

## **Introduction to the Special Issue on Humanities at the University of Botswana and Botswana's 50 Years of Independence**

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We are greatly pleased and excited as the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Botswana (UB) for producing such a momentous special issue of the *Botswana Notes and Records* on Humanities and Botswana's 50 years of Independence. This is a milestone achievement for our Faculty of Humanities, UB, our country Botswana, and scholarship in general. The impressive contributions to this volume are made by various scholars from different disciplines and departments in the Faculty of Humanities. This is, indeed, in line with UB's mission and vision of being the centre of excellence in the world. What is also pleasing is that contributions are from both senior and emerging scholars across the disciplines. In some instances senior and junior scholars have co-authored articles which is a mentoring process we encourage greatly in the Faculty and the university at large. It is even more gratifying to state that some of the articles were written by former students in the Faculty of Humanities who have since pursued different endeavours which include graduate studies overseas. We also have contributions by specialists from other institutions in Botswana, and former employees of UB who have since moved on to other institutions or callings. This is a development we are quite proud of and it is further touched on below. The publication of the articles in the special issue of the *Botswana Notes and Records* also has an important historical dimension. For instance, when Botswana celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1976 the *Botswana Notes and Records* also had a special issue focusing on the development of the country from 1966 to 1976. The special issue was launched around the time of the 1976 Independence celebrations. Perhaps, it should also be stated that the *Botswana Notes and Records* is the country's oldest surviving indigenous journal. Therefore, the *Botswana Notes and Records* has grown through the involvement of great scholars from UB and elsewhere.

The contributions in the current issue of the journal focus mainly on various issues of development in Botswana since the country attained its Independence from British colonial rule on 30 September 1966. This is part of a larger project at UB and the national level whereby various activities were launched in celebration of the country's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for 30 September 2016. Among other activities UB held several well-publicised seminars on various topics or themes relevant to the development of Botswana since Independence. In fact, the very opening seminar featured a member of our Faculty, Professor Part Mgadla, and this proved quite popular with the audience (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1: Front page of UB newsletter featuring Professor Mgadla in his element

**BOTSWANA 50**

# UB NEWS

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## Prof Mgadla debunks Myths as BOT50 Lecture Series kicks off

Professor Mgadla says the three dikgosi travelled to England 10 years after Bechuanaland had been granted British protection.

The University of Botswana BOT50 Public Lecture Series kicked off at the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) on August 11, 2016 with Professor Part Mgadla debunking what he said had been a long held historical myth in the media and other public fora that the three Botswana dikgosi went to England in 1895 to seek British protection.

According to Professor Mgadla, who is Confucius Institute director, the three dikgosi - Khama III of Bangwato, Sebele I of Bakwena, and Bathoen I of Bangwaketse - went to England 10 years after Botswana, then Bechuanaland, had been granted British protection. Professor said it was, therefore, a myth and misconception to suggest that they went to England to seek protection since it was granted in 1885 long before they traveled to England.

The guest speaker, Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe, former Cabinet Minister (1974-1999), had set the ball rolling by observing that before independence, the different tribes represented by the three chiefs went to the United Kingdom to request Queen Victoria's protection against Cecil Rhodes' desire to have them as part of the Rhodesia's North and South, as well as from apartheid South Africa's grand plan to have them as part of the Union of South Africa. She said in the Union of South Africa, there was provision for future incorporation should Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland wish to join South Africa. "But they decided not to,"

she added.

Dr. Chiepe said at her request for protection from Cecil Rhodes, Bechuanaland was ruled by Britain as a protectorate whose capital was outside its frontiers - in a foreign country. The capital was in Mafikeng, South Africa where a piece of land was carved completely surrounded like an island, called the Imperial Reserve.

"To say this arrangement was very inconvenient is an understatement of the highest order. One needed a passport to go through Ramatlabama border post to get into Mafikeng, South Africa, and suffered the indignity of being black in apartheid South Africa," said the former minister.

She noted that the Imperial Reserve was fenced, and once one got out of its gates, they were in South Africa. "If you were black you were arrested for being in town from nine o'clock in the evening. Benches and other amenities at the railway stations were marked clearly for whites only or for blacks only," added Dr. Chiepe.

However, Professor Mgadla said for a long time there had been confusion about the purpose of the three dikgosi with the media and many other people propagating the myth and misconception that the 1895 mission to the United Kingdom was to seek for protection. Instead, he argued, it was a protest against annexation by Cecil Rhodes, as protection had already been granted in 1885.

On the question from one of the audience whether indeed the three dikgosi went to England, both Professor Mgadla and Dr. Chiepe said there was documented and detailed evidence to that effect.

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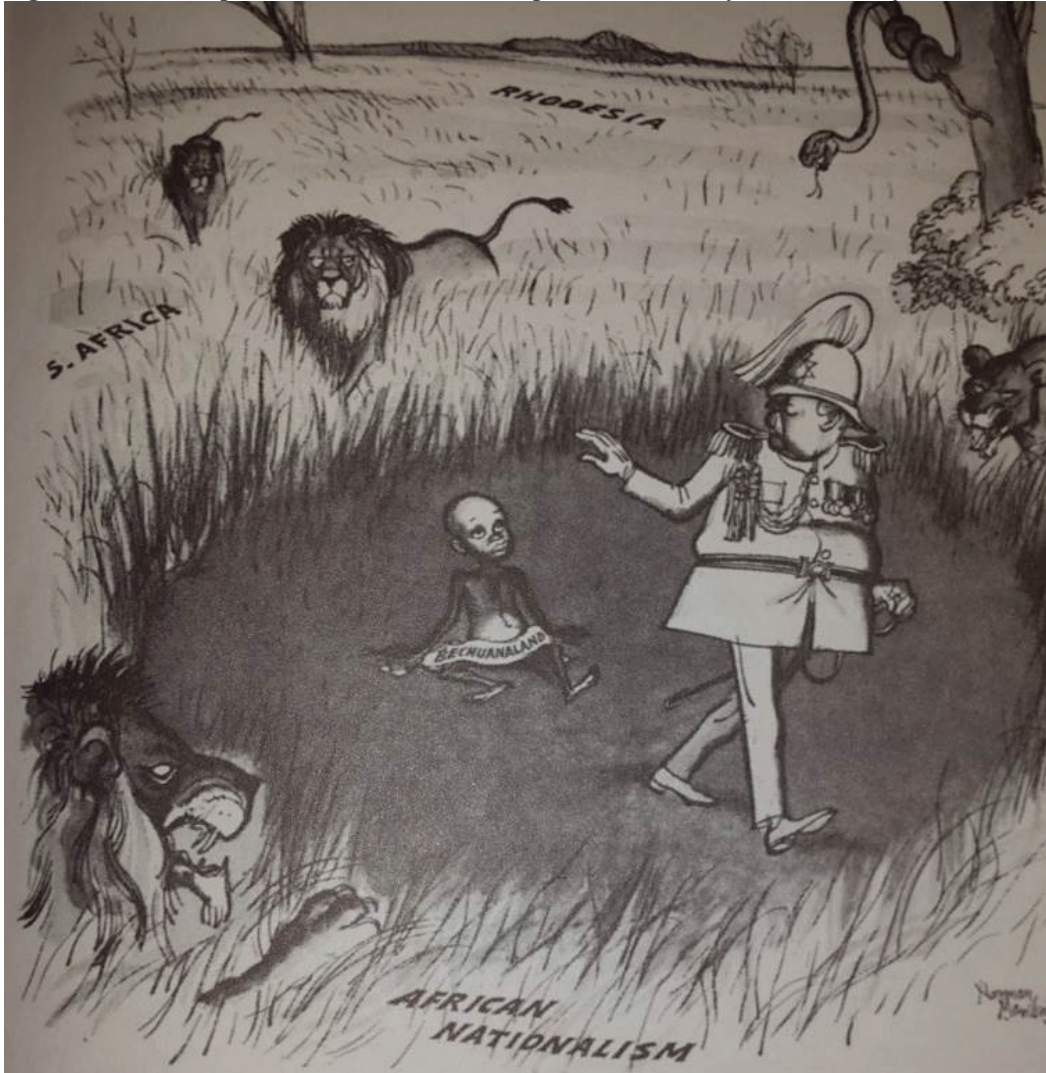
Source: Courtesy of Public Affairs, University of Botswana

When Botswana attained its Independence in 1966 it was ranked the second poorest country in the world (Magang 2015). The international media painted a very gloomy or hopeless picture of the future of the country. The famous British magazine *Punch* went to the extent of depicting, through a cartoon, the acceptance of Independence as 'Very Brave or Very Foolish' on the part of Botswana's leaders. This phrase was used by the country's second president, Sir Ketumile Masire, as the title of his memoirs which was published in 2006 in commemoration of Botswana's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence. The *Punch* cartoon



depicted Botswana as a severely malnourished and sickly child ('*serathana*') who was being abandoned in the forest by its British colonial governor (guardian) where lions and poisonous snakes lurked (Figure 2). The lions and snakes were in the form of the racist and vicious white minority regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) as well as African nationalists in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Mozambique who fought against oppressive white settler regimes.

**Figure 2: Punch depiction of Botswana at Independence as 'Very Brave or Very Foolish'**



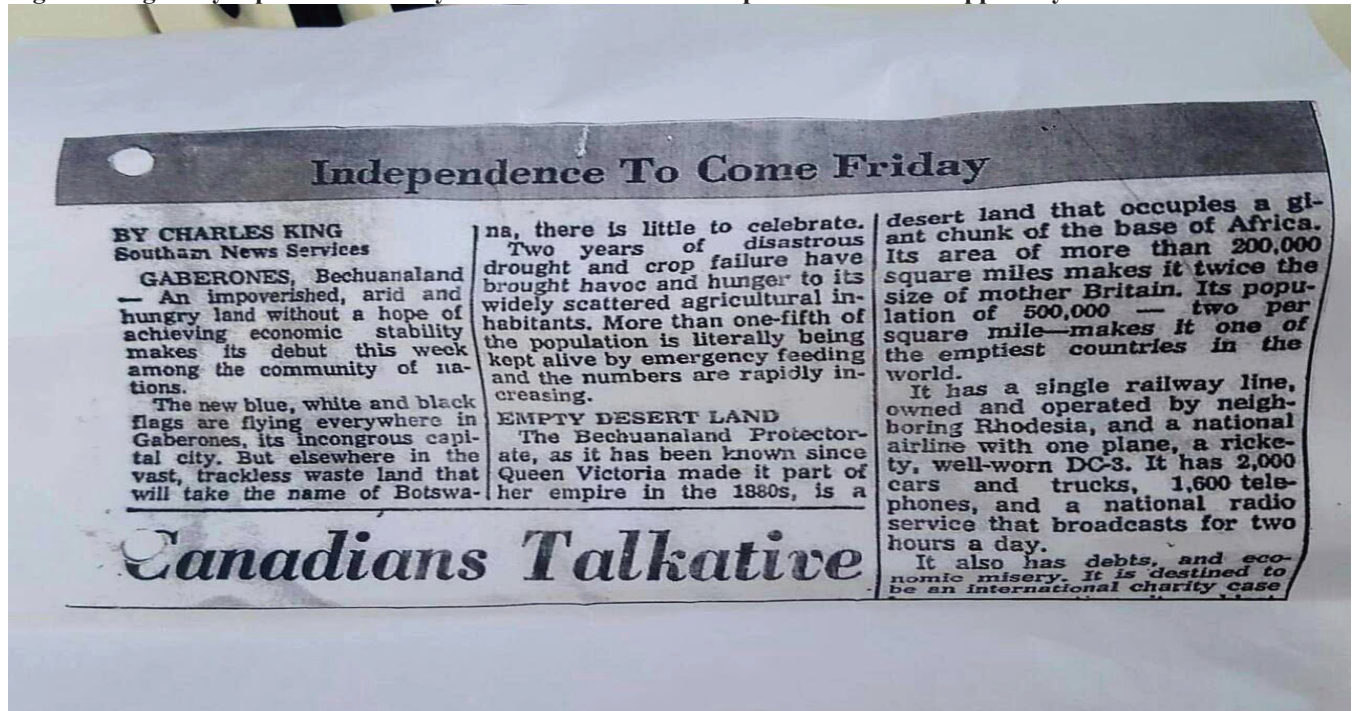
Source: Masire (2006)

However, Botswana became a model democracy on the continent which defied the white regimes' negative portrayal of black leaders in independent African countries as despots who were ruining their countries' economies. Whereas the helpless Botswana was heavily dependent on South Africa economically and for infrastructure, the country openly condemned South Africa's apartheid system which oppressed the black majority (Makgala 2016a). Botswana also gave moral support to the African nationalists fighting against white regimes in the neighbouring countries. For this, Botswana, which did not have an army until 1977, suffered military attacks and other forms of harassment from the Rhodesian and South African regimes (Makgala and Fisher 2009; Mgadla and Mokopakgosi 2013).

Another gloomy depiction of Botswana (called Bechuanaland Protectorate at the time) was in the

form of an article in a newspaper by Charles King of the Southern News Services in the United States in late September 1966. Whereas the *Punch* cartoon was telling in terms of the image, the text of Charles King's article was even more depressing as can be read from Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: A gloomy report on the sorry state of Botswana at Independence and its supposedly bleak future



Source: This image was obtained from the social media in which it was popular in the build-up to Botswana's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence.

As indicated above Botswana went on to become a celebrated democracy in a region or continent (Parsons *et al* 1995) characterised by unaccountable political leadership whose repressive rule impoverished large numbers of citizens (Mbeki 2009). Military coups and counter-coups became common means through which governments were changed. Civil strife and ethnic cleansing were also a worrying trend. Most African countries are blessed with important natural resources such as minerals which could be used to improve the standard of living of the people. However, in most cases this has resulted in civil wars and civil strife commonly known as the 'resource curse' (Bannon and Collier 2003). For most African countries the first 50 years of Independence were characterised by this rather disturbing scenario (Meredith 2005).

In Botswana diamond mining started in the 1970s and 1980s and these greatly transformed the country from what Charles King describes in Figure 2 above to an upper middle income entirety (Masire 2006, Siphambe *et al* 2003 and Magang 2015). Through diamond revenue the government of Botswana was able to provide basic social amenities to most parts of the country in the form of education, roads, healthcare, telecommunications, water and others. For a period of some 30 years Botswana's economic growth was reported to be the fastest in the world, and this resulted in the country being referred to as the 'African Miracle' and 'African Success Story' (Leith 2005; Samatar 1999; Acemoglu *et al* 2002 and Magang 2015). Other observers have even described Botswana as a developmental state (Maudeni 2001 and Taylor 2003).

Botswana's development trajectory was premised on the national philosophy comprising of four principles of *democracy, self-reliance, development and unity* and collectively known as *Kagisanyo* (peaceful co-existence) (Carter and Morgan 1980). In 1997 the government of President Quett Masire introduced



a fifth principle of *botho* (courteous and appropriate behaviour) through a long term national roadmap known as 'Vision 2016' (Republic of Botswana 1997). Vision 2016 envisioned Botswana to be a peaceful, competitive and prosperous society in 2016 when the country celebrates 50 years of Independence. Where possible the articles in this collection are discussed or conclude by making reference to how their subject of discussion relates to Vision 2016.

However, the rapid development of Botswana has not been without serious challenges and difficulties. For instance, in the nation-building process languages of the so-called ethnic minorities were marginalised and subordinated to Setswana as the only recognised national language (Nyathi-Ramahobo 1999). This has over the years become an issue of major concern to the marginalised ethnic groups (Mazonde 2002). So serious has been this issue that some people have even suggested that the name of the country should be changed to reflect the name of a natural geographical feature such as a river as is the case with Zambia and Nigeria instead of Botswana which reflects the existence of only one ethnic group –Tswana speakers (Makgala 2008). Kgalagadi is one of the names suggested for the country because the Kgalagadi desert dominates its landscape (Makgala 2008).

In addition to the language question there are issues of high levels of poverty and the widening gap between the country's haves and have-nots, HIV/AIDS epidemic, deteriorating education system, failure to meaningfully diversify the economy from over-dependence on the non-renewable diamonds through improved arable agriculture, disturbingly high and rising level of unemployment, among many other concerns. This scenario has seen former cabinet minister and one of Botswana's successful entrepreneurs David Magang (2015) redesignating Botswana from the 'African Miracle' to the 'African Mirage' (also see Makgala 2016b).

The story of Botswana's successes and challenges over the past 50 years is raised in this collection. The first article is Part Mgadla's explanation of Botswana's administrative centre which was located outside the country first in Vryburg and then Mahikeng in South Africa from the beginning of colonial rule up to 1965 when it was finally decided to be relocated in Gaborone inside Botswana. This article provides the background to the collection by examining Botswana's administrative history. Nonofho Ndobochani's article reviews the development of archaeological legislation in Botswana from 1911 to 2011. Her interest is mainly in how integration of archaeological issues in other pieces of legislation has facilitated the growth of archaeological legislation. This is followed by Puso Sezuka's examination of the history of safari companies in Ngamiland from 1960 to 1990. Ngamiland is the country's prime tourist business region. The article is a revised BA research essay or thesis which Sezuka wrote as a fourth year student in the Department of History. This is a tradition that was started by the Department way back in 1976 when the University itself started in Gaborone. The revision and publication of Sezuka's thesis bears testimony to the high quality of some of our undergraduate student's research projects particularly in the History Department as Fred Morton and Bruce Bennett explain in this collection's Notes Section.

Part Mgadla follows up his article on the movement of Botswana's administrative centres with another one on interesting Legislative Council (Legco) debate in the early 1960s on which site to locate the country's new capital inside the country. His conclusion, which is influenced by current challenges such as lack of adequate water supply for the capital –Gaborone – and concentration of most government services in the capital, is that the choice of Gaborone was a 'Very Grave and Expensive Error'. This is a direct phrase or 'prophecy' that was used by one of the councillors during the Legco debate in 1961. It is worth noting that Mgadla's paper was presented at the History Department's seminar series in September and drew a great deal of interest in the local media and the general public.

Christian John Makgala and Peter Sebina follow up with a piece on the history of the national anthem from 1965 to 2006 when the country celebrated 40 years of Independence. They state that soon after the anthem was commissioned and recorded its composer found it to have serious and embarrassing errors

which had to be corrected. An interesting account of the origins and dynamics of diplomatic relations between the capitalist Botswana and the socialist Union of Soviet and Socialist Republic (USSR) during the era of the Cold War is recounted by Kwante Kwante and Boga Manatsha. This article was originally a BA research essay written by Kwante Kwante in the Department of History. It was revised by Boga Manatsha and this shows the importance of the BA student research essay in our scholarship. Boga Manatsha and Gabriel Malebang follow the Botswana-Soviet Union diplomatic relations paper with another one on Botswana-Japan relations from 1966 to 2016. They demonstrate how central Botswana is to Japanese economic and political interests in the Southern African region. Another revised BA student research essay is by Bafumiki Mocheregwa on Artificial Insemination in Botswana from 1960 to 2011. This essay was of such good quality that it earned Mocheregwa the coveted Professor Michael Crowder Prize for the best Department of History student during graduation in 2011. This helped him get a Trent University scholarship to pursue an MA in History at Trent University in Canada. He did so well that he managed to get a scholarship to pursue a PhD in History at the University of Calgary, also in Canada. These products of our Faculty make us very proud. Distance education is very important in the production of informed and skilled personnel for the country, and library service is the heart of this development. The opportunities and challenges faced in the country's distance education and library service are discussed by Olugbade Oladokun from the colonial period to date.

Herman Batibo's article on the origin and evolution of the Setswana language was first presented in 1996 as an inaugural lecture here at UB. The inaugural lecture tradition is also important in scholarship and our Faculty has not been left behind over the years. Batibo focuses on how the Setswana language evolved and its relationship with other Bantu languages in sub-Saharan Africa. A related subject is discussed by Rosaleen Nhlekisana by looking at the role of Setswana proverbs in Botswana's national psyche and nationhood. Among other issues she discusses the role of *Botho* which as we noted above has become the fifth principal of the national philosophy. Another focus on languages is done by Andy Chebanne who concentrates on the plight of the country's 'minority' languages which he says are threatened with death owing to the government's language policy that does not recognise them. He also argues that even Setswana is not immune to this eventuality because it is subordinated to the English language which is the country's official language. Joyce Mathangwane further examines the plight of the marginalised vernacular languages by examining the Ikalanga which is also widely spoken in Zimbabwe. She informs us that in Zimbabwe the language among other indigenous vernaculars has been accorded official national language status which will greatly assist in the development and sustenance of the language. Ndana Ndana, Glorious Gumbo and Andy Chebanne provide us with an account of the culture and naming of canoes among the Basubiya in the Chobe District. Their article demonstrates the need to document ethnic activities that enrich the cultures of Botswana. Kethapile Mojuta and Arua Arua examine lexical or language problems faced by court interpreters at the High Court in Botswana. They demonstrate that these can be so serious that they can lead to inadvertent miscarriage of justice. Hence, the need for thorough training of court interpreters in order for justice not to be compromised.

There has been debates in the public domain as to whether Botswana is a Christian state or not. Officially, the country is not a Christian state even though an overwhelming majority of the people subscribe to the Christian doctrine or religion. Religion, particularly Christianity, has been an integral part of the school syllabus for a long time in Botswana. In this regard Fedelis Nkomazana and Senzokuhle Setume's article addresses the changes that have taken place in the teaching and the curriculum of Religious Education in Botswana since 1966. They are of the view that the teaching of the subject in the country's primary and secondary schools has contributed to the development of social values and moral standards in the learners. On the issue of development of social values and moral standards, Christian John Makgala and Maitseo Bolaane focus on how Gobe Matenge as the coordinator for Botswana's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence

celebrations in 1976 tried to use the process to cultivate positive social values. They argue that Matenge's approach has been influential to Vision 2016 to reduce the negative impact of globalisation on the attitudes and social values of Botswana.

Lovemore Togarasei's piece discusses major characteristics of Modern Pentecostal Churches in Botswana. It notes that this form of Christianity is making some contributions to the socio-economic and political life of Botswana. However, he also points out that the churches have more to do to reflect their increasing dominance in the Christian faith. Still on religion and the church Moji Ruele explains the relationship between theology and the temporal order in post-independence sub-Saharan Africa using Botswana as a case study. He says that it is evident that many Africans and Christians in the post-colonial era are faced with serious socio-economic and political challenges in the form of landlessness, homelessness, subjection to undemocratic systems, violation of human rights, and the 'captivity of the Church'. The latter, he says, refers to the operations of the Church as a morally upright institution that is supposed to promote social justice but has been held hostage by its leadership. Generally, these challenges deny many Africans social justice. As far as he is concerned all these challenges can best be understood, interpreted, and addressed through contextual theological approaches. Whereas the Bible and Botswana society is characterised by patriarchal tendencies, Mmapula Kebaneilwe is of the view that Proverbs Chapter 31 verses 10-31 in the Bible, which deals with 'A Woman of Courage', can be used to inspire women in Botswana to become successful entrepreneurs. This is all more important given the country's struggle with high levels of unemployment.

Plagiarism is a major issue and a problem in academia as well as other walks of life. Despite its consequences which can be quite severe Christian John Makgala, Maitseo Bolaane and Andy Chebanne argue that it will continue bedeviling societies as people engage in it for survival or pursuit of glory. Their focus is on intellectual property rights infringement in politics, corporate sector, entertainment industry and even the controversial logo for Botswana's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence (BOT50) celebrations. Diamond revenue has in recent decades so dominated government of Botswana's revenue stream that arable agriculture, which contributed about 40% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) around 1966, had been reduced to mere 3% by the turn of the new millennium. Efforts to grow the agricultural sector for food self-sufficiency through government subsidies to farmers have borne very little fruit, if any at all. This is a subject that Bongani Gumbo discusses by looking at the Arable Land Development Programme (ALDEP) in the Chobe District from the 1980s to the 1990s. Wazha Morapedi takes the debate further by examining the shortcomings of ALDEP and how it was replaced with Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agricultural Development (ISPAAD) in 2008. He is of the view that ALDEP failed because of the government's top-down bureaucratic approach which is being repeated with ISPAAD. Hence, he does not see any difference in the implementation and results of the two programmes. While on paper the government gives serious attention to agricultural production Senwelo Isaacs observes that in the village of Otse, which is located on the country's busiest AI highway between Gaborone and Lobatse, good agricultural land was being converted to residential and industrial use. Her observation of this development between 1986 and 2002 leads her to conclude that agriculture has been the loser at the end of it all.

The media is important in any society including Botswana which did not have a national television until 2000 when Botswana Television (Btv) was established. In this regard Seamogano Mosanako's article examines the performance of Btv by analysing the extent to which a development-oriented message is prevalent on the service. Through an interpretative content analysis of Btv schedules, argues Mosanako, Btv has mostly scheduled educational, informational and entertainment programmes, which are mostly consistent with the national development objectives of Botswana. Nonetheless, programmes relating to corruption, productivity and innovation are deficient, she observes.

In the area of culture Wazha Lopang goes beyond an oral-aural appreciation of Ikalanga trickster

tales to explore the tacit manner in which patriarchy views *shulo* (hare) the Ikalanga trickster as male. He explains the concept of androgyny to demonstrate why the trickster is a successful character, even though some storytellers and critics view the trickster as either male or female. Lopang argues that seeing the trickster as either male or female is flawed because the trickster functions outside the paradigms of masculinity and femininity. It is this non-conformity that helps us to better appreciate how we define ourselves socially as human beings. Another aspect of culture is pottery and this is a subject Phenyo Thebe delves in. His study integrates various multi-disciplinary approaches on ceramics that provide answers to the past, present and possibly the future of the subject. He gives special focus on the four main stages of pottery production in south-eastern Botswana, that is raw material acquisition and processing, forming and shaping, decoration and surface treatment, and firing and finishing of pots. His objective is to demonstrate the changing pottery traditions in Botswana over the last 50 years.

Connie Rapoo discusses performance and the economies of cultural heritage festivals in Botswana and asks the question whether these are a 'cashing in or selling out' phenomenon. She says cultural heritage performances such as the Kuru Dance Festival of the Basarwa (Bushmen/San) and the Sedibelo Festival of the Bakgatla trade on indigenous performance traditions by translating rituals, culture and heritage into economic activities for the consumption of tourists. Her article examines what the potentials and pitfalls of such an exchange might be, and provides insight into the way cultural performers re-enact their perceived 'authentic' memories of 'African-ness' through performative acts that attempt to resist the long history of mythologising Africa. She further discusses whether such performances might perpetuate Euro-American patterns of 'consuming Africa', and thereby reiterate colonial power dynamics. Another discussion on culture is by Lebogang Disele who focuses on theatre by examining a student initiative of The Company@Maitisong at the private Maru-a-Pula secondary school in Gaborone. This was an effort to develop a professional theatre industry in Botswana. She examines various challenges that the company faced in a bid to become a sustainable commercial enterprise. Keletso Setlhabi's article is on an aspect of cultural heritage in which she argues for the creation of presidential museums in Botswana to house personal and public belongings of the country's presidents. She was encouraged to undertake such research on seeing a large number of presents given to Botswana's third president, Festus Mogae (1998-2008) by Botswana all over the country. Unfortunately, there is no systematic storage for such material and others that form part of the history of the presidency in Botswana.

The final article in the collection is by Senwelo Isaacs and Boga Manatsha who focus on one of the most controversial and emotive issues in sub-Saharan Africa –land. They assess Botswana's land policy of 2015 and argue that it is a hurried project which creates more problems than it intends solving when considering land administration and management in Botswana.

The *Botswana Notes and Records* also has a Notes Section for mainly non-academic articles. These can be personal memoirs and anecdotes. As mentioned above Fred Morton opens the Notes Section by giving a narrative of his experience on the origin and early years of the History Department's undergraduate major research essays which started in 1976. He also provides important historical information on some of the founding members of the Faculty of Humanities which has now been forgotten. Morton's account ends in 1990 after which Bruce Bennett continues the account up to 2016. He tries to explain developments within the context of the impact of reforms of academic and administrative programmes at UB over the past two decades or so. One founding father of UB who also happened to be the first Head of the Department of History, first dean of the Faculty of Humanities and later deputy vice chancellor and then vice chancellor of UB was Professor Thomas Tlou. In 1998 he retired from being vice chancellor and returned to the Department of History to teach. Alinah Segobye, who was an archaeology lecturer in the Department interviewed Professor Tlou and the interview was published in the Department's handbook. We reproduce the same interview in this volume. For many years Professor Tlou worked and sometimes co-published



with another eminent historian of Botswana, Professor Neil Parsons who retired from UB in 2009. In 2016 he happened to be in Gaborone and the *Sunday Standard* journalist Spencer Mogapi interviewed Professor Parsons for his newspaper. Mogapi, who is the deputy editor of the *Sunday Standard* and former student in the Faculty of Humanities, interviewed him on historical subjects and the state of history as a discipline and education generally in Botswana.

In 2010 *Sunday Standard* journalist's Kagiso Madibana had interviewed Professor Felix Mnthali, a luminary of African literature who was based in the Department of English and had even been the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities. Joyce Mathangwane helped revise Madibana's article which is now included in this volume. Another former Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, the now retired Dr Joseph Tsonope, also contributes his personal account as a lecturer in the Department of African Languages and Literature, dean, and director of UB Foundation. He also discusses the opportunities and challenges at The Botswana Society of which he was a chairperson for some years.

As indicated above, inaugural lectures are very important in academic spheres and the Faculty of Humanities has embraced these fully. In 2011 Professor Fred Morton gave an inaugural lecture on the 'Future of History' and this is included in this volume's Notes Section. In his inaugural lecture Prof. Morton also gives interesting information about the history of the History Department and the Faculty of Humanities. Finally, there cannot be a serious discussion on development in Botswana in the last 50 years without mention of the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Therefore, the final piece in the Notes Section is provided by Professor Musa Dube on the critical subject of HIV/AIDS in Botswana. Prof. Dube has won awards for her research at UB on the subject of HIV/AIDS.

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