its sizeable expatriate communities many of whom adhere to

various religious traditions that were founded and flourished in the Middle East and South Asia.

It is therefore apposite to accentuate that one of the contributors to African society's transformation in the colonial and postcolonial periods has been religion. Through their theology, their education, their message of repentance from social beliefs, foreign religions in Africa have effectively alienated and annihilated African Society's culture and identity (Mijoga, 2002). In Botswana Christianity and the cultural discourse associated with it effectively accord to this religion a national religion and an agent of deculturalisation. *Dikgosi*, the so-called custodians of Botswana culture commence their deliberations with the evocation of and supplication for succour from the Christian God. Children at a tender age, even before their acceptance of the Christian faith, grow in this religious imposition. Generally, in the Botswana society even those who do not believe or practice Christianity bury their defunct relatives using Christian burial rites and rituals. In Botswana today, one can have Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Baha'i burial sites and never African religion believers' burial sites. The religious and civilizational assimilation has gone to that extent - that you can no longer die African, in your sacrosanct religious values of your ancestors.

In the Christianity of Botswana, religion is pervading, and the social thought has diametrically and fundamentally changed. Major social conditions such as homosexuality, abortion, and capital punishment are debated from the perspective of Christian values. Botswana, a country with many ethnic linguistic communities, who cherished their ancestral religions and cultures, is now a country that is Christianly baptised, and the plethora of churches demonstrates the blind acceptance of this religion regardless of its nefarious social and cultural impact. The important questions to ask: were Botswana without religion? Is Christian religion, as practiced, the panacea for remedying African social ills? Can a subjugated Setswana culture subsist when subjected to a preponderant foreign religious order, epitomised by Christianity? Can there be social cohesion with this existence of this religious phenomenology? When one is saying Setswana culture today, what is one talking about? Are the actions of the State and its associated institutions not tantamount to entrenching a theocracy in the democratic dispensation of Botswana? To answer these question, the rest of the discussion will demonstrate the permissiveness of media channels and the complacencies of the state.

Several social transformations followed the period of vicissitudes of colonialism and missionary actions. Missionaries' religious influence in consort with European trade in foreign goods and intoxicants quickly resulted in European powers making claims on the territories that missionary's desired protection upon. The scramble for Africa that resulted had far reaching consequences for Africa. States were created according to Missionary and European powers' interests (Tlou & Campbell, 1997). Missionaries and settler imperialists all had interests in advancing imperial polities. Botswana, then baptised Bechuanaland became a British Protectorate between 1883 and 1885. Missionary work expanded and thrived (Groves, 1958, reprinted 1964; Mackenzie, 1887; Mzizi, 2001)). Missionary education raised native evangelists who carried the faith to new areas. European traders also reached new areas. Discovery of minerals attracted more Europeans, and resulted in more encroachments into African societies. Native evangelists, as vassals of missionary work were also effective, not by their powerful preaching, but by the envy they caused among their fellow African because of their literacy, dress, and employment with White Missionary. Their mastery of the White man's language was a marvel to Batswana – European languages and money became the mainstay of this Africa-Europe contact phenomenon (Groves, 1958, reprinted 1964). The massive movement of Batswana males to go to the mines to among other purpose to pay European administration taxes; the attractions to own new implements and tools for agriculture and to possess war and hunting weapons catapulted the socio-cultural transformation ((Tlou & Campbell, 1997); Mackenzie, 1887). The new material culture created a new social and economic order. The Botswana society was never to be the same. This created a fertile ground for religious and cultural change. The emerging society and its polity entered a new period of fundamental social transformation. Consequently, Christianity, it can be said, did not wage a war to subdue Batswana – like flies to milk; Batswana threw themselves into it and figuratively drowned.

Historically, these social and economic changes benefitted colonialism and missionary implantation. However, such changes should not be viewed in very simplistic manner. This transformation did not automatically modernize Batswana. Urbanization took a longer process and the rural and urban were characterized by some socio-cultural differentiation. But it was a matter of time as the rural communities inevitably succumbed, not to urban life, but into sharing of the socio-economic and religious culture. Christianity rapidly influenced all social strata,

and the emerging culture mimicked European lifestyle and soon those remaining rooted in the traditional believes became the odd ones in their native land. The truth is, once Christianity settled into the habits and beliefs of Batswana, the society inevitably took the path that opened the floodgates of European influence in all socio-cultural and socio-economic spheres. It is this religious and cultural permanency within the Botswana society that the paper is going to critically examine. Ideas from researchers who analysed the influence of religion on culture in Africa (cf. Sanneh, 2001) will be significant in this discussion. Now to tackle the question of religion – agent of deculturalisation, alienation and annihilation, let us go into the historical implantation and the practices of Christian denominations among Batswana. It is the point of view of this discussion that the indigenous Batswana culture is increasingly becoming subsumed under the preponderant and pervading influence of Christianity. The other way to view the current situation of religion is that the society is high jacked.

The objectives of this paper is to discuss this subject within the post-colonial theories and also within the cultural anthropology theory which allows for an analysis of socio-cultural dynamics of a given society. The other objectives are to demonstrate how religion over time perpetuated the colonial condition by the agent that continues to usurp the social and spiritual fibre of the indigenous African society. The paper will further argue that the rich tapestry of African value system has been corroded, hybridised, despised, and evacuated out of the moral values of the traditional Botswana or African society. The explosive phenomenon of religion has the danger of making the people a nation of fanatics and creating a situation that can cause social strife in the form of religious wars, and entrenched neo-colonial seizure that will annihilate African culture and usher in foreign social order.

Religious mediatisation

The concept mediatisation is taken from the communication theories which have extended the definition to the role of media in journalism, and has progressively become a methodical concept for understanding and theorising the transformation of commonplace life, culture and society in the context of the current transformation of media (Krotz, 2017: 105). Stig Hjarvard asserts that mediatisation has emerged as a new theoretical framework to revisit and reframe old, yet fundamental questions about the role and influence of media in culture and society” (2011:111). The theory of mediatisation is relevant to the analysis of the intersection of media,

particularly on how media influences and shapes the following social institutions, politics, family and religion. Hjarvard (2011) continues with the following,

Mediatization denotes the social and cultural process through which a field or institution to some extent becomes dependent on the logic of media” (Hjarvard, 2011:119).

Mediatization lays the following claims and perhaps conclusion about Media. Mediatization theory insists “media are not outside society, but part of its very social fabric.” Media, Hjarvard continues,

[Media] have become integrated in the into the workings of almost all types of social institutions at the same time as they have become responsible for the general society’s public as well as private communication (Hjarvard, 2011:119).

Media has not left any institution untouched. Through its logic and power, institutions lend themselves to the power and influence of media. The modern reality of life is that we are immersed ourselves in our communication media – cellphones computers, and their chat services. We have become mediatized. And so is religion. Media controls us, and so is religion. How we adapt can be seen in the photos we take, for example, the selfies ever bold in exposing our uncovered body, the preparation we make for the media, the facial expression, and all the operations that make us comply to media make us mediatized. Therefore the media cannot be switched off, it is pervasive and ubiquitous, and there is no escape. We are constantly mediated. We are complying with the constant mediating of ourselves.

The question that should be in back of our minds is, how does mediatization and religion come about in our life? Where does this relationship emerge? Some scholars claim that the concept of religious mediatization comes from business, in fact this concept has its origins in politics as some sociologists have ascertained (Hjarvard, 2013). Religion as a social phenomenon can lend itself to a business enterprise that can effectively employ advertisement strategies to attain its ends. According to Krotz (2017: 106) it has been observed over the years that media were becoming more and more relevant for human activities and social relations, and for other areas of life on micro, mezzo and macro levels; such as in social relations, working processes and the economy. The concept of mediatization is therefore adapted here and employed to characterise activities that people or organisations communicate via media. Any

communicative activity that is media related and that is taking place in relation to media; is mediated. This definition is of interest in this discussion in that it helps to account for any cultural or social phenomenon that thrives through the use of media (Hjarvard, 2013). Whilst media could be considered a neutral vector, it can also be a captured vector (Martín Babero, 1993), just as a prison building is synonymous to the institution of imprisonment. Media serve the religious exploiters to serve their commercial than spiritual interests. The process of mediation is about the development of media that begins in communication media and proceeds to subordination of the power of prevailing influential institutions, and in this case, religion. Institutions and whole societies are shaped by and dependent on mass media (Hjarvard, 2013). Mediation theories therefore explore and interrogate the complex relationship between media and society.

According to Hjarvard (2011: 122), citing Schulz (2004), the argument is that mediation brings about four types of changes: (1) media extend human communication and interaction beyond immediate time and space, (2) they substitute existing forms of face-to-face communication and interaction, (3) media and existing forms of communication and interaction amalgamate with one another and (4) social actors and institutions may accommodate to the logic of the media. In the case of religion, the television broadcast of a religious service extends the reach of the sermon to a mass audience. The idea is to capture the public opinion in favour of religion (Martín Babero, 1993). And this is how religion over the years has become a social institution that has even encroached in political spheres of influence. At this pace, we are not far from one day hearing a country in Africa calling itself a Christian Republic. On that day, the bearers of the Cross will have nothing to envy from the Boko Haram and the Al Shabbab religious movements.

In this discussion and the arguments from Hjarvard (2011: 124) the mediation of religion is not a universal phenomenon that characterises all cultures and societies. It is primarily a development that has accelerated particularly during the last decades of the twentieth century in modern, highly industrialised and mainly Western societies. The nature of this development takes many forms and has various consequences depending on the specific religion, media and context in question, but, in general, mediation entails the transformation of three aspects of religion. The media become an important, if not primary source of information about religious issues. Mass media are both producers and distributors of religious experiences, and interactive media may provide a platform for the expression and circulation of individual beliefs. Religious

information and experiences become moulded according to the demands of popular media genres. Existing religious symbols, practices and beliefs become raw material for the media's own narration of stories about both secular and sacred issues. As a cultural and social order the media have taken over many of the cultural and social functions of the institutionalised religions and provide spiritual guidance, moral orientation, ritual passages and a sense of community and belonging. According to Hjarvard (2011: 126), when media become producers and distributors of religious content, the institutional, aesthetic and technological characteristics of the media influence the framing of religion and the ways that audiences and users are supposed to interact with religion. Media may not only provide information about religion, but also create narratives and virtual worlds that invite people to have experiences of a religious-like character. Furthermore, social media may provide platform for discussions and community-building among people with similar religious orientation.

Religion is now commercialised, and the TV and radio programmes are becoming effective advertising agents for religion as a commodity. If this mediated phenomenon pleases the uncritical, it is to worry social observers as this religious explosion can be the onset of social vicissitudes and deculturalisation and also destabilisation. Recent years have witnessed a phenomenal growth of religion in all communication media. The free satellite television broadcasts, free radio space even in national radio, public crusades and indoctrinating school services demonstrate that the society is under religious capture and hegemony (Martín Babero, 1993). An observer would worry about the fanaticisation of religion and the desecration that is happening in the Christian theology. There are now more churches in a locality than schools and shops. Churches supplant bars and social meeting places. Elders have lost their wisdom.

Religion and culture conflict

From a social and anthropological perspective, it is necessary to introduce this subject by looking at the history of Christianity in Southern Africa in general, and in Botswana (former Bechuanaland) in particular (Volz, 2003; Amanze, 2002). The history of Christianity as a religious institution is a little more than 150 years (Mgadla, 2007; Nkomazana, 1998). Within these years, Botswana has moved from African beliefs to Christianity (Amanze, 2002; Nkomazana, 1999). As in all socio-cultural encounters, Christianity first supplemented the Batswana religion, which according to researchers in church history was a monotheist religion that is, acknowledging one deity, *Modimo* – God (cf. Nkomazana, 2001; Amanze, 2002). The

thesis held here is that this phenomenal religious transformation was facilitated by various conjectural factors, some of which can be mentioned as, education – run by the missionaries themselves (Willoughby, 1909); commerce and trade – run by settler communities long established in the Cape Colony, and Missionaries also facilitating as linguistic intermediaries; wars and the formation of new states – the push from the south by Boers into the mainland and also the *Nfecane* wars necessitated formation of protective alliances – the missionaries were critical in channelling weapons to protect the communities of their mission, and later in seeking protection of territories that came under their influence (cf. Nkomazana, 1999; Volz, 2003). This put religion in the line of power and control of Botswana society (Chebanne, 2013).

The role of traditional leadership was not just administrative authority but also religious authority in the belief systems (spirituality and establishing links with the supernatural and the recognized deity, taboos, rain making); traditional authority to declare preparation for ploughing, harvesting and celebrating harvest; traditional authority on the rites of passages (circumcision, ceremonies bestowing femininity and masculinity); and authority to establish regiments and declaring war (Nkomazana, 1999). Ardent African cultural and religious observers will concede that all indigenous cultural exponents have but all gone extinct save some commercialised cultural celebrations of unsophisticated cultural elements of downtrodden culture (Chebanne, 2013). When all these are considered, it quickly emerges that a Motswana professing Christianity completely fails to disentangle herself or himself from the religious grip of this faith in the domain of her or his culture and value systems. For him or her, Christianity is culture, and culture is Christianity. Customs, moral laws, and ethics of laws and culture are adjudged from the Christian value system perspective (Mijoga, 2002). Even in Europe and Israel there have never been such religious shackles that enslave a people to the extent that an objective stand on matters of religion, culture and society are inextricable (Chebanne, A. (2013). It may be argued that reformation turned the tide of European religion, and that even though European modernism may have called for the death of God and the influence of religion, religion had informed their lives, as it is embedded in the civilizational system (law, culture, and identity). It can be further argued that in Europe, once religion is removed, such an action would affect the civilisational symbolism and metaphor of the continent. Historically it would not be altogether appropriate that Africa should be subjected to the influences of Christianity or Islam to be deemed civilised and saved. It is documented by many religious scholars that Africa has its own religions, spirituality, and civilisation (Mackenzie, 1887; Mbithi, 1979; Mugambi, 1989; Mijoga, 2002).

Even as religion is generally an aspect of culture, from an anthropological perspective, it becomes intrusive when it comes into a people's culture for reasons that defeat the existing architects of a people's values. The arguments made hitherto, therefore, is that religion (that of old missionaries and modern miracles and prosperity preachers) is eroding Batswana culture by intruding into domains that made the expression of such culture palpable. But the encroachment and the damage thereof is even in personal and social realm. The point is this, it is not to be assumed that the arguments that Christianity has appropriated Batswana culture is translatable into pronouncing that all Batswana are Christians. The idea is this that even people who are not regular worshippers or self-proclaimed secular, wittingly or unwittingly, practice Christian alien rites (in birthdays, weddings, funerals) that they cannot even be said to be upholding their own African traditional culture. This point is important in that when religion subordinates the secular, the society is edging into a new religious order. As Mugambi (1989) seems to worry, when all religion forms and practices are considered primordial, one would seriously doubt if Batswana still have, in the overall. Their culture to talk about in the context of Christianity (Nkomazana, 2001). It is the intermingling expression of European culture and Christianity and their extension into the common people's lifestyle which clearly make a demonstration of life style. In that context it is clear that the annihilation of traditional religion and culture is premeditated and executed.

The question that one should ask is: why does Botswana traditional culture (inclusive of beliefs), suffer under the feet of Christianity, and is failing to resist the assailing actions of a new religion, which as far as we know have not been decreed? Why is Setswana religious and cultural ideals existing as antithesis of all they stood for? Why, if Batswana still believe their culture exists, are value references focused on Christianity than on traditional religion? To answer these, let us consider the two theories that Rajana (1976) used to analyse new religions development in Japan after the World War II. These are the Emperor Substitute and the Urban Anomie Theories. The emperor substitute theory which is concerned with religious authority substitution is appropriate to analyse how the loss of Botswana's chiefs' authority led to the attrition and annihilation of culture. When culture is orphaned of its figure of authority and power, it atrophies. Since a human community cannot live in a cultural vacuum, other values (cultural and religious) quickly fill up the space and create new forms of embodiments and force of influence. Khama the Great of the Bagammagwato is the chief example of a monarch who yielded all to Missionaries and became the agent substitution of the monarchical authority

in matters of religion and culture by Christianity (cf. Nkomazana, 1999). Christianity appropriated to itself the power to reattribute Setswana culture and to decide on the laws that the Kgama's Kingdom was going to enact and administer to the Bangwato.

The Urban Anomie Theory is concerned with religion being a substitute of social institutions. Religious organization with bigger associations and more social influence tend to usurp the power of social institutions (traditional chiefs' power, public administrations) in the area of mores and cultural values (Rajana, 1976). This theory is also interesting in that it provides for individuals cut off from their cultural roots to find solace in church or religious organizations. In this condition religion provides recourse in solitude, in poverty, in relationships problems, in spiritual fulfilment, in exorcizing of evil or demoniac powers that are construed to be responsible for bad luck and lack of prosperity. Such an individual lives in the high hope and belief in miraculous prosperity and freedom from want and bodily ills (Chebanne, 2013; Sanneh, 2001). In this state of affairs mediatisation of religion regiments Culture and Society and becomes the agent for exploitation and abuse of power (Hjarvard, 2013; Sanneh, 2001).

Religious explosion in the media and its consequences

Media in Botswana has in a big way facilitated religious transformation in an explosive and deafening manner. By redefining the power base of various religious actors and subjecting politics to religious conformities; by claiming to bridge the chasm between ethnic and social identities under a common faith is the basis of the ubiquitous indoctrination in the social sphere. Religion is reinforcing its grip on institutions as it becomes the moral reference in the judiciary, in laws, and in public conduct. This religious encroachment is licenced in every turn and at every social stratus. Botswana society is under serious religious capture and there is no voice to call for extrication. Once this happens, ethnic communities' values social values reference, morality, and customs become Christian. Unable to resort to political means to install Christianity as a new social order, missionaries or modern preachers target culture and the individual. African culture is deemed outmoded, despicable, and debauched, associated with evil, and incapable of redeeming or saving the soul. In the scheme of this view, the African individual must of necessity be saved from such a culture.

The consequences of this mediatisation of religion is altogether catastrophic. Children no longer learn social and family values from homes, but from churches. The Church becomes

ruthless and morally and culturally damaging. Morals are spiralling out of containment. The emphasis on miracles of healing and prosperity, hijacking of religions for social commentary are all manifestations that clearly demonstrate that the social cultural fabric has been loosed with the onset of deculturalisation. Religious authority of the old order has been lost. Mainline churches have been put out of any role by prosperity and miracle performing churches. Traditional African religions are now an anathema. Africa is under a neo-colonial commandeering of religion in the manner that Sanneh (2001) argues. There is a lot to worry an Africanist in what foreign religions, especially the new prosperity ministries are doing through the media. Whilst there are variations in the practices and ministrations of Christianity in churches, the ultimate goal of usurping African culture and religion and spirituality is intended (Mijoga, 2002). From a postcolonial theory and the social phenomenological interpretations, the argument underscored in this paper is that the religious explosion in our society will have nefarious consequences such as losing the fabric of culture, putting in desuetude African beliefs, evacuating all traditional cultural and spiritual elements that identify an African Motswana. The antithesis of this condition is a society that has no identity and authenticity nor social and developmental direction (Chebanne, (2013).

Whereas we cannot yet talk of theocracy in Botswana with regards to Christianity, the truth is that Christianity has now institutionalised and Christians practice their religion and believes in state functions as if there were in a theocracy. This is the fear that Sanneh (2001) elsewhere is expressing when arguing about the impact of religion on culture and society. Christianity is dominating the public space, and in the argument of Meyer (1999), it is evident that in Africa the increased presence of religious themes in the media are a negation of the ideas that secularisation is the hallmark of modernity, and that the media are agents of enlightenment. Thus, in Botswana politicians feel obligated to associate themselves with Christian events and celebrations. All these religious exaggerations and fanatical behaviours have the effect of shifting cultural power from the tradition of the people to religious practices of Christianity. As the intolerance and despising of the indigenous Botswana culture are let loose, the people effectively remain no culture of their own. They are left with a religion or religions that they even do not have the full knowledge or mean to observe. Botswana are lost in a pitiful way, and this is most regretful. Indirectly and in a pervasive manner, and without even decreeing it, the Government gives religious movements platforms to administer to Botswana doses of the religious cultural order (Chebanne, A. (2013). Herein therefore are the postcolonial and neo-

colonial entrenchments that religion enthusiastically and unaccountably perpetuates in Africa among African societies.

Data from Statistics Botswana from the national census of 2001 (Central Statistics, 2001) show that there are now more churches in a locality than schools, and that churches supplant bars and social meeting places. Researchers on religion and theology show that religion is now commercialised (Chebanne, 2013), and the TV and radio programmes are becoming effective advertising agents for religion as a commodity (Haron, 2016). This is phenomenal, and if this phenomenon thrills the uncritical, it is to worry social observers as this religious explosion can be the onset of social vicissitudes and cultural destabilisation (Chebanne, 2013). The nefarious consequences are that without their own authentic Setswana culture, elders have lost their wisdom, the uncultured have usurped authority from the traditional, and children no longer learn cultural values from homes, but from churches. In this social order, alien and destructive morals are getting out containment. The observed emphasis on miracles of healing and prosperity, demonstrate that there is hijacking by religion of those spiritual and religious values that identify and make a culture an authentic and vibrant agent for social cohesion. Religious authority has been instilled in the society (Mijoga, 2002); Nkomazana, 1991). Traditional religions are now an abomination in social media spaces. Africa is under a religious neo-colonial commandeering. There is a lot to worry an African thinker. Asian nations have been able to limit the role of new or foreign religions, and thus ensuring their identities and development on their own terms.

Conclusion

The reality therefore is that as the metaphor of explosion is used, religion and its development in Botswana and in Africa is getting out of control, socially and politically, and all this facilitated by modern media. What emerges from the discussion of this gloomy and pitiful condition of religious hegemony is what should be qualified as Setswana culture capture as it is literally browbeaten, scorned, and without any political remedy or recourse, and therefore, it will only atrophy. Not only that, religion, as it becomes a Setswana culture, and therefore, a social and cultural institution, rides on the beneficial wings of media. We see even how public discussion about religion and religious conflicts became intertwined with various media dynamics. For example, the alleged resurrection of an alleged dead man, is an example of how the mainstream day-to-day religious beliefs and practices of both individuals and religious

communities have also become dependent on and integrated with various media practices. These also push to view religion as a commercialized vice. Mediatisation therefore is about a long-term social and cultural change brought about by religion. This mediatisation implies a process through which core elements of a social or cultural activity assume media form. Media commercialisation logic, through mediatisation, has infiltrated Setswana culture. Therefore, the deculturalised Setswana culture, already colonised by Christianity, is now reeling under the influence of media to become something that is not representative of the people and the culture that should identify them. We, like, fish in a bowl, live in media which now defines our fate. Therein is the civilizational tragedy of Africa. The question for the future is, why is Africa the best importer of religion than goods and services that elsewhere bring other countries to the pedestal of high and beneficial technologies for development?

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