Education and Training of a Tswana Chief Under the British Colonial System in Botswana: The Case of Kgosi Mokgosi III of Balete, 1920-1945

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Abstract

African chiefs were pivotal to the British colonial policy of 'Indirect Rule' in British tropical Africa. With skeletal staff on the ground, the British ruled through the chiefs since it was economic to do so. The British started indirect rule in Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century after which it spread to East Africa and then Central Africa. In most cases chiefs had to be collaborators with the colonial system to remain in office. In some of these colonies special schools were provided for training chiefs to become 'cadres' in the colonial system. Indirect Rule reached Botswana in the early 1930s amidst spirited resistance from Tswana *dikgosi* (chiefs). Critically, the straightforward Tswana succession system through primogeniture made it difficult or impossible for the Tswana *dikgosi* to work with the colonial system as collaborators. Consequently, whereas deposition of chiefs was common in other colonies, in Botswana this was rare. Whereas there was no special school for *dikgosi* in Botswana and they had to be sent to South Africa, the British colonial administration had an idea of the kind of education to be accorded the *dikgosi*. Mostly utilising archival records, this paper uses the example of Kgosi Mokgosi III of Balete to demonstrate that even in a case of a *kgosi* (chief) whose behaviour the colonial authorities disapproved of, they had no choice but to accept and nurture him through schooling even when he did not perform well or got expelled for leading a riot. Furthermore, the authorities sought to prepare him for the chieftaincy (*bogosi*) by enlisting him into the colonial police service, and attempting to have him serve in the Second World War. Mokgosi was the heir apparent of the Balete from 1931 to 1945 after which he became *kgosi* from 1945 to 1966 and performed his duties well.

Keywords: Education; chieftainship (*bogosi*), *dikgosi*, Balete, Indirect Rule, African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps.

Introduction

After the British colonised the land of the Tswana in 1885 and calling the territory Bechuanaland Protectorate, they left the Tswana *dikgosi* largely as they had ruled their people before. There was limited interference with chiefly powers under the system that came to be called 'Parallel Rule'. Whereas challenges existed between the British colonial administration and *dikgosi* during this period, which included issues of chiefly succession among others, generally this generation of *dikgosi* was said to have been cooperative. The *dikgosi* were also influenced by the planned incorporation of Botswana into the Union of South Africa formed in 1910. They greatly feared loss of their lands, excessive exploitation at the hands of European settlers and resultant intense racism in case of incorporation. However, starting in the 1920s as a new generation of *dikgosi* started to replace the old ones, complaints emerged of their general irresponsibility, drunkenness, ignorance of the tribal law and custom, increased succession disputes and ineffectual service delivery (Schapera, 1940). Hence, a need was expressed for regulation of the powers of the *dikgosi* and their tighter control by the colonial authorities.

Furthermore, in 1927 British secretary of state for the colonies, Leopold Amery, had visited Botswana and was appalled at the backwardness of the territory owing to lack of development he witnessed (Crowder 1988). He responded by appointing Charles Rey as a new resident commissioner to overhaul the

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parallel rule and replace it with the more 'progressive' indirect rule which was common practice in British colonies in West, East and Central Africa. Soon after his appointment, Rey stated in his diary in 1929 that 'there has never been any legal definition of Chiefs' powers- they practically do as they like-punish, fine, tax and generally play hell. Of course, their subjects hate them but daren't complain to us; if they did their lives would be made impossible' (Rey 1988:4).

Makgala (2001) states that indirect rule spread to other British African colonies after it was first adopted in Muslim Emirates of northern Nigeria by Frederick (later) Lord Lugard shortly after conquering these states in 1903. The British governed the Africans through their own political institutions the most critical having been chieftainship. So important was chieftaincy that where none existed such as in southeastern Nigeria, the British created office holders styled 'warrant chiefs' (Afigbo 1972). These indigenous African institutions had to be shorn of some of their aspects which the British disapproved of (Crowder 1968). Lugard's (1965) voluminous book *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* first published in 1922 became the bible of British colonial officials in Africa. The policy differed from its original form as it spread from Nigeria to other parts of West Africa, then to Uganda and Tanzania (Tanganyika) and then British Central Africa (Makgala 2001; Chipungu 1992; Low and Pratt 1970). Collaboration with the British colonial authorities, sometimes at the expense of the people, was critical to the African chiefs continued stay in office (Makgala 2001). While in the straightforward Tswana succession system gave *dikgosi* great advantage against the colonial administration, in Nigeria some chiefs came into office through chief-in-council arrangement (Perham 1937). In some cases, one could be elected for purposes of quiet life (Perham 1937). Such scenarios weakened the chiefs' position and rendered them collaborators with the colonial authorities.

Makgala (2001:4) states that indirect rule reached Botswana in the 1930s after the appointment of Charles Rey for regularisation of chiefly power. Around 1930 the British took a more active and critical line in relation to the *dikgosi* as they were worried about their perceived autocratic style of rule (Gulbranden 2012). Indirect rule was introduced in January 1935 through promulgation of Native Administration and Native Tribunals Proclamations of 1934 spearheaded by Resident Commissioner Charles Rey. The Native Administration Proclamation stipulated the powers, rights, privileges, and duties of the *dikgosi* and their subordinates (Makgala 2001). The Proclamation made provision for a tribal council which was an avenue for educated tribesmen to participate in tribal administrative matters. It was made obligatory for a *kgosi* to exercise his authority in consultation with his tribal council. However, some *dikgosi,* notably the influential Bangwato regent Tshekedi Khama, were hostile to educated or enlightened tribesmen. The Native Tribunal Proclamation categorised traditional *kgotla* court system into two grades namely senior tribunal and junior tribunal courts (Makgala 2001). The Proclamation also provided for the recording of court cases and regularisation of fines (Makgala 2001). The colonial administration also commissioned Professor Isaac Schapera of the University of Cape Town to produce a book or manual for the courts with the title *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (1938). Nevertheless, these proclamations met strong resistance from Tshekedi Khama who mobilised others and took the colonial administration to court in 1936 (Otlhogile 1992). They argued that they had not been consulted and the new laws were against Tswana customs and violated an agreement between the British and Tswana *dikgosi* in the early 1890s. However, Tshekedi lost the case, but it was soon established that the new laws were not workable. Part of the problem was hostile relations caused by personal animosity between Rey and the *dikgosi* particularly Tshekedi.

Rey's retirement in 1937 paved the way for Charles Arden-Clarke as the new resident commissioner, and his experience of indirect rule in Nigeria proved invaluable. After establishing good rapport with Tshekedi and other *dikgosi* they were able to revise the 1934 proclamations with active participation of the *dikgosi* in the mid-1940s during the Second World War (Makgala 2001 and Hailey 1953). So pleased were the *dikgosi* that when the Second World War broke out, they were eager to assist in the British war

effort against Germany (Jackson 1999). Consultation with *dikgosi* and involvement of local tribal opinion through the traditional kgotla forum was paramount to the colonial rule in Botswana and this differed from the how indirect rule operated elsewhere in British colonial Africa (Makgala 2001). There are few works colonial impact on *bogosi* and customary law (Morapedi 2010; Matemba 2005; Ifezu 2015; Mgadla and Campbell 1989).

Colonial Government Perceptions of *Bogosi* and Education in the 1930s

The colonial authorities' perceptions of *bogosi* were that the institution was necessary to the government for the successful implementation of its policies in the tribal areas. Therefore, the *dikgosi* had to be educated in a particular way for them to execute their duties effectively. The colonial authorities felt that they needed disciplined and responsible *dikgosi* who would do colonial government's work on the cheap such as tax collection and provision of social amenities (Makgala 2012 and Makgala 2004). The *dikgosi* also needed ability to communicate well in English.

Education in this article is viewed in both formal and informal senses. The question of education being used to produce a 'colonial type' of *kgosi* is seen more vividly when one looks at Mokgosi III, and when one draws a parallel with Moremi III of Batawana. The latter had to undergo rigorous police training before he could assume chieftainship, and Mokgosi III followed this precedent. The British authorities argued that future, such as Mokgosi III, needed not only better academic preparation, but also a broadening of their horizons, which could best be imparted by personal contact with men who had a good knowledge of their home environment, and were well-versed in the art of administration. Tshekedi and Kgosi Bathoen II of Bangwaketse were the type of *dikgosi* preferred because they had acquired education at secondary schools in South Africa and were seen as good administrators. Unlike in some West African colonies which had special schools for chiefs (Education Department- Sierra Leone 1934) in Botswana no such school existed.

At the same time, the colonial authorities showed a keen interest in the education of *dikgosi* by attempting to promote a scheme for their education. This fact is illustrated by what transpired in a meeting of the Board of Advice on Education in 1934. At that meeting Charles Rey observed that 'Under modern changed conditions, it is essential if chieftainship is to survive, that the natural leaders of the people, the chiefs, their families and the people of the group be equipped for their task. They needed much more than ordinary education. Theirs [education] should include groundwork as well as civic education' (Mgadla 2003:129-130). In his Dual Mandate the father of indirect rule in British tropical Africa, Lugard, stated that 'It is necessary to produce a new generation of native chiefs of high integrity, and an appreciation of responsibility for the welfare of the community. The chiefs must be groomed for education as well as the sons of the chiefs and headmen, at an approved institution' (Lugard 1965:426). Furthermore, Rey felt that education for *dikgosi* should be broader than that received by ordinary people. He suggested the establishment of 'A school for the sons of chiefs, members of the royal family and others where they would be taught not only ordinary subjects, but also administrative civics; and that education for the prospective chiefs should be wider than that received by their subjects and that a special curriculum above the ordinary run of education should be thus designed to give special moral and mental equipment to the future chiefs' (Mgadla 2003:130).

Though the preceding proposals by the colonial authorities did not come to fruition in terms of implementation Mokgosi's education would be in line with the above ideas.

Early Years of Mokgosi's Education

Kgosi Mokgosi I of Balete died in 1886 just one year after the colonization of Botswana in 1885. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Ikaneng, who reigned from 1886 to 1896. When Ikaneng died in 1896, he

was succeeded by his son Mokgosi II. Mokgosi II died in 1906 but the heir to the throne, Seboko, was too young to succeed. Therefore, the late *kgosi's* immediate junior brother Baitlutli, was appointed regent. In July 1917 Baitlutli handed over *bogosi* to Seboko. Seboko and his wife Roseta had the following sons in order of seniority: Mokgosi III, Kelemogile, Dikhudu, Difako, Nakedi and Bogatsu. Kgosi Seboko died on 11 July 1937 and his eldest son, Mokgosi III was next in line of succession which stipulated that the first-born son of the great wife (one married first) succeeded. Nonetheless, by 1937 Mokgosi, who was born on 19 May 1920, was aged 17 and considered too young to be enthroned. Therefore, Seboko's junior brother Ketshwerebothata Mokgosi had to act as regent and guardian of Mokgosi III.

Mokgosi first went to a primary school called Balete National School in his home village of Ramotswa in 1931. He started at Sub A and completed Standard IV in 1936 (Botswana National Archives and Record Services (BNARS) S. 487/5/1-2, 1937-1944). He was then enrolled for Standard V at Modderpoort Primary School in the Orange Free State in South Africa. However, he seemed not to have enjoyed his schooling at there as he ran away from the school in 1937 (BNARS S.487/5/1, EP Arrowsmith to Government Secretary, 21 September 1937). Though Mokgosi himself did not give any reason for running away, the district commissioner's office in Gaborone revealed that Mokgosi's unhappiness at the school was due to his own fault as he was said to have been suffering from an exaggerated idea of his own importance, which would seem to be supported by oral sources. One might infer that Mokgosi thought Modderpoort school was inferior for his status as a future *kgosi*.

The acting district commissioner at the time, said that he had always had reservations about Modderpoort as the right school for Mokgosi, (BNARS S.487/5/1, EP Arrowsmith to Government Secretary, 21 September 1937) and suggested that Mokgosi might do better at Tiger Kloof near Vryburg in the Cape Province of South Africa. Mokgosi was reported to have soon regretted his running away from school as he saw it as an unwise act. Moreover, the colonial government had told him in no uncertain terms that he would not be allowed to cease his education, since he was groomed for tribal leadership. At this point Dumbrell, director of education, intervened by making a request to the principal of Modderpoort, Patrick True, to permit Mokgosi to finish the remaining part of the 1937 academic year term. The principal acceded to the request, and Mokgosi left Ramotswa to return to Modderpoort School in October 1937. Meanwhile, preparations were made in earnest to secure Mokgosi a place at Tiger Kloof.

Mokgosi's Schooling at Tiger Kloof

Western education was introduced amongst the Batswana by missionaries such as David Livingstone of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in the nineteenth century. The LMS education concentrated mainly on religious education. This type of education was heavily criticised by Khama III of Bangwato and other *dikgosi* (Mgadla 2003). Consequently, some Tswana, particularly the aristocracy and the wealthy began to send their children to post-elementary schools in the neighbouring countries, namely, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). At the time there were no post-primary education schools in Botswana. It was because of the aforementioned factors that the LMS established Tiger Kloof in 1904 in Vryburg after it could not secure land in Khama III's territory over tenure issues. Tiger Kloof aimed at broadening and raising the standard of education amongst its learners. Its curricular was much broader in scope as it offered academic, technical and teacher training focus (Mgadla 2003). In the subsequent years it became the preferred destination for education by members of royal families and well-to-do members of society in Botswana. The president of Botswana and his vice president at independence in 1966, Sir Seretse Khama and Quett Masire, and a significant number of cabinet ministers were former Tiger Kloof students.

At the beginning of 1938, Mokgosi went to Tiger Kloof and was admitted into Standard VI. He first met Seretse Khama who had enrolled on 7 February 1937 (Parsons *et al.,* 1995). The two young royals became close friends with their friendship blossoming through both happy and trying times. Other

Batswana royals at the school were Neale Sechele (future *kgosi* of the Bakwena), Lenyeletse Seretse (Seretse Khama's cousin) and Goareng Mosinyi from Kalamare in Bamangwato territory. On 10 July 1938 Resident Commissioner Charles Arden-Clarke, visited the institution and had a short discussion with Mokgosi. Arden-Clarke suggested to the future Balete *kgosi* that when he completed his schooling, he could be placed in any of the governmen secretarial offices at Botswana's administrative headquarters in Mahikeng (Cape Province, South Africa) to be trained in clerical work (BNARS S.487/5/1, 20 July 1938). This idea excited Mokgosi so much that on 11 August 1938 he wrote to Arden-Clarke requesting to be allowed to begin work as a clerk the following year. At Tiger Kloof, Mokgosi seemed to have started his studies on a high note as indicated in a letter from the principal of the school, Reverend AJ Haile to Arden-Clarke in September 1938. He wrote that 'Since July Mokgosi appeared to have been trying to do more serious work. He seemed to be fairly intelligent and when he got through standard VI, he would benefit by at least a year or two in Secondary School, but concluded his report with a caveat that, the lad certainly needed discipline' (BNARS S.487/5/1 12, September 1938). This was a red flag of some sorts that a lot still had to be done in terms of Mokgosi's upbringing.

With these complimentary and encouraging words from the principal about Mokgosi, Dumbrell seized this moment to write to Mokgosi in person, thanking him for his apparent change of attitude, and urged him to work harder (BNARS S.487/5/1, 'Director of Education Opinion of Mokgosi', 29 September 1938). He also encouraged him to enter fully into the general life of the school such as sports and recreation. As would be expected, Mokgosi reciprocated by promising to work very hard, and to at least come out of Tiger Kloof with a Standard VI certificate (BNARS S. 487/5/1, Mokgosi to Dumbrell, 10 October 1938). Nonetheless, to the astonishment of many, Mokgosi failed the Standard VI examinations in December 1938. Of the six subjects he studied, namely English, Native Language (Setswana), Arithmetic, History, Geography and Hygiene, he dismally failed all of them, except for Geography which he obtained a modest 58% (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1938). The report from the school was that he had not worked hard enough and did not seem to care. But despite this, the Principal, Rev Haile, expressed some optimism that if he were to return to school, and set his mind to work, he had no doubt that Mokgosi would pass Standard VI. It was, therefore, decided that Mokgosi repeat Standard VI in January 1939.

It is important to note that throughout his schooling, part of the funds for his school fees came from the director of education's vote, and the rest from the Balete *morafe*. When quizzed by the colonial authorities on his poor academic performance, Mokgosi narrated a litany of woes which he claimed distracted his studies. First, he claimed that he was worried about the cost of educating his younger brother Kelemogile, and sister Enid out of his father's estate. His brother was attending Saint Boniface Mission School in Kimberley (Cape Province of South Africa), and the sister was at the Kilnerton Institution, near Pretoria. Mokgosi further contended that he had been trying to pay for his siblings' fees out of the inadequate estate of his late father. He said he owed £12 for his brother's fees, and approximately £10 for the sister (BNARS S.487/5/1, District Commissioner to Director of Education, 23 January 1939). However, there was doubt on these claims by Mokgosi as will demonstrated later in the paper. Another matter which he claimed troubled him was that he felt too much pressure was being brought to bear on his brother to become a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He still wanted him to remain at school. The dominant church since the nineteenth century in Bamalete tribal territory was the Lutheran Church. Therefore, it may not be far-fetched to assume that this was an unwanted pressure as Mokgosi, and his family might have been Lutherans. In addition to this, his father had arranged with the Bishop of the Church, to admit Kelemogile free of charge to Saint Boniface School (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1939). The implication here being that the church had now reneged on its promise. More importantly, Mokgosi claimed that his mother was ill-cared for by the royal family as required by tradition whilst he was away at school.

Whereas some of Mokgosi's claims may have been truthful, he was himself partly to blame for

his below average performance at school. This was corroborated by one senior member of Balete royal family, Ikaneng Mokgosi in an interview with this author. He disclosed that at school Mokgosi had pride and did not look to the future and thought that as he was the son of the *kgosi,* everything would just come like manna from heaven. It was also said that at times insisted on other students calling him *kgosi.* From this we see a complete contrast with Seretse Khama who loathed being called '*kgosi*' by his school mates (Parsons *et al.,* 1995).

Mokgosi's return to Tiger Kloof in January 1939 did not make him any better. Immediately after his arrival, the school principal complained to the director of education, stating that Mokgosi had returned in a noisy and truculent mood (BNARS S.487/5/1 1939). He had been caught making noise during study period and was given a severe warning. Mokgosi countered the principal's accusations by writing to the director of education himself. He complained how the school principal ill-treated him and claimed that even if he had genuine complaints they were dismissed:

> Even if I have done nothing wrong or asking for help or lodging a complaint, Mr Haile would say to me 'you must remember that Government is paying for your education. Citing an example, on the other day of our arrival here the other boys came to welcome us and made a joyous noise, and I was singled out as the one causing noise whereas it was not myself who did. Sir! I am sure if they did not expel me through their hatred of me, I am not returning next session- not returning Sir (sic). Sir I am a human being and I have feelings, I feel that which hurts, if I am ordered to stick myself with a thorn I refuse (sic). Every time they injure my feeling, they say the Government. I should rather discontinue and take private study' (BNARS S.487/5/1, Mokgosi to Dumbrell, 13 February 1939).

Naturally, there were often disagreements between members of the Balete royal family. For instance, there were often allegations of witchcraft as was common among Tswana families. At times the regent might be accused of trying to usurp the throne for himself from the rightful heir. Moreover, the young Mokgosi did not see eye to eye with his senior paternal uncle, Ketshwerebothata Mokgosi, who was also the regent. On several occasions the two clashed. One such instance was during the discussions in February 1939 about the late Kgosi Seboko's estate between Ketshwerebothata, Ntanyane Motsumi, who were the two executors, and MmaMokgosi (queen mother). The position was that Motsumi had been nominated the executor by the late Kgosi Seboko. He was said to have been the *kgosi's* chief-confidant. In 1938 district commissioner for the area, Edwin Arrowsmith, made regent Ketshwerebothata a second executor. Possibly, this was done to ensure that things were properly conducted as Ketshwerebothata was Mokgosi's guardian. Motsumi appeared to have disregarded Ketshwerebothata, and acted on Mokgosi's instructions, further disregarding the idea of trusteeship (BNARS S.487/5/1, District Commissioner to Director of Education, 18 February 1939).

Consequently, Mokgosi would not go to his uncle for anything, and allegedly disrespected him completely at the instigation of Motsumi. Mokgosi even went as far as to tell the acting *Kgosi* straight to his face that the estate was not his (Ketshwerebothata's) affair. He went to the extent of not informing his uncle of his movements. Mokgosi's behaviour towards his uncle was completely different to the one of Seretse and Tshekedi had before the former got married to a white woman. Seretse and Tshekedi had cordial correspondences and had words of endearment for each other such as 'Father' and *Ngwanaka* ('my son') (Parson's *et al.,* 1995:37). There is little doubt that, Mokgosi's behaviour towards his uncle would have been motivated by the fact that he suspected that Ketshwerebothata wanted to usurp *bogosi* from him. (The name Ketshwerebothata is loaded as it means 'I am faced with trouble' and 'befitting' to the regency, a poisoned chalice). If this had happened, the colonial authorities may have condoned it.

This view is buttressed in communications between Dumbrell and Arrowsmith after both had

received numerous reports of Mokgosi's wayward behaviour at school. First to express disapproval of Mokgosi's behaviour was Resident Commissioner Arden Clarke who stated that he was even reluctant to recommend to the high commissioner that Mokgosi be appointed *kgosi*, when the question arouse, unless his conduct had greatly improved (BNARS S.487/5/1, 28 February 1939). However, the Tswana succession system was critical and in reality, an imposed appointee was likely to face revolts of sorts from the *morafe.* A clear example is of Kgari Sechele II of the Bakwena who faced 'legitimacy' questions after the deposition of his elder brother, Sebele II in 1931. For instance, in 1937 Arden-Clarke reported that 'Chief Kgari has a difficult task as he is not in in the eyes of his people, the rightful chief. His brother Sebele who was exiled is still looked upon by most of the people as their chief' (BNARS S.433/9, 1937).

Consequently, the colonial authorities began to consider how to bypass Mokgosi in favour of his younger brother, Kelemogile. This idea was dropped after the district commissioner cautioned that he did not think the *morafe* would consider Mokgosi's behaviour at school as sufficient justification for him to be deprived of his chiefly birthright (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1939). This was very risky approach on the part of the colonial authorities because in most cases the rightful *kgosi* was so popular amongst his people even if he was irresponsible and they would not tolerate the imposition of anybody else however worthy. He warned further that, if Kelemogile were appointed instead of Mokgosi, a split might occur in the *morafe*. The second option which in the district commissioner's opinion was better, was that if Ketshwerebothata was to be confirmed in his acting appointment as a *kgosi* in his own right, the *morafe* would be solidly behind him, except for a small minority. This suggestion was made on the basis that, there was general jubilation when Ketshwerebothata returned from the Witwatersrand mines in South Africa to take up the regency. This again was a non-starter given the Tswana succession system and it was even dropped.

Reports of Mokgosi's misconduct at school continued to pour in. One the morning in February 1939, Rev Haile telephoned Dumbrell and complained that Mokgosi was causing a lot of trouble at school (BNARS S.487/5/1. 25 February 1939). Dumbrell then arranged for Mokgosi to be brought before the resident commissioner in Mahikeng on 1 March 1939. The meeting took place as arranged, and the resident commissioner warned Mokgosi of dire consequences, if his conduct continued to be reported gravely (BNARS S.487/5/1. 1939). Mokgosi could not take accusations leveled against him and, in March 1939, he wrote a strongly worded letter to the director of education part of which read:

> As you told me to write to you at the end of this month, I found that I should write to you earlier because I am having a bad time… Indeed Sir, I am grieved by the fact that I am pierced by a thorn which is being 'denied' (sic), yet it is said a pain in one's body cannot be felt by another. Sir, if you knew my feelings, surely you would understand my position better. Personally I am not at all looking at the point of the Chieftainship, I can speak without shame. Sir, I have already noticed that paying of my fees by the Government lead me to troubles (sic) because if I want to say anything I am told the Government pays for you and you will not be a Chief. In this way Sir, I beg to ask the Government to pay for the education of my younger brother and I pay for mine in order that I may be free from troubles (Mokgosi to Director of Education, BNARS S.487/5/1, 13 March 1939).

He went on somewhat arrogantly saying that:

> Regarding Chieftainship, God was not foolish to give me Royal blood and I have no word for that. If I shall forfeit Chieftainship because I have ventilated my grievances, that does not matter. I shall remain a member of the Royal family and as such it is alright. There is no one that can take out my royal vein and put it in the subordinate or take the subordinate vein and put it in me. I may be poor, but shall die a member of the royal family and for that I am not afraid to answer, Sir. I have

> lost hope of going elsewhere because I shall be followed by letters defaming my character. On my arrival here I was told in the presence of boys that the least mistake I make, I shall be expelled. I have noticed that I am badly treated because Government pays for me and everything comes to me through the Government. Please Sir, excuse me for having gone beyond the limit of this letter. I am so grieved that I have become incapable of self-control.

Mokgosi's sojourn at Tiger Kloof ended unceremoniously in March 1939. On Sunday, 19 March 1939, boys went on strike at the school. They demonstrated against boarding master, Walter Pela, and to a lesser degree against the prefects associated with him. They smashed the windows of the dining hall and of the boarding master's house (Parsons *et al.,* 1995). So ugly was the situation that police were called from the nearby town of Vryburg to prevent personal injury and further damage to property. For his protection, Pela was taken by the police to Vryburg and stayed there until the dust had settled. The grievances against Pela were caused by the alleged severity of his discipline and methods of punishment, which were been compared to those of military prisons rather than schools (Parsons *et al.,* 1995). It was alleged that Mokgosi was seen in the thick of the rebellion. As a result of police intervention, order was restored from Monday, 20 March 1939.

On Tuesday night at 9pm just before the boys went to bed, Rev Haile, who had now assumed full responsibility for the boarding department, claimed to have noticed a suspicious dozen or so boys near one of the dormitories, seeing a torch flashed at a convenient meeting place (BNARS S.487/5/1, 21 March 1939). Haile went there and accosted four boys; the holder of the torch was said to be none other than Mokgosi himself. Haile said that he seized the torch and ordered the boys to bed. The following day, he expelled 15 boys thought to be ringleaders, amongst them being Mokgosi and Neale Sechele (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1939). 13 other boys left the school in protest. Mokgosi was reported to have maintained his truculent attitude to the end, when he and 10 other boys, who were expelled, were put on the 5pm north-bound train on Wednesday (BNARS S.487/5/1, 22 March 1939). Mokgosi's role in the strike remains unclear, and his expulsion was probably because he was considered a troublemaker by the school authorities who grabbed this opportunity to expel him. On 23 March 1939, in a meeting attended by the resident commissioner, government secretary, Deputy Commandant of Police Major Hurndall, and Mokgosi, the resident commissioner told Mokgosi that he was personally disappointed to hear that he had been expelled from Tiger Kloof, because of the disturbances which took place there.

Search for Another School for Mokgosi, Police and District Administration Service

In the light of these circumstances, the resident commissioner informed Mokgosi that he would be given a last chance, if it was possible to get him into a suitable institution in South Africa. Otherwise, Mokgosi could be enlisted as a police trooper. He would undergo police training after which, if favourable reports were received on his conduct, he would receive additional training in other government departments (BNARS S.487/5/1, Government Secretary to Director of Education, 23 March 1939). In the meantime, Mokgosi was enrolled as a trooper, and he proceeded immediately to the police camp near modern Gaborone for training. The resident commissioner had the authority to terminate at any time Mokgosi's enlistment in the police if a place was found for him at a different school in South Africa. Mokgosi expressed himself willing to fall in line with any arrangements which the government might make for his welfare.

Immediately after this, the director of education, informed the district commissioner for Gaborone, Forbes Mackenzie, that he had sent a letter to the principal of the Grace Dieu institution, near Pietersburg (Transvaal Province), Rev Canon Woodfield, asking whether there was any possibility of placing Mokgosi there. The reply came from the new principal of Grace Dieu, CM Jones, in April 1939. Jones turned down the request on the grounds that it would be unfair to Tiger Kloof, to accept a student who had been expelled

by Tiger Kloof (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1 April 1939). Failure to secure a school place for Mokgosi meant that he had to remain in the police force for the rest of the year.

In January 1940, Mokgosi wrote to Assistant Resident Commissioner Aubrey Forsyth-Thompson requesting to be re-attested as a policeman as it appeared that he was enjoying himself in the police. He was said to have hinted that his ambition was to become a soldier (BNARS S.487/5/1, 16 January 1940). His request was accepted. At this time, a confidential report from the government secretary stated that Moremi's general conduct was good, though at times he was inclined to be wilful or obstinate (BNARS S. 487/5/1, 30 August 1940). His sense of responsibility was said to be still undeveloped, and he showed no natural tendency towards leadership.

In January 1941, Mokgosi wrote to Aubrey Forsyth-Thompson asking to be discharged from the police (BNARS S.487/5/1, 6 February 1941). The resident commissioner ordered Mackenzie to inquire why Mokgosi wanted to leave the force, and whether he had any plans. Mokgosi was told that the resident commissioner believed in the event of he (Mokgosi) leaving the police, he should have further training, with apprentice interpreter in the district administration mentioned as an avenue for him. Serowe was chosen for Mokgosi's posting because the Bangwato were his maternal uncles, since Mokgosi's mother, Roseta, was from there. Also, Serowe might have been preferred because though Mokgosi would be working for the colonial administration, close proximity to the no-nonsense Tshekedi it was thought would have a positive effect on him. It then followed that since Mokgosi was a royal with relatives in Serowe he had to be introduced to local royalty and Tshekedi. Another reason for the choice of Serowe might have been that, since Mokgosi was fond of beer, its 'absence' at Serowe might have some beneficial effect on him. Alcoholic beverages had been banned among the Bangwato since the Christian fundamentalist Khama III became *kgosi* in 1875 (Chirenje 1977). However, despite this liquor ban it was still a problem in Serowe as in other places in the Protectorate. It was still brewed and obtained illegally in Gammangwato which was why Tshekedi engaged the tribal police to curb its sale (Makgala 1997).

Mokgosi's decision to leave the police was said to have been because, the salary he was earning was insufficient to cater for his and family needs. Nevetherless, Mokgosi's claims were doubted as the colonial authorities concluded that an investigation must be carried out to find out if Kgosi Seboko's estate was insufficient to support his family (BNARS S.487/5/1, District Commissioner's Office to Government Secretary 20 February 1941). Mokgosi argued that he wished to receive ten pounds per month, either in the police or as an interpreter in the district administration (BNARS S.487/5/1, 20 February 1941). Failing that he wanted to go on farming at his cattle post in Otse, where he believed he would be able to make the equivalent amount.

Mokgosi was then discharged from the police force and offered the post of interpreter starting at seventy-two pounds per annum (BNARS S.487/5/1, Resident Commissioner to District Commissioner 31 March 1941). He accepted the appointment at the stipulated payment. He left for Serowe in June 1941 after Tshekedi had approved of his coming. At the time he left the police service, a confidential report on Mokgosi stated that he had been carrying out routine police duties. In drill, horsemanship and police work generally, he was reported to be below average. He was said to have shown no particular ability in his work, and it was unlikely that he would become an efficient member of the force. He was also reported to be lacking in sense of responsibility and discipline (BNARS S.487/5/1, 10 February 1941). Despite his reported wayward behaviour, the colonial authorities were determined to make something positive out of him.

Discussions on Mokgosi Joining the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps

In July 1941 Arden-Clarke, through the district commissioner of Serowe, Gerald Nettleton, suggested that Mokgosi enlist in the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (AAPC) for the Second World War. These were

Bechuanaland men recruited by the British forces fighting in North Africa, and the Middle East during the war. The original task of the Pioneer Corps entailed being labourers and builders, but they subsequently diversified into other roles which including some combat duties. They became front-line anti-aircraft gunners as they accompanied the British 8th Army through Italy as far as Yugoslavia. Together with troops from Basutoland (Lesotho) and Swaziland (Eswatini) they became regular armed soldiers unlike their black counterparts in South African Union Defence Force (Parsons *et al*., 1995). The corps participated in the ferociously fought Battle of Monte Cassino (Mulindwa 1987). This change in the role of Batswana men is buttressed by Jackson (1999) when he says it signalled a major shift in British military policy in 1943 as more British soldiers were needed for the eventual reinvasion of Northern Europe.

Mokgosi replied in August 1941 stating that he did not feel any urge to join the AAPC. He suggested that instead a job be found for him at Lobatse Depot (Batswana recruits congregated here before being dispatched to their various postings), but Nettelton disagreed on the grounds that it would have the effect of taking him nearer to the beer pots of Lobatse (BNARS S.487/5/1, Nettelton to Arden-Clarke, 12 July 1941). Arden-Clarke then informed Nettelton that he should persist in his effort and to lose no opportunity of impressing on Mokgosi that, as he hoped to be recognised as *kgosi*, it was up to him to prove his capacity for leadership. It was also noted that it was his duty to give his people a lead by joining the AAPC (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1 August 1941). Mokgosi diplomatically stated that he should first become a competent clerk before he could become a soldier. He further said that while there was nothing to stop him from joining the Pioneer Corps, he was not inclined to joining. However, Nettelton expressed a view that Mokgosi appeared to be a little frightened off (BNARS S.487/5/1, Nettelton to Arden-Clarke, 12 August 1941). Tshekedi, to whom Nettelton had broached the subject, was of the view that it would be wrong for Mokgosi to enlist for the war front. He compared it with Tshekedi himself allowing Seretse to go on active service in the army. Tshekedi said that people would immediately suspect that there was a plot to get rid of a rightful *kgosi* (BNARS S.487/5/1, Nettelton to Resident Commissioner, 12 August 1941). However, there were other *dikgosi* such as Kgari Sechele II of Bakwena and Molefi Pilane of Bakgatla who had voluntarily joined the war effort. Therefore, it was obvious to Nettleton that for Mokgosi to enlist for the war the Balete had to be consulted on the matter.

Meanwhile, Mokgosi's stay in Serowe had brought a marked difference in his character and relations with other people. For instance, the district commissioner's office in Serowe reported to the government secretary in Mahikeng, that Interpreter Mokgosi (now 21) had been in the office for six months, and had shown improvement in many aspects, though he had not yet developed the initiative which would be so essential to him in carrying out his duties as future *kgosi* (BNARS S.487/5/1, District Commissioner to Government Secretary, 18 January 1942). Mokgosi was found to be polite and quite industrious when assigned tasks to carry out. He was also reported to be a cheerful young man, and popular with the other members of staff. The district commissioner even suggested that time had come for Mokgosi to be given more responsible work (BNARS S.487/5/1, 18 January 1942). Nettelton had earlier on discussed Mokgosi with Archilaus Tsoebebe, former schoolteacher and now African clerk in Serowe, with whom Mokgosi lived. The discussion also involved Tshekedi. The feeling was that Mokgosi should continue in the office for a prolonged period to gain valuable experience. Nettelton further suggested that from July 1942 Tshekedi could be requested to employ Mokgosi in his tribal office for about one year, even if the colonial government paid his salary. The idea was to arm Mokgosi with invaluable experience in tribal administration for which he was being prepared to lead.

Nonetheless, the idea of Mokgosi joining the Pioneer Corps was resuscitated. On 13 May 1942, Nettelton reported to Forsyth-Thompson in Mahikeng that Mokgosi had come to him that morning and solicited advice regarding his desire to join the AAPC (BNARS S.487/5/1, 1942). He had advised Mokgosi that it would be an excellent thing for him, and that it had been the resident commissioner's advice to him

a year prior. Moreover, this would be good for Mokgosi because one of the messengers in the district commissioner's office, Seane Molefhe, also wanted to join the AAPC, and the district commissioner had released him. Interestingly, Molefhe was one of the students expelled together with Mokgosi from Tiger Kloof in 1939 (BNARS S.487/5/1, 13 May 1942) and was reported to be good at working in the district commissioner's office. One would surmise that Molefhe's enlistment had influenced Mokgosi.

Nettelton then advised Mokgosi that it would be wise if he could go and inform or consult his people, as well as Tshekedi, since he had been very good to Mokgosi (BNARS S.487/5/1, 13 May 1942). Mokgosi did consult the Balete in a *kgotla* meeting. However, in June 1942, he informed the assistant resident commissioner that the Balete had refused him permission to join the AAPC (BNARS S.487/5/1, 17 June 1942). The *kgotla* meeting categorically said that a letter be written to the district commissioner in Gaborone informing him of the *morafe*'s refusal. The *morafe* even wanted to see the district commissioner in person. Balete argued that Mokgosi had been away from them for a long time, and that they wished him to return home to be taught their laws and customs, as well as duties which he would have to execute as *kgosi*. 'If he went to war, when would he return?' they enquired (BNARS S.487/5/1, District Commissioner to Government Secretary, 10 July 1942). A plausible reason why the Balete were opposed to Mokgosi joining the AAPC was that they feared that he might be killed, thus denying them their rightful *kgosi.*

Despite the Balete's adamant stance that their future *kgosi* would not join the AAPC, the colonial authorities ignored this and went ahead with preparations for Mokgosi's departure. The preparations entailed a tentative arrangement that Mokgosi would be attested at Mahikeng and straightaway sent to Lesotho (Basutoland) for some training; and then he would be attached to a Basotho Company going to the Middle East, where immediately on arrival, he would be transferred to a Bechuanaland Company (BNARS S.487/5/1, Aubrey Forsyth-Thompson to Forbes Mackenzie, 9 March 1943). It was further stated that, if Mokgosi agreed to this arrangement he would join at the rank of private, and work his way up, but the assistant resident commissioner said, he was prepared if Mokgosi could make the grade, to ask for accelerated promotion to the rank of corporal (BNARS S.487/5/1, 9 March 1943). Mokgosi passed medical tests on 18 March 1943, and he was enlisted as a private in Serowe. Then he went to Ramotswa to say goodbye to his relatives and Balete.

Ketshwerebothata's alleged endorsement of the idea that his nephew should join the AAPC further strained the relationship between uncle and nephew. Mokgosi wrote a private letter to Tshekedi, whom he greatly admired, stating that the government was in effect forcing him to join the army, and that his uncle was quite determined to get him out of the succession plan. Immediately after this, Ketshwerebothata accompanied by Tshekedi went to meet the new resident commissioner, Forsyth-Thompson, on 24 March 1943. What emerged in the meeting was that the Balete were not in full agreement about Mokgosi joining the AAPC. It was submitted that those Balete who gave their consent did so on the grounds that, they had been made to understand that it was Mokgosi who had insisted to the government to let him enlist. It was now made clear by the resident commissioner that Mokgosi had no real desire to enlist, and he blamed Ketshwerebothata for this turn of events (BNARS S.487/5/1, 25 March 1943). The resident commissioner then instructed Nettelton to immediately meet with Mokgosi, and travel with him to Ramotswa and hold a *kgotla* meeting on 29 March 1943 for consultation with the morafe and settle the matter conclusively.

After the said meeting, together with representations made to the resident commissioner by Ketshwerebothata and Tshekedi, it was decided by the resident commissioner that Mokgosi need not remain in the army. Hence, arrangements were now made for his release, and return to Tshekedi's offices since the resident commissioner considered that Mokgosi was still far from being fit to assume *bogosi*. Mokgosi's reluctance and his people's refusal to allow him to be enlisted in the AAPC meant that he managed to avoid going to war by a whisker. The plausible reason why the colonial authorities pressured Mokgosi to go to war was that he would follow the precedent set by other *dikgosi* and members of royal families such

as Kgari Sechele II (Bakwena); Molefi Pilane (Bakgatla); Mookami Gaseitsiwe (Bangwaketse); Molwa Sekgoma and Rasebolai Kgamane (Bangwato). They were all dispatched to North Africa and the Middle East serving in the British army.

After all this, a tripartite arrangement was entered into between the resident commissioner, Ketshwerebothata, Mokgosi, and Tshekedi that Mokgosi would spend the remainder of the year (1944) at Serowe. After this he was to go back to Ramotswa, where after a period of six months under the supervision of regent Ketshwerebothata he would take over tribal affairs by the middle of 1945 (BNARS S.487/5/1, Resident Commissioner to Administrative Secretary to High Commissioner, 6 July 1944). The Balete were informed accordingly during a *kgotla* meeting about the impending return of Mokgosi, and the news were overwhelmingly welcomed. Everything went according to plan, and Mokgosi was enthroned as *kgosi* of the Balete on 10 July 1945 (BNARS S.487/5/2).

Kgosi Mokgosi III in Office

Beginning with shaky childhood, Mokgosi grew into an industrious and progressive leader contrary to what his critics had expressed about him. One of the projects that had a positive impact on the lives of the Balete was the Mogobane irrigation scheme. The irrigation scheme prospered under Mokgosi. Different crops were grown for export to South Africa (Tsumake 1982). Another positive contribution of Mokgosi to his *morafe* was his stance towards the joint tribal project of Balete and Batlokwa called Kgale Livestock Improvement Centre or bull camp which was established in the 1930s with assistance of the colonial administration. The scheme was established on a farm that belonged to the Balete. The project was, however, a failure. Kgosi Mokgosi doubted the benefits of this bull camp and requested the government to return the land in question to Balete who badly needed it for ordinary farming purposes, and he eventually succeeded (BNARS DCG,1/25, 1946-1947).

His reign ended abruptly on 13 June 1966, when he died at the Bamalete Lutheran Hospital in Ramotswa after being admitted for a week. The doctors said the cause of his death was an attack of cerebral thrombosis (*Bechuanaland Daily News* 14 June 1966). He was survived by his wife, seven daughters and a son. His untimely death, at a relatively young age of 46 was a great shock. He was mourned by many, including his long-time friend Seretse Khama (president of Botswana from 1966 to 1980), the *dikgosi*, members of the legislative assembly (parliament), other Tswana *dikgosi* from South Africa, and ordinary people throughout the country.

A point has been made earlier in the paper on succession to Tswana *bogosi* through a patrilineal system, and this was how Mokgosi ascended to the throne. Yonah Matemba has argued that when Mokgosi's first child was born in 1950 and happened to be a girl he expressed shock and disappointment. He remarked that 'Well, it's a woman (mosadi). What can I do? It's my child' (Matemba 2005:1). Therefore, she was given the name 'Mosadi'. Mokgosi probably was worried that he might not have a son to succeed him. Unbeknown to him, 37 years (2003) after his death his eldest daughter, Mosadi Seboko, made news headlines as she was enthroned as *kgosi* of Balete. She became the first substantive *kgosi* in her own right among the Tswana-speaking *merafe* to be enthroned in both the colonial and post-colonial period. This symbolic and significant event (Mosadi Seboko's enthronement) buttresses Nyamnjoh's (2003) assertion of the 'adaptability' of the institution of *bogosi* in modern-day Botswana.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the Tswana succession system forced the colonial government to groom heirs to *bogosi* because substitute however worthy was likely to be unacceptable to the people. Therefore, the colonial authorities had to put up with Mokgosi's conduct and work hard to educate and train him to become a responsible tribal leader. Whereas there were special schools for chiefs in other parts of British

tropical Africa, this was not the case in Botswana.

However, even in Botswana, the colonial government still had ideas on the type of education for future *dikgosi* as the case of Mokgosi shows. This, they pursued with great vigour to the extent of even polarising the society, as shown by the discord and confusion in the attempts to enlist Mokgosi into the AAPC.

Even though *bogosi* was weakened during the colonial period it managed to survive. At independence, the post-colonial government continued the process of eroding the powers of the *dikgosi* and further weakening and undermining their role in society. However, the institution managed to persevere and survive up to this day.

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