Part IV. Botswana

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Chapter 4. Church, cult, and lodge

In search of therapeutic meaning in Francis-town, Botswana

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For a religious anthropologist working far outside her or his own native culture, the town is not a place to gain competence in ethnically specific cultures and worldviews that inform the lives of urban migrants. That was why, during field-work in Zambia, I shifted my research into Nkoya cults from Lusaka, Zambia's capital, to outlying Kaoma district, extending my project to encompass virtually the whole of Nkoya rural society and history. After earlier field-work in Tunisia, Zambia and Guiné Bissau, in the late 1980s I started research on Botswana's second city, Francistown, as a meeting ground between local tradition and global modern culture. While admittedly the urban situation, and the adoption of a new research area in mid-career, have obvious limitations, one justification for my project is that many of the sociological questions of today cannot be answered by sheer extrapolation from the rural situation. Even in Botswana, whose official self-image has long remained nostalgically pastoral and rural, for an increasing proportion of the population the everyday experience is primarily or exclusively an urban one, even while one maintains urban-rural ties and ultimately considers rural retirement. Problems of meaning and order, and their solutions, are generated both in home villages and in towns, under different forms of marital and kinship relations, modes of production, and socio-political organization. Ever since J. Clyde Mitchell's *Kalela Dance* (1956), the anthropology of South Central and Southern Africa has wondered what specific selection and transformation rural institutions would undergo when introduced into town by urban migrants; likewise, Mitchell's equally seminal paper on 'The meaning of misfortune for urban Africans' (1965) triggered a discussion – still

far from settled – on the place and significance of ancestral and other 'home'-orientated ritual in towns.[1] The present chapter loosely situates itself in this tradition.

My Nkoya research had concentrated on complementarity between the urban and rural settings in which many Africans operate: on the one hand the village economy subsidizing the urban capitalist sector through migrant workers' 'over-exploitation';[2] but on the other hand rural-based cult leaders 'raid' the towns as part of a process through which their rural society reproduces itself, while with regard to political and economic conflict, sorcery, and the redress of long-standing misfortune and illness Nkoya people turned out to take refuge in the village from the town but also the other way around, fleeing the village for the town. This situation reflected the fact that comparatively, the Nkoya – because their foothold in modern urban settings had remained insecure due to their small numbers, lack of education, and remoteness – have long persisted in a pattern of circulatory urban-rural migration while other groups in South Central and Southern Africa had already proceeded to more permanent urbanisation. Against this background, what patterns of self-organsiation and signification have been discernible in Francistown, Botswana?

4.1. Introduction

In his book *Ritual passage sacred journey* (Werbner 1989), which largely deals with cults in rural south-western Zimbabwe and in Botswana, Richard Werbner (almost in contrastive anticipation of my own – in comparison ephemeral and superficial – 1988-1989 Botswana field-work which he himself initiated) describes his thirty-year project of which that book is the splendid result in the following terms:

> 'Among other points, I have posed the following salient questions as markers for my research: How do the people find themselves, over time, in a cosmos, whether microcosm or macrocosm? How, as home comers, strangers, or the estranged, do they symbolically locate order and disorder in their universe? (...) The answers, like the questions themselves, call for anthropological knowledge that is informed by the people's own views seen in the light of comparative theory. My own *long-term* [original emphasis] observation – and I use the word aware of *how much I had to see in order to know* [my emphasis, WvB] – of "going to Mwali," in the most widespread cult of God Above in Southern Africa points to an important direction. I observed numerous, fine micro-historical religious changes in repeated field-

[1] For later work along this line, *cf.* Rigby & Lule 1975; Hammond-Tooke 1970; van Binsbergen 1981b, 1997e, 2015: ch. 1.

[2] *Double* exploitation: Marxist-inspired authors like Meillassoux 1975, Amin 1974, van Binsbergen & Geschiere 1985a, Gerold-Scheepers & van Binsbergen 1978, have argued how in the context of labour migration

(a) the familiar exploitation of urban workers in the context of wage labour, is exacerbated by

(b) the fact that the rural communities which have produced these workers' labour power in the first place, are not compensated when these communities are subsequently deprived of that labour power by the workers' migration to formal-sector employment in towns.

> work between 1960 and 1985. (...) Most of these changes were not innovations (...). Their concern has overwhelmingly been the religious responses to "the shattered microcosm" ' (Werbner 1989: 326)[3]

In other words, the focus is on cults' contributions to the reconstruction of a meaningful social order in the changing societies of Southern Africa, and particularly among the Kalanga. Werbner could bring this project to such a good end for four reasons, among others, which together make for excellent anthropology, in his case and that of many others. He could make the project his life's work, weaving into it his own and the discipline's theoretical growth over three decades. His frame of reference has been almost exclusively rural: taking as his base a few rural wards – small-scale communities built of inclusive social relationships in which he could readily share, generating rapport and research continuity – he could from there explore wide regional networks which manifested themselves in these wards, and gauge the impact of such major regional conditions of labour migration, commoditification and the Zimbabwe war of independence. The long-term concentration on a culturally and linguistically fairly homogeneous rural society made mastery of one language and cultural idiom (that of the Kalanga, the area's dominant ethnic group) a feasible and rewarding investment. And historical depth was guaranteed both by the span of his own research and by the general historical thrust studies of this part of Africa have taken.

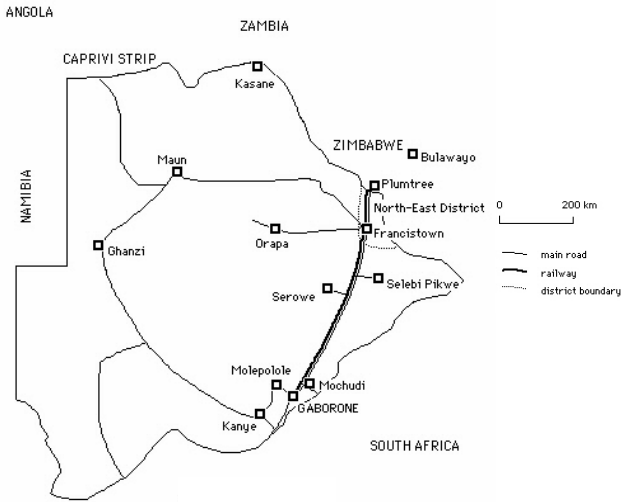

Fig. 4.1. North-East District within Botswana

[3] The expression 'the shattered microcosm' Werbner seems to derive from van Binsbergen 1981b, where it is in turn inspired by Horton 1975.

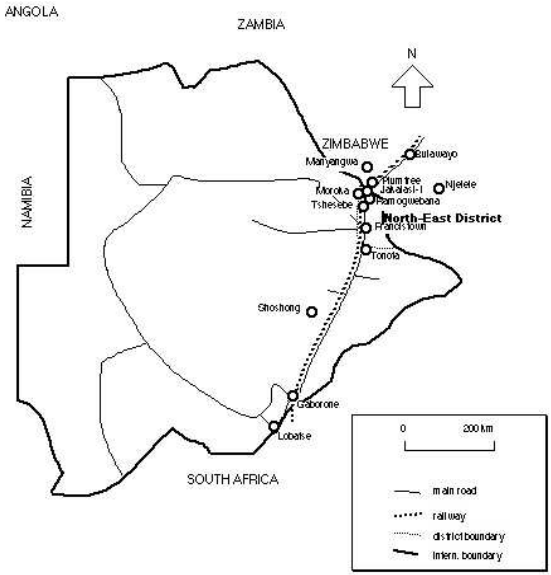

Fig. 4.2. Localities mentioned in the text of this chapter.

My Francistown research has had largely the same focus and has dealt with the same geographical area, but it has been almost diametrically opposed to Werbner's in time span of field-work (only one year full-time, followed by near-annual short visits), urban focus (despite rural excursions mainly in the north-east district of Botswana, it concentrates on the town of Francistown), absence of competence in any one local culture and language (which is both impossible to achieve, and slightly out of place, in the poly-ethnic urban environment of Francistown where Kalanga culture and language are no longer majority expressions), while the synchronic sociological analysis alone entailed such formidable problems that I scarcely came round to pursuing specific historical questions. The fundamentally different social structure of urban life also meant that the standard anthropological technique of 'settle somewhere, become involved in the ongoing social process around you, wait and see' in Francistown did not by far yield, spontaneously and automatically, data of the profundity and scope I was accustomed to in previous rural and even urban field-work elsewhere. Accidental and shifting networks of personal relations and introductions, rather than the immersion in localized small-scale and inclusive communities, are the source *par excellence* of anthropological information in town; the

more controversial the topic, and the shorter the period of exposure, the more the yields of such a network approach depends on chance.[4]

Over the decades, much of my research into religious anthropology has concentrated on the Nkoya people of Zambia. In the Nkoya case, the striking complementarity between the urban and rural settings in which many Africans operate suggests a temporary balance which not only derives from the amazing resilience of Nkoya rural society and culture, but also from the relative insecurity of their urban existence, and (until 2000 CE) the increasingly low-key profiles of Zambian towns since Independence as centres of capitalist production, cultural dominance and mass consumption. Botswana towns, because of the country's very different economic situation as well as the cultural and economic dominance of nearby South Africa, are in a very different situation. They offer many of their inhabitants an urban livelihood which is no longer so insecure that maintaining a substantial stake in the village home (with all this implies in terms of submission to rural-based elders, obligations of their economic support, and observance of village-derived rules, prohibitions, rituals and collective representations) is an absolute condition for survival; in stead, rural-urban relations have come to be characterized by optionality in virtually all cases, individual opportunism in many, and downright rupture in some. Moreover, Botswana towns are places where (already ast the original time of writing, 1990) worldwide patterns of cultural transmission through electronic media and mass consumption have gained enormous dominance, in a context of wage labour and bureaucracies offering a variety of services (in such fields as education, housing, medicine, retail trade *etc.*) which reinforce the individual, rather than the rural-orientated kin group, as the standard unit of modern social life. As a result, 'traditional' rural culture in urban Botswana has adopted an extremely defensive, and often an underground, position, scarcely meeting the eye of the casual observer. Despite politicians' ideological harping on such fossilized items as traditional courts, traditional dance instruction at schools, the cooperation between traditional and cosmopolitan medicine, and urbanites' administrative identification with their rural chiefs and village headmen, the reality is that a unified and commoditized modern mass culture has gained apparent dominance in the social experience of townsmen. Since many keep up a measure of urban-rural relations, the study of what happens to rural forms in towns is timely and of immediate relevance to the social production of meaning in modern society. But given this dominance, such a study cannot consist is mere extrapolation of the rural findings. I am not in the least suggesting that this is what Werbner does, in fact he is very careful to repeatedly point out the rural context of his analyses. But there is an obvious

[4] In addition, of course, I collected extensive quantitative data on hundreds of inhabitants of Francistown both from existing files in bureaucracies such as the Self-Help Housing Agency and the Local Courts, and by a survey of my own. These data are indispensable in bringing out the social structure of Francistown, the urban experience (in the family, at work, in health and disease, and in religious matters) of its inhabitants, and the extent of their urban-rural relations; *cf.* van Binsbergen 1989; van Binsbergen with Krijnen 1989b). Meanwhile the present argument is largely based on qualitative data.

case for an urban study, however imperfect, of cultic and religious aspects so far covered by his rural research.

The complexity of the urban situation, the structural discontinuity between the town and the countryside, and the network bias in my urban data, makes it difficult to identify a structural locus in town where the various lines of an argument on cult structures, meaning and healing could be found to intersect in time and place, and to be patterned in enduring social relations in which the overall structure of society is reflected. The analysis of selected cases with a considerable degree of detail and time depth has long (*cf.* Epstein 1969) been recognized as a useful approach to show recurrent patterns of structure and conflict, by having the urban process crystallize around the cases' protagonists, against the background of the ongoing social process involving them. This will also be my approach in the present argument. As a heuristic devise, this is hoped to raise questions and to yield tentative insights which in a later stage could lead to a more sophisticated analysis of urban-rural dynamics in the structuring of ritual, the social production of meaning, and the shaping of specific social relations in this context. The present approach inevitably lends an element of arbitrariness and perhaps superficiality to my selection, presentation and analysis of data. At this stage, in the face of Werbner's subtle and profound analysis of similar data from the same area, I do not feel up to anything more ambitious.

There is, meanwhile, one aspect which I feel constitutes a real, and not just a gradual, difference between mine and his approach. The method used in his book brings us much closer to a detailed, systematic understanding of the structure of ritual as it evolves in time and place. However, this is a predominantly cognitive approach, a form of close reading of culture-specific semantics, imagery and organizational properties, admirably systematized and abstracted so as to be capable of discussion in scientific English. There is perhaps too little in his argument that reminds us of the fact that these cults, through their very organization, symbolism and spatio-temporal structure, cater for suffering and despair. Beyond being fascinatingly dynamic constructs of the human mind they are an idiom of healing, and amazingly effective at that. The problem of meaning in modern society, African or world-wide, is driven home in the quest for (mental) health, most dramatically and in a form which generates the greatest empathy and concern. I thought it opportune to lay this emphasis in the present chapter, even though the crudity of its argument is far less suited than Werbner's own method to pinpoint just why and how this therapeutic effectiveness is achieved, had he chosen to address this issue systematically.

4.2. The public aspect of religion and ritual in Francistown

Francistown is a European creation, with a considerable industrial and commercial sector, founded nearly a hundred years ago, and racially segregated until Botswana's Independence (1966). Francistown finds itself halfway between rural villages and cattle posts, and the distant destination of labour migration in South

Africa, whence it accommodates returning migrants and their attitudes, practices, tastes, fashions *etc*. as acquired in distant places. There is a keen awareness of ethnic differentiation and opposition in the town, reinforced again by a lively political process where ethnic mobilization and particularly the issue of Kalanga identity and assertion are major inputs. Yet if Francistown ever was a Kalanga town in the sense that the Kalanga ethnic group (as a 'host tribe') dominated both the surrounding countryside and the town itself, this can no longer be said to be the case: in addition to a major influx from Zimbabwe, people from all over Botswana have settled there, and the town's *lingua franca* is no longer Kalanga but Tswana, Botswana's official language. Though the vast majority of present inhabitants of the town was not born there, the place has developed a distinct sense of a poly-ethnic urbanism, an idiom of public urban discourse in which the particular cultural inputs from national ethnic groups and the influence from distant places has amalgamated to form some common denominator: with attitudes, types of relationships, pastimes and places to pursue them which are felt to be typically urban; which elaborate stereotypes characterizing the various townships within the town and ranking them in a classification of wealth and prestige; and with standard collective representations and responses, with regard to such matters as neighbourliness, conflict resolution, norms of urban public behaviour in the streets, shops, workplaces and drinking places.

This public discourse also defines, on the level of lay participants and everyday conversation, the major medico-religious complexes and their characteristics (*cf.* Ståugard 1985):

- the clinic or hospital, where generally high-quality cosmopolitan health care is dispensed at considerable costs of time and frustration but against nominal fees (P0.50[5] per treatment);
- healing churches, with prophets (*Baprofiti*) as cultic leaders; with ritual services in which drumming, dancing, singing, speaking in tongues and laying-on of hands are major ingredients, they form the dominant public religious expression, and as dispensers of spiritual and material treatment feature prominently in people's health strategies;
- *Dingaka*, traditional healers (the principal ones organized in various local professional associations) using a material divination apparatus (usually the widespread system based on four divining tablets making for sixteen basic combinations) and a wide selection of traditional and neo-traditional medicines; and finally
- *Basangoma*, spirit mediums whose distinctive feature *vis-à-vis* the *dingaka* is the inclusion of drumming and trance in divination and treatment, and a greater emphasis on ancestral rather than sorcery explanations of disease and other misfortune.

People cannot help being aware of these medico-religious complexes. Cosmopolitan medicine, besides being invoked as a first resort in cases of illness,

[5] At the time, P1 ≈ US$ 0.50.

forms a regular component of administrative procedures regulating employment, absence from work, immigration *etc*., its physical locations dominate the urban scene, and the career opportunities it offers especially to women (as nurses) are greatly aspired. Healing churches exist by the score in Francistown, and they proclaim their existence by signboards, the sounds of singing and drumming not only at weekends but also several evenings and nights through the week. Members can often be seen in the street in their colourful uniforms specific to a particular church. Many display the fact that they are adherents and are being treated in the church by colourful strings of cotton around their wrists and necks; adherents of the major healing church, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC; *cf.* Comaroff 1987), wear enamelled badges wherever they go. *Dingaka*, operating in and from treatment rooms they insist on calling 'surgeries', are generally less conspicuous; even the licensed ones rarely put out signboards, although every inhabitant in town has knowledge of a number of them and can easily find recommendations to others. The same applies to *Basangoma*, who however identify themselves by strings of beads around the neck, wrists and occasionally ankles, not only in the elaborate display customary at their professional sessions, but also, much more reticently, in everyday life. This does distinguish them from the *Baprofiti* and their adherents who never wear beads, more so than from the *dingaka* some of whom have gone through rituals and continue to adhere to cults also prescribing the wearing of beads: various strings of beads form together a catalogue of the bearer's past sacrifices and current cultic attachments.

At the level of public discourse, people are only dimly aware, if at all, of the esoteric specialist knowledge around which these various medico-religious specialist shape their professional activities, although these matters constitute cherished topics for everyday lay conversation. Most townsmen patronize not just one of the complexes but a combination of them, with this proviso that *Basangoma* with their prolonged and expensive treatment searching deep in the patient's existence and history normally are referred to as a last resort.

Poly-ethnic public discourse in town classifies not only major medico-religious complexes and superficially attributes distinctive traits and evaluations to them, it also offers a common-sense aetiology, a provisional classification of symptoms and likely causes necessary for initial crisis mobilization (of kinsmen, neighbours, colleagues, fellow-church members, employer and health specialists) in the urban environment, and stipulates an initial strategy of health action – to be refined once a particular medico-religious complex has been approach, and revised or extended whenever that complex does not soon respond satisfactorily. In this connexion one major common-sense interpretation, far from peculiar to Francistown public discourse, is that of certain complaints (*e.g.* chronic headache, swollen extremities, eye trouble, persistent bad luck) as signs of being possessed by spirits, and of certain family conditions (notably the prevalence of such possession in previous generations, handed down in chains of cultic affiliation) as conducive to these complaints.

Francistown finds itself well inside the catchment area of Southern Africa's

mayor High God cult, that of Mwali. Through extensive research by Richard Werbner, Terence Ranger and others[6] we are now beginning to understand the cult's history and organizational structure, its significance for the region's rural communities, and its political significance in the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence. It is remarkable that the cult hardly features in the public discourse on medico-religious complexes in Francistown in so far as I got to know it. It is in this connexion particularly that I appreciate Werbner's statement quoted above: 'how much I had to see in order to know' (1989: 326). For many months, there was nothing to see at all, at least not from the yet fairly standard site-and-service area where my family and I lived as the only co-resident Europeans / Whites. Only towards the end of a year's field-work did I once see a group of Children of Mwali, *Bawosana*, in uniform (staff, black cloak, white or black-and-white skirt, white or red sash, and strings of black beads or a combination of black, black-and-white, white and red) out on a public road in town; but by that time I had already made contact with a few Francistown lodges where sessions of dancing, treatment and initiation would be held, on private yards which due to the nature of urban space in African towns would still be fairly open to the public eye and ear. For the rest it was as if a conspiracy of secrecy surrounded the Mwali cult. In town, despite my questioning I could hardly ever pick up a spoken reference to the Mwali cult; yet later, after I had dismissed my main research assistant, he turned out to have major Mwali adepts among his close kin.[7] In the rural areas, particularly in the villages of Moroka and Jakalasi-I which are close to the south-western Mwali oracle, the presence of the *Wosana* cult (the word Mwali was rarely used before me) and its rain-calling practice were superficially acknowledged but it proved impossible to make contact. Well-known Mwali cultic personnel does have an urban residence: Mr. Vumbu, who is the high priest of the cult's south-western region encompassing the North-East District, and has an oracle inside Botswana's border (*cf.* Werbner 1989: 278 and *passim*), has a house in Francistown's area L and runs a transport company; but however I tried I scarcely managed to catch him or his lower-ranking associates in my urban research network. A standard response of my urban informants was that Mr Vumbu had dropped his cultic activities, was absorbed in his transport enterprise, and was no longer considered a true representative of the cult. A similar image of past activities supplanted by present-day inertia was detectable when I confronted Francistown lay informants(and even a few specialist) with my increasing information on what went on in the

[6] *Cf.* Werbner 1989; Ranger 1985a, 1987; Daneel 1970; and extensive references there.

[7] Even at the public sessions and lodges in Francistown, where Mwali connotations were unmistakable, these were only acknowledged (in much detail) by the lodge leaders; the adepts seemed to be largely ignorant of the Mwali cult dimension of their activities and paraphernalia, and apparently never had been near a central oracle: their ritual identity derived form the leader's, and the latter alone maintained the link. None the less the adepts were present during my concersations with the leaders; perhaps the adepts were just not free to discuss the topic.

lodges: the dancers there were explained to me not as actual Servants of Mwali at present incorporated in a regional network of cultic prestations and obligations, but as mere descendants of such adepts, emulating their ancestors' dress and paraphernalia in a fragmented and localized cult which no longer bounds its present-day members in a viable regional network. To what extent such responses were meant to keep me beating about the bush I cannot say. For lack of data there is no reason for me to assume that the extensive cultic network as described by Werbner (1989: ch. 7), spanning the entire North-East district, has ceased operation; the extent of urban-rural ties between Francistown and, particularly, the rural communities of north-eastern Botswana suggest that a considerable number of urbanites may participate in rural forms of the Mwali cult. If they do, they did not care to tell me. Hence I have little to report on the most obvious topic concerning Francistown and the Mwali cult: the interaction between the town and the cultic region in its immediate rural hinterland.

The urban invisibility of the Mwali cult appears to be partly due to the obvious seasonal element in the rain cult: from July to September, towards the end of the dry season, *Wosana* dancing sessions are staged in several townships of Francistown, by what the public discourse calls *Basangoma*, at private residential plots which house lodges – centres of divination, healing and the training of adepts. These sessions, which draw a lay audience of several score some of whom join in the dancing, are rallying points for senior adepts and cult leaders from other lodges in town, but also for a dozen or more of the *dingaka* who are not *Basangoma* and do not have lodges. Participants of the latter category include some of the most senior *dingaka* – chairmen of their local professional associations; while in attire and ritual practice they identify as *Wosana* during these sessions, contrary to the lodge leaders they are not Ndebele but Kalanga from the North-East district; they may well be the very links between Francistown and the cultic region of its immediate hinterland. Whatever I have seen functioning of the Mwali cult in Francistown, mainly concerns cultic personnel of Ndebele ethnic affiliation associated with the Manyangwa oracle near Plumtree and the Njelele oracle in the Matopos, in Zimbabwe.

4.3. Cults and Christianity

Public discourse and public practice in Francistown points (rightly or wrongly) to the Christian healing churches as the most conspicuous, obvious and readily accessible medico-religious complex dealing with prolonged and intensive suffering involving a strong mental or psychosomatic component. The *dingaka* and *Basangoma* operate in a setting where their lay clients, and even these specialists themselves, tend to regard Christianity as a Great Tradition which in general does not need to be denied or opposed, although in many specific cases this tradition is known to be inadequate to restore a patient's well-being. Antagonism between traditional healing and local churches emanates from the churches' side mainly. It is rare in Francistown to find a *ngaka* or *sangoma* who is entirely unaware of the Christian idiom; the more common

response is to spice the traditional professional idiom with references to Christ, the Bible, Christian codes of morality, and even prayers – as if we were not dealing with two or more distinct and rival worldviews but with variants of the same worldview placed in a subordinative relation *vis-à-vis* each other.

In this context an analysis of the contributions the non-Christian cults make to the reconstruction of social order and the reinsertion of suffering individuals in that order as a condition for their well-being and social functioning, may profitably start with an examination of the confrontation between traditional spirit possession and Christian healing.

Divination in the selected Christian healing churches I studied in and around Francistown context shuns all divining apparatus except sometimes a Bible copy, and usually takes the form of 'prophesizing': during the service the head of the congregation or one of his acolytes with the formal title of 'prophet', makes coherent pronouncements as to the organic and spiritual condition of one of those present. (The speaking in tongues is here also a prerogative of prophets, as distinct from the congregation in general, and is not interpreted in terms of a diagnosis.) Sometimes the person who is thus singled out before the entire congregation has not even presented herself or himself as suffering prior to this prophetic moment, but then the physical complaints indicated (often minor menstrual or reproductive troubles) tend to be sufficiently general to be applicable. Sorcery and possession by spirits are the stock interpretations of a patient's condition. Besides prophesizing, the healing churches also make it possible for possession to manifest itself through what could be termed autodivination: the continuous chanting and very rapid dancing and turning in circles of which the many hours of a service consist, creates high levels of regression and lowers thresholds of self-consciousness, – one gets the impression of the entire congregation charging itself with spiritual energy while waiting for the sparks to fly. Thus most services in the healing churches set the scene for the public trance (with violent convulsive movements and screams) of a few members of the congregation, one or two hours after the beginning of the service. Moreover, when towards the end of the service the senior church personnel takes position to lay on hands on every member of the congregation (individually or with two or three at a time), the transmission of Holy Spirit which is supposed to take place at that moment may lead to a short-lived serene trance of benign transport, but often also brings out a dramatic convulsive response interpreted as the spirits' violent rejection of the Holy Spirit.

The following two cases may illustrate these points. Both concern young urban women from the border village of Moroka, at approximately 60 km from Francistown: active members of the budding urban congregation of Saint Mark's Service Church, who in that church seek a solution for the traditional cultic commitments they consider to have inherited.

4.3.1. Kitso's case

Kitso (her name, meaning 'Knowledge', may have an esoteric cultic implication) is a nineteen year old girl, who like so many has moved to Francistown to find employment. As usual at this age, she has one child, who stayed behind with the grandmother. She found work as a chamber-maid in the town's most prestigious hotel. In services of St. Mark's Service Church, both in Moroka and in the urban branch which was founded in Francistown's Monarch township (an upgraded mining compound) in 1989, she makes herself conspicuous by the most violent and vocal fits of possession which each time assure her of the congregation's undivided attention for an hour or more. The exceptional violence of her state brings the church personnel to equally violent responses, and (as is usual in such cases) she is tied up in the brightly coloured cords of the prophets' gowns, and thus guided and sometimes dragged over the church floor almost like a domestic animal to be broken in; she is smacked in the face and her hair is pulled, while a passionate prophet continues to cry over her for the Holy Spirit's assistance, and admonishes the possessing demon to leave. Although church attendance must thus be a shattering experience for her, she continues to visit the services, and to claim her excessive share of ritual attention. It is common knowledge that she attends church in defiance of her parents and other senior kinsmen, who claim that she has received the spirit of an ancestor who was a prominent cult leader, and want her to follow in these steps. It is not entirely clear why she fears such a commitment (see the discussion below), but certainly the church reinforces her rejection by declaring the possessing agent to be a devil, only fit to be destroyed by the Holy Spirit. Although she is remarkably relieved, almost smug, by the end of each service, the treatment brings no lasting effect: she keeps complaining of severe chronic headache.

Far from being resolved, the conflict propelled her even further afield than Francistown: mid-1989 Kitso moved to Gaborone, and I lost track. I did not get to know her rural background sufficiently to assess in detail whether her spiritual conflict might be accompanied by, or could even be reduced to, a more secular conflict over independence, norms of propriety and economic power between Kitso and her senior kinsmen. Superficially there were no signs of this; for a young girl from Moroka, Kitso's situation as a regional labour migrant and absentee-mother had nothing unusual about it.

4.3.2. Chidzani's case

Chidzani ('Helper'), a young woman twenty-four years of age, was raised (even, as she claims, adopted) by her maternal grandparents in Moroka, after her mother had moved to Zimbabwe and entered into a new marital attachment there. In Moroka Chidzani met George who was temporarily working there, and she joined him when he returned to Francistown in 1984.

In 1985 she lost their first child shortly after its extremely difficult birth, her grandmother acting as midwife. In 1986 their second child was born, a girl named Kefilwe ('I have been given', expressing gratitude for this second chance). When Chidzani found employment as a domestic servant in 1988, the girl was alternatingly looked after in Francistown by her distant cousin Lunyepi from Zimbabwe, or sent to the great-grandmother in Moroka. From Francistown Chidzani would visit Moroka once a month, to keep in touch with her grandparents, her daughter and her church, Saint Mark's Service Church, whose itinerant pastor Gabriel is a boy-

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friend of Chidzani's sister Constance. There she also occasionally met her mother when visiting from Zimbabwe; throughout her life Chidzani has felt rejected and sacrificed by her mother (whom Chidzani particularly blames for discontinuing her school education after Form II), and the hopes at redress which flare up with every meeting invariably leave her disappointed and confused.

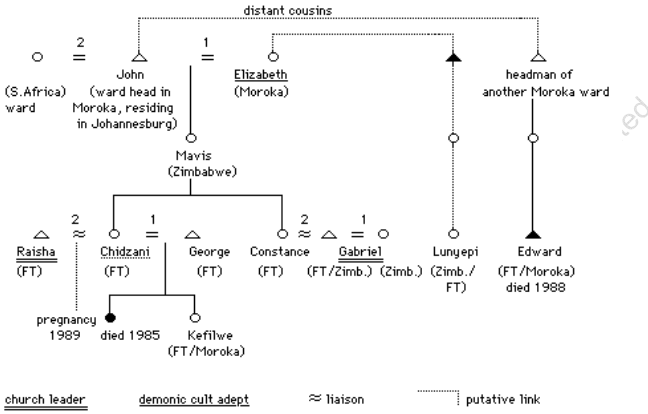

Fig. 4.3. Chidzani's case.

Chidzani proved increasingly unable to reconcile the conflicting claims from her Francistown life (organized around George, his co-residing sisters, her work, her dreams of material acquisition which this work begins to make true) and her Moroka attachments, where her enthusiastic and fulfilling participation in church life scarcely counterbalanced the negative aspects: her grandparents' pressure to either formalize or preferably terminate her liaison with George (Kefilwe's stay in Moroka was sometimes interpreted as a reminder of George's lack of paternal rights), and Chidzani's fear for her own safety and especially that of Kefilwe: she knew (but never admitted publicly) that her grandmother was an adept of the 'demonic' cult, that she herself was expected to join that cult too, and she attributed whatever misfortune she suffered (especially the deaths of her first child, and of a cousin in Moroka, 1988; and the increasing estrangement between her and George) to the evil workings of the cult members. For Chidzani (as for many others in Francistown), the cult is the very incarnation of evil, and she struggled desperately against the outside and internalized pressures to join it. In Francistown she began to frequent the services of the Malges Star Apostles Church, which is very similar to Saint Mark's, and without formally joining she acted as a church secretary for half a year, and participated in long evening and night services three times a week.

The pressures tearing Chidzani's life apart came to a head. She suffered a marked loss of vitality and cheerfulness, was given to long spells of headache, gastro-enteritis and apathy, developed skin diseases and persistent pain in the legs, and began to neglect her work – all suggestive of a heavy attack from a spirit. At the same time the theme of personal independence and assertion became very prominent in her conversations and actions during this episode. Under the thin pretext that George's unfaithfulness had

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caused her to be harmed by his girl-friend's sorcery, she left George and his relatively prestigious, recently extended house in the Somerset East Extension site-and-service area, and rented a miserable single room in Somerset West, Francistown's largest (upgraded) squatter area. Here Chidzani lived very near the Malges Star Church, where during her even increased attendances her condition was diagnosed by prophesizing but initially in such a veiled way that the evasive interpretation in terms of George's unfaithfulness could be maintained. Ironically, a conspicuous visitor and guest star at these services is Raisha, a prophet from Moroka's Saint Mark's – like Gabriel and Lunyepi an illegal immigrant from Zimbabwe; Chidzani had openly resumed a long latent affair with him so that the church diagnosis could hardly be said to be impartial. When at the instigation of her employer her case was diagnosed, on two separate occasions, by *sangomas* (one using trance divination, the other tablets), George was entirely disculpated by their interpretations, the hidden demonic dimension of Chidzani's life was finally admitted by her, and the obvious path to redress (an animal to be sacrificed in the midst of her family in Moroka, as part of initiation into the cult) indicated, but to no avail: in great distress, sobbing, she declared that she would rather die than join something that horrible and evil. George, who remained loyal to Chidzani throughout this episode and continued to provide for her, Kefilwe and even Raisha, soon broke through the dead-end by reporting Raisha to the immigration authorities (!) and taking Chidzani (who has lost her job) back to Somerset East Extension. Meanwhile Saint Mark's opened its Monarch branch in Francistown, far from Somerset West, and Chidzani's attention shifted away from the Malges Star Church. Here the field-work ended for the time being, when there was still every indication, in Chidzani's behaviour and appearance, that her fundamental conflict had not been resolved. During this entire episode she must already have been seriously ill. Like so many otherr at the time, died of AIDS in 1991.

In Chidzani's case there is certainly evidence of deep-seated intrafamilial conflict spanning several generations. In her eyes at least the conflict springs from the family's long-standing involvement with the demonic cult. Considerable light is thrown on these cases by Werbner. He characterizes the cult in question as follows:

> 'In the course of the ritual, boundaries between domains, such as that between the domestic and the alien and wild, are crossed by possessed women, for the sake of purification and healing, both of the women themselves and their patients. The possessed Kalanga women, while mediating between domains, also act as mediators in interpersonal relations. They give their ritual services for intimates who want benevolence and trust among themselves renewed. Kalanga perform the demonic possession ritual in their ritual homes, never in town, and it is only certain women, specially associated with home and domestic life, who can be possessed' (Werbner 1989: 63).

He stresses the importance of the urban-rural dimension with regard to the cult:

> 'Throughout the twenty-five year period of my study of demonic possession, the rule has been: once a migrant worker, never a novice host. (...) [H]ow are we to account for the virtual avoidance of cult membership by the young and what are the main implications of this avoidance?
>
> Kalanga themselves give various reasons. One is that young women prefer to join the "churches of the spirit" where, in congregations of kin and non-kin, they speak in tongues and are moved by the Holy Spirit. Such churches reject demonic possession as a backward thing of the past and worse still, a thing of the devil. Another reason mentioned is that young women are unwilling to undergo the initiation, given its nasty treatment and stink of the wild; it is held to be demeaning and ill-becoming by women who have been educated at school.

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> In the past, young novices were in the main elite women. At present, such women are often themselves schoolteachers, nurses, or other migrant workers, who are not primarily identified with domesticity in the countryside, or at least domesticity as it has been linked to the role of *dombo* [= host]. (...) In the past, initiation established a long-lasting dependence between senior and junior kinswomen. (...) At present, that dependence and authority can no longer be sustained.' (Werbner 1989: 105-107)

If, as Werbner argues, the demonic cult's main concern is to defend the domestic domain, then Chidzani's and perhaps Kitso's conflict with the cult might have to do with their attempts, as young female urban migrants, to break away from the domestic domain. The young women appear to struggle not so much against concrete control exercised by elders at their rural homes: the latter seem to have largely accepted as inevitable the lives young women live at more or less distant urban centres, or at least seldom oppose this life-style openly. Rather, the young women seek to embrace modern society, with its mass consumption and capitalist relations of production, without this being spoiled by the ideological reserve, by means of which village life has sought to protect itself. They struggle for the freedom to be modern; not realizing that many of their psychosomatic problems spring from the pathogenic effects of modern society, and from their lack of traditional support and anchorage. What is amazing and highly significant, is that the cult which Werbner, from a rural vantage point, describes as serving the integrity of the Kalanga domestic domain should, from the perspective of Francistown, appear to be not just 'dirty', but full of unspeakable terror. The dependence implied in the acceptance of the cult is not lightly cast off.

The available data give the impression that the essential conflict is that between the old woman Elizabeth and her female offspring, in such a way that over time the daughter (Mavis) is substituted by the granddaughter (Chidzani) and then great-granddaughter (Kefilwe) – as if the locus of obligation of the later generation *vis-à-vis* the elders and ancestors (to inherit the demonic cult?) keeps shifting. In this chain of substitutions the member of the previous generation can only gain her freedom if she trades in her daughter, allowing the latter to remain in the day-to-day custody of the grandmother at the homestead.

It is important to appreciate what the church's contribution is in the process. The affliction is not traced to specific historical causes and family conditions (as in *sangoma* divination to be discussed below), and the patient's pronouncements when questioned are not woven into an increasingly rich and convincing story of causation, detection and remedy. For no accommodation is sought by means of which the patient can restore his or her relationship with the afflicting agent – the only response can be that of utter and total rejection. In the Christian idiom, the only question that is worth considering when someone is possessed, is simply: *how to get rid of the possessing agent*. Purification, food taboos (particularly on pork and beer), taboos on contaminated environments (such as discos) and activities (such as adultery), protection not by beads (which are the feared signs of the demonic cult and other similar cults) but by

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strings of manufactured cotton in selected bright colours,[8] the consumption of medicinal substances which are dispensed by the church leadership, baptism, exposure to Christian reading and preaching, and above all the singing and dancing in church, are all devices to dispel the possessing spirits. The latter are exclusively seen as evil, with no legitimate place in the modern lives of the members of the congregation. Hence the patient is not brought to a subjective feeling of insight and competence with regard to the personal past, but is reinforced in his or her impulse to flee from that past. In the confrontation between the inherited tradition and the modern world of urban living, tradition is resolutely rejected, before its specificity, meaning and beauty are even allowed to be considered. The healing churches as they manifest themselves in the above cases deny that the patient is part of a history.

By reinforcing the young adherents' abhorrence from the demonic cult, the healing churches support their centrifugal movement away from the ritual and domestic control by their elders, and to town and everything town stands for in Southern Africa. In this respect the church is an instrument of urbanization. As the cases suggest, the churches' intervention is not really therapeutic in that it avoids the issues at hand. In a situation calling for a new definition of the relations between young women and their rural homes, for a transformation that enables them to incorporate the old in the new and vice versa, all the church has to offer is a total rupture, after which there is basically no coming back, so that an essential anchorage of their life in the microcosm of the familiar rural home is lost. To young women wholeheartedly embracing the freedom and material gratification of modern urban life, such radical rupture has great appeal; yet the unresolved problem is likely to continue to make itself felt through psycho-somatic disorders, now or later in life, for which it is very doubtful that the healing churches have a remedy. It is time we turn to a locus of symbolic and therapeutic production in Francistown where similar problems are treated very differently: the cult lodges.

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[8] As has been long recognized, on this point, and on many more, the healing churches' symbolic repertoire is a ready transformation of material available in the region's authochthonous cults. The parallels with the *Sangoma* and *ngaka* complexes are obvious. Werbner, moreover, stresses the lack of conceptual antagonism between local healing churches and the Mwali cult (1989: 311 *f.*, 316 *f.*); as he shows this does not preclude competition for central places. However such correspondences in form and content do not preclude totally different therapeutic positions taken by these medico-religious complexes.

Meanwhile the striking continuity between the Mwali cult and the healing churches means that not only the latter form the Great Tradition hovering over fragmented cultic activcities of local leaers, but that the Mwali cult also plays this role. Such a view would go a long way to explain the evasive and distant, little structured yet persistent presence of the Mwali cult in my data on Francistown lodges: as a distant ultimate authority, a source of integrity (particularly as far as healer / client relations are concerned) and advice. The Christian churches constituting a Great Tradition may then be due not so much to European cultural imperialism but to the churches, as converging High God cults, simply having come to share in a position the Mwali cult had already achieved centuries before the advent of Christianity in the region.

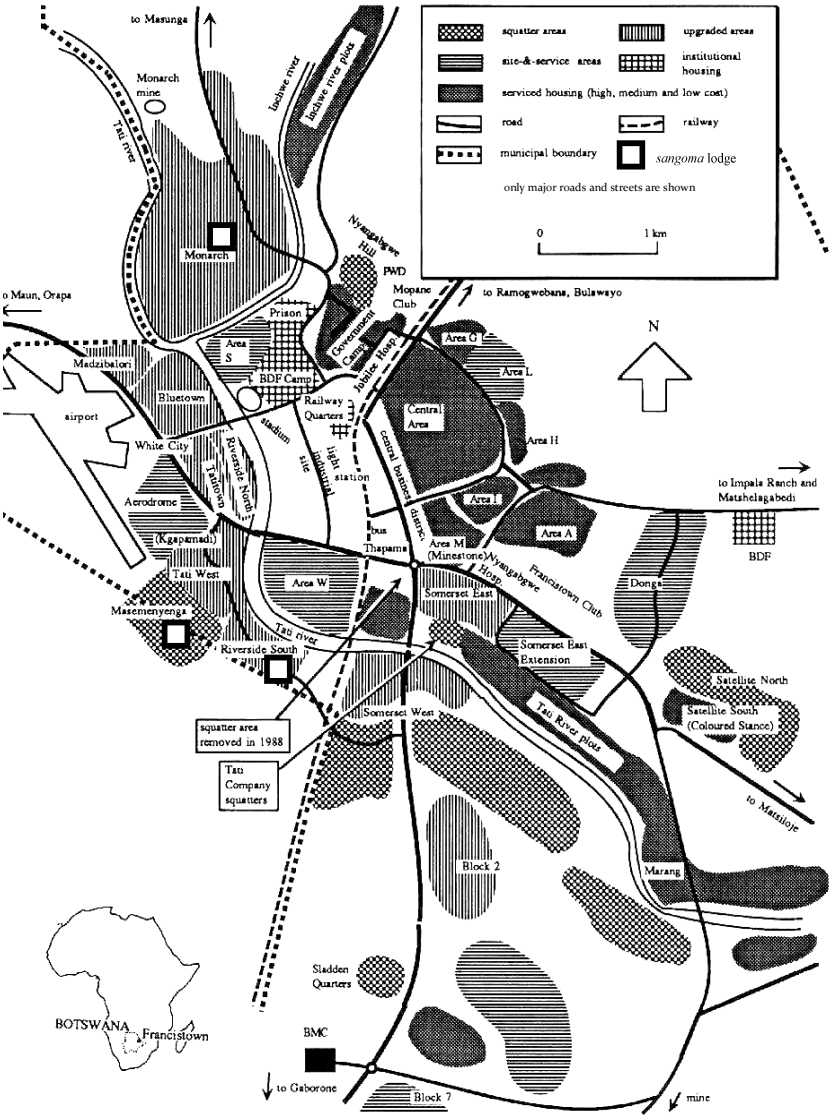

Fig. 4.4. Aspects of Francistown as a ritual space.

Table 4.1. Membership of the Maipaahela lodge, Francistown.

name	gender	rank(a)	year of birth (approx.)	country of origin	ethnic affiliation	regular place of residence	code number in genealogy (diagram 4)	present source of income
Ma-Ndhlovu	F	lodge leader	1936	Zimbabwe	Ndebele / Kalanga	Maipaahela lodge	5	practice + rent
Cecilia	F	adept	1925	Zimbabwe	Ndebele / Kalanga	Maipaahela lodge	2	kin support
Malumo	M	adept	1926	Zimbabwe	Ndebele	Maipaahela lodge	3	general worker
Amandhlozi	F	adept	1937	South Africa	Sotho	Maipaahela lodge	4	housemaid
Bessie	F	adept	1918	Zimbabwe	Ndebele	Maipaahela lodge		kin support
Jeanette	F	adept	1922	Zimbabwe	Ndebele	Maipaahela lodge/ Tshesebe?	14	kin support
Sarah	F	adept	1956	Botswana	Khurutse	Tonota		?
Annah	F	adept	1961	Botswana	Ndebele	?		?
Ma-Bigi	F	adept	1963	Botswana	Khurutse	Maipaahela (b)		husband
Kwani	F	adept (c)	1972	Botswana	Ndebele / Kalanga	Maipaahela lodge	11	kin support
Ellen	F	(junior) adept (d)	1958	Botswana	Ngwato	Tshesebe (e)		shop assistant
Litapo	M	junior adept	1952	Botswana	Ngwato	Maipaahela lodge		kin support

(a) The order from top to bottom roughly represents informal seniority relations at the lodge.

(b) Lives with her husband and child at a distance of c. 75 meter from the lodge.

(c) Despite her tender age, she is a fully-fledged sangoma, graduated in 1987.

(d) Graduated in September, 1989.

(e) She is employed as a shop assistant in Tshesebe; her home is her mother's house in Maipaahela, adjacent to the lodge.

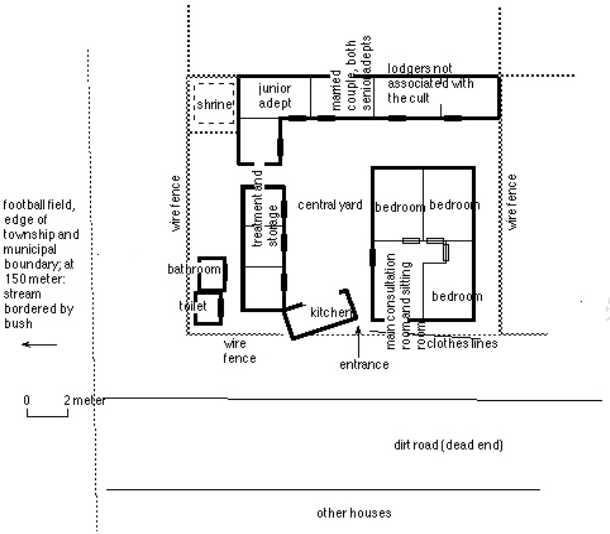

Fig. 4.5. Plan of the Maipaahela lodge, Francistown.

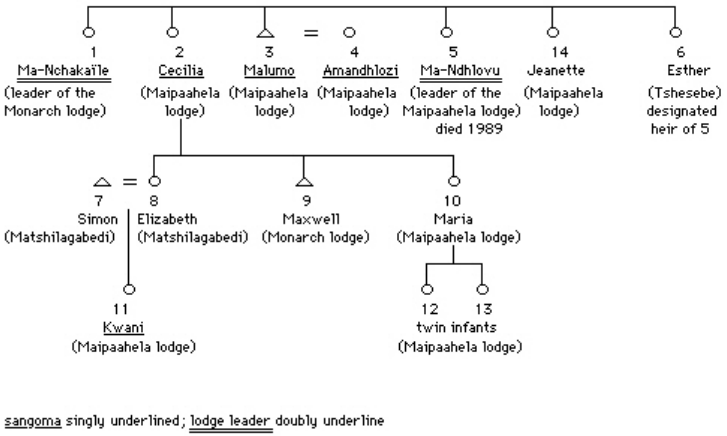

Fig. 4.6. Genealogy of core members of the Maipaahela and Monarch lodges, Francistown.

4.4. A cultic lodge

Francistown contains a few communities (I use the word almost is the monasterial sense), situated on private plots in residential townships, where the day-to-day life of the members, under the leadership of a major s*angoma* who is an adept of the Mwali cult, revolves on the diagnosis and treatment of mental and psychosomatic disorders attributed to ancestral and demonic affliction, and, in the process, on the training to *sangoma*hood of those patients who – according to the widespread model of the cult of affliction – can only be cured by becoming therapists themselves. I have detected and studied in varying detail three such lodges; there are indications that one or two more exist in other parts of Francistown. The discussion below concentrates on the lodge in Maipaahela; the others are in Monarch township, and in the squatter area of Masemenyenga (see Fig. 4.4).

In the late 1980s, Maipaahela was a recently upgraded former squatter area. This offered the opportunity to secure a relatively spacious plot and to fill it – see Fig. 4.5 – (in a way which would be impossible in a more controlled site-and-service plot, such as owned these days by an increasing proportion of Francistown inhabitants) with all sorts of inexpensive structures as dwellings for adepts and as treatment rooms, store rooms for paraphernalia and medicines, and a relatively large area occupied by a shrine: a large platform made of tree branches The medico-religious emphasis is combined with secular economic pursuit: in addition to the lodge members as described in Table 4.1 (about half of whom are close relatives of the lodge leader, as specified in Fig. 4.6) the plot houses two tenants, young working women who are not related to the lodge leader and who have nothing whatsoever to do with the ritual organisation of the lodge.

The lodge is situated at the edge of the township, where complaints about ritual noise *etc*. will be minimal, relative privacy from neighbours maximum (further enhanced by the secluded arrangement of the buildings, which is very a-typical for Francistown), and finally as close as possible to a small stream. Its borders covered with shrubs offer a place for ritual ablutions. Most important however about the stream is that it is (as streams in the surrounding rural areas) a place where ancestral spirits are supposed to be eminently present, and approachable; here novice adepts are chased across the river where they deposit offerings of banknotes and coins (immediately to be forwarded to the lodge leader). The plot's closed lay-out around a central yard, with only one very narrow entrance, is suggestive of a womb nurturing and protecting the humans contained in it. It may also evoke the symbolism (more than the actual physical form) of the Kalanga homestead and local kin group, the *nzi* (*cf.* van Binsbergen 1999h) – which is remarkable given the fact that Ndebele is the language of communication at the lodge; however, the demonic cult in which the cult leader specializes beside her Mwali connexions also has a decidedly Kalanga signature. With its elaborate shrine and the adjacent river the lodge reproduces, in an urban setting where such is very exceptional indeed, a viable rural, kinship-based social order, a ritual microcosm where so many of the traditional elements of the symbolic life are represented. This *sacralisation of space* must be an important aspect of the healing potential of this urban community.

Significantly, the reproduction of a rural social order is however only one aspect of the physical layout of the lodge. The dominant structure on the plot is a fully-fledged modern four- roomed house, which would satisfy all the regulations and requirements of state-controlled urban building, and in appearance, capital investment, and elaborate furnishing testifies to a very considerable adoption of modern global tastes and life-style, in no way exceptional in Francistown except among the very poor. What is exceptional about the lodge is the perceptible balance between the old and the new. The constant attention for ritual activities and paraphernalia such as drums, cloths, beads and medicine (items which the leader constantly carries around in, significantly again, disposable plastic shopping bags such as clutter and litter the outskirts of all Botswana communities today) does not go hand in hand with a rejection of whatever the modern world has to offer in the way of furniture, clothing, utensils, child care requisites *etc*. Most of the food consumed at the lodge is bought in Francistown's large supermarkets – the lodge reproduces the 'superstructure' rather than the 'infrastructure' of the rural socio-economic order. The beer consumed and libated in considerable quantities at the lodge, particularly during rituals, is not a ritual homebrew but the simple manufactured Chibuku, packed in cartons; the leader herself consumes an endless series of canned beer of a rare brand called *Black Label* – the package in red and white against a basic black (*cf.* the *Wosana* costume) lends it a sanctity which its modern manufacture and purchase for money does not seem to affect negatively.

Against the sense of contamination prevailing, for instance, in the healing churches, at the lodge a carefree sense of immunity appears to reign – not in the least since *money*, that major contaminating agent, *can be sanctified* on the spot: by the leader's handling it, storing it with the paraphernalia in the shopping bags, and forwarding 5 – 10 % of it to the Manyangwa oracle with which she is associated. Fees range from P5 for a simple first consultation, via c. P100 for extensive treatment, to c. P1000 (not counting sacrificial animals, firewood, cloth and beads) for graduation to full *sangoma*hood; by comparison, the average monthly wages in the formal sector in Francistown are in the range of P150 – P200.[9]

[9] As it later turned out, these fees are variable, although not negotiable. My own full training to accomplished *Sangoma*hood (graduation mid-1991) cost BPula 400 in cash, and over a twelve-months' period a total of five goats (total value BPula 180 not counting a similar sum for transport – one could not purchase a goat within Francistown, and each goat usually required a few hours' drive all over the North East District), apart from several strings of relatively expensive glass beads, a length (c. 20 m.) of white calico, locally bought garments (white trousers and a red shirt) towards the uniform whose details had been revealed in dreams, occasional bottles of manufactured alcoholic drinks demanded by the cult leader, an offering in coins (totaling about BPula 10) when crossing the dry river bed adjacent to the lodge (the preferred abode of ancestral spirits), a wooden gun I made and brought myself, and two elaborate sacrificial meals with choice meat for over a hundred people each: both lodge members and spectators from the neighbourhood (costing about Pula 200 per meal). The cash fee included a fine of about 30% since I had failed to live up to the imposed total abstinence from sexuality; my youngest son was born a few months after my entering *thwaza*hood, the formal *Sangoma* apprenticeship. Meanwhile, for good measure the lodge leader out of the goodness of her heart herself threw in a sheep and a full-grown, massive black ox (the preferred victim for Mwali, the High God who is associated with black rain clouds); together with fellow lodge members I slaughtered these animals as my

Of the other two lodges, the Monarch one is very similar to the one in Maipaahela – their leaders are (real or classificatory) sisters, and when one of them died in 1989 the other lodge absorbed most of her adepts and patients. The Monarch lodge however is situated not at the edge but more towards the centre of a township, a stream and bush therefore are not conveniently near, and the plot is secluded from neighbouring plots and particularly from the main road by exceptionally dense cactus vegetation. The Masemenyenga lodge, although subservient to the same Mwali oracle in Manyangwa, is different from the other two in that it has far fewer adepts (only three Kalanga women in addition to the Ndebele leader), who in ceremonies wear not the *Wosana* costume which covers the body from neck to knees, but instead emulate nineteenth-century Zulu dress: a short dancing skirt as well as textile or beaded scapular bands across the upper body, leaving the breasts and most of the legs bare. The main difference lies in the way in which space is sacralized: not primarily by an outdoor shrine made of branches but by fine white-washed one-roomed permanent building which is exclusively used for divination and treatment, carefully kept clean, the floor covered with elegant reed mats, the walls crammed with sacred cloths and other paraphernalia, and with two small decorated ancestral gourds as the mobile centre of the shrine. In the midst of the – in Francistown proverbial – filth and devastation of Masemenyenga, the plot (occupied by the lodge leader more than twenty years ago) stands out as a beacon of purity and vital strength.

At the Maipaahela lodge, the sacralisation of space goes hand in hand with the *sacralisation of person*. The lodge leader is seen as the incarnation of a major ancestral spirit, whose presence and sacred status is constantly to be acknowledged by a ritual greeting: whenever an adept or patient wants to enter the yard he or she kneels at the narrow entrance and loudly and slowly claps hands a few times; the leader then calls back '*Yebo, yebo*, you may approach, the spirit welcomes you.'

The constant awareness (reinforced by frequent divination in which more senior adepts attend to the junior ones under the guidance of the leader) that all adepts are hosting 'incarnations' similarly as the leader albeit on a less exalted scale, lends an extra dimension of ancestral dignity to the adepts' personalities. Whether from a sense of generational continuity reinforced by the constant emphasis on the ancestral dimension, as a reversal of the rejection of children which is attributed to demons (Werbner 1989), or simply as another enacting of the quality of rural family life, it is remarkable that the few young children at the lodge are at the centre of everyone's attention, admiration and care. (Such a situation is rather conspicuous in Francistown, where mothers often find them-

personal sacrifice, although I was never charged a penny for them, and although their joint value was in the range of my own cash payment. All in all a good example of the point I have made in my paper 'We are in this for the money' (van Binsbergen 1999b / 2005e): although *Sangomas* seldom work for free, and like to stress the cash connection so as to spare their clients a sense of life-long obligation, in fact they have a strong sense of vocation, and regardless of the cash payments (of which they must forward a share to the cult's headquarters in Zimbabwe) usually they offer their ritual services in the first place out of genuine therapeutic and humanitarian concern.

selves unable to balance the demands of maternal care with those of wage labour and sexual hospitality as more highly valued activities). The lodge's shrine is a focus for sacrifice and libation, which as elsewhere should be approached respectfully – without shoes and wristwatches, and with a ankle-length cloth wrapped around a woman's legs even if she is in ritual attire (with only knee-length skirt) – but this does not preclude joking and laughter in the presence of this eminently homely epiphany of the sacred.

More even than a dwelling place and a shrine, the lodge is a therapeutic community: for the 'outpatients' who come and go regularly, but particularly for the adepts. Kinsmen and non-kin alike identify as children of the leader, despite their considerable variation in age, mother tongue and ethnic affiliation: the lodge leaders are Ndebele, but their co-residing adepts (in so far as they are not recruited from the leader's close kindred) may derive from any ethnic group in and around Botswana. There is great emphasis on mutual warmth, understanding, assistance both in day-to-day domestic matters and in ritual and healing, so that an awareness of belonging and protection is generated (along with the awareness of engaging in something dangerous, exclusive, often despised and repulsive: the pursuit of *sangoma*hood). The members are very much aware of constituting a solidary group, which is further emphasized by their donning the lodge uniform for ritual occasions which, however, occur almost every day. The lodge does not house all adepts permanently. Some of them have, after their graduation from the esoteric training at the lodge, moved to places like Tonota and Tshesebe, 30 to 40 kms from Francistown; they visit the lodge several times a month.[10] Although the lodge members may engage in secular activities, including wage labour, even when not resident at the lodge they are supposed to spend almost all their free time at the lodge, for both ritual and social action.

A fictive family, the lodge has a firm style of leadership which makes it far from a democracy. The leader's plastic bags contain everything that the adepts may ever need for treatment and initiation, and as such represent the constant generous flow of healing care from the leader to her followers, but they also represent the almost total control which she exercises over the material and symbolic resources available at the lodge. Keys to the treatment and store rooms ensure her authority over the lodge's drums, pilgrim staffs, consecrated divination tablets, animals waiting to be sacrificed, butcher's knives *etc.* – and this authority is reinforced whenever she personally hands out these necessary items. Only fly switches, uniforms (once the material has been bought, and sewn into shape by the leader) and exercise tablets are kept by the adepts themselves. Similarly, individual adepts may administer the treatments prescribed by the leader, but she alone can prescribe a therapy, while she oversees all serious (*i.e.* non-didactic) divination going on at the lodge. This insistence

[10] An amazing aspect of the lodge's location is that two of the adepts are neighbours! MmaBigi, a woman in her late twenties, lives with her husband and his children at a distance of c. 75 meters; and the plot of Ellen's mother is adjacent to that of the lodge.

on control is on the one hand in line with the immense responsibilities the leader takes upon herself, braving ancestors and demons in her efforts to restore the patients to health and preserve the wellbeing of the adepts despite the supernatural and psychological risks they run. On the other hand the pattern of leadership is in line with the managerial problems of the position of leader, the cleavages and rivalry within the family which controls both the Maipaahela and the Monarch lodge, potential tensions within the lodge (between senior and junior adepts, adepts who are the leader's kin and those who are not), and the sharp competition with other Francistown healers, in which resort to such drastic, murderous means as they have professionally access to is taken for granted.

Throughout the day, but particularly in the afternoon, early evening and weekends, new clients may present themselves. Treatment sessions, during which the patient may be required to be clothed in nothing but a blanket, take place in the small treatment rooms, with only one adept in attendance; there is a strong sense of bodily integrity and privacy. Divination sessions however are a collective undertaking, when all the adepts gather around the leader in order to see applied to real life situations the principles which they have been discussing and practicing on virgin exercise divination tablets during the day. While the lodge leader oversees all divination sessions and pronounces the main diagnosis and paths to redress, she often leaves it to a senior adept to cast the tablets, to name and offer a first interpretation of the combinations, and to question the patient in the initial stages. A large proportion of the sessions, meanwhile, concern not outside patients but the adepts themselves, and particularly the decisions that have to be taken at various stages of their progress to healing, graduation and senior status. In these cases, when all adepts intently bend over the tablets and try to read them as signs of misfortune and redress for their fellow-adepts, the nature of the lodge as a therapeutic community becomes particularly manifest. At the same time the training component of such sessions is unmistakable: while present the lodge leader may allow one of the more experienced adepts to go almost all the way in the diagnostic dialogue, showing her increasing mastery and gaining credit for it in the small circle of the lodge.

Each day at the lodge begins with a ritual: in a small treatment room all adepts present as well as an occasional outpatient under special treatment (but never the leader) stage a ritual which in all details is identical to the one described by Werbner (1989: 311 *f.*) as the cooling ritual through which a Child of Mwali is initiated and which has also been adopted by the ZCC. While all present repeat the following chorus in Ndebele:

'Zemyama zenatu danga inkomo	'We black cows drink muddy water,
Zemyama za Amandhlozi'	We black cows of the ancestors',

a watery suspension of the powdered herb *mpetlelwe* is stirred into a foam, and they take turns in scooping the foam towards them; their conscious interpretation is not in explicit terms of the Mwali cult but of fortification through the handling of bitter and repulsive matter, helping the ancestral spirit in them to emerge. After the morning ritual, a few adepts may attend to out-patients, ad-

ministering fumigation, steam baths, massages *etc.* Meals are consumed collectively. In the afternoons adepts often occupy themselves with the practicing of divination, learning the basic combinations and improving their skills at spinning meaningful stories out of the chance sequences in which these combinations occur when thrown.

Around the inner core of the lodge there is a very loose network of free-floating senior adepts: traditional practitioners still in the process of building up a practice and a following in Francistown; they have their own source of esoteric knowledge and status independent from the lodge leader, but may appeal to the latter when needing expert advice and ritual. In addition the lodge sees a coming and going of Francistown lay patients, only very few of whom will ever be captured in to become trainees. Among the clients are members of Francistown's principal trading and political families seeking luck in their commercial and political exploits.

Every urban lodge heavily relies on nearby (up to than 50 km) rural homesteads as sources of kin support, vegetable medicine, and as locations where such secret ceremonies for the demonic cult can be staged as are considered to be incompatible with the urban environment. This implies that the sacralisation of space at the lodge has its limits, not so much because the lodge is within the municipal boundaries but because its reproduction of the rural order is balanced by the pursuit of a modern life-style and consumption patterns.

The leader is the only lodge member with a personal link with the Mwali cult, having visited the oracle at a critical point in life and having there received the guidance (not the specific training and healing) that led to betterment and ultimately to success as a healer. A junior adept may live at the lodge for years, and graduate as a fully-fledged sangoma, without ever making the journey to a central Mwali oracle, and apparently without developing any clear awareness of the interregional implications of his or her particular combination of cultic styles, idioms and paraphernalia – let alone awareness of the ramifications in space and time that make such lodges reminiscent, possibly even historically continuous, with oracular shrines in Graeco-Roman Antiquity and with South Asian *ashrams*.

Within the general setting of life at the lodge as described above, the restoration of meaning and well-being is brought about through the movement back and forth between the essential therapeutic situations of divination, performative ritual and sacrifice. Such topics cannot be dealt with in passing – they are too complex and raise too many theoretical difficulties and options (*cf.* Devisch 1984a; Werbner 1989). Yet a few remarks especially on divination are in order here, since they help to pinpoint the nature of the therapy the lodge has to offer (for instance, by comparison to the churches), and form a stepping-stone to the cases to be discussed below.

Divination at the lodges takes place with a combination of divination tablets and clairvoyant trance. The divining tablets, their names and associations (*cf.* ch. 9, below) are derived from the basic foursome widespread in the subcontinent. Individual variations include exchanging or altering the shape and names of certain tablets and combinations, the use of more than one set of four at the same time, the addition of 'joker' tablets reflecting the diviner's personal idiosyncrasies and biography, or the substitution of this system by the more ab-

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stract but essentially similar system of unmarked nutshells. Trance divination is supported by such physical requisites as drums, fly-switch, ceremonial dress comprising beads, ostrich feathers and rare skins, ceremonial spears or axes, cloths with representations of sacred animals in prescribed colours, substances to be rubbed onto exposed parts of the body, and ancestral gourds. In both variants the diviner tends to enter into a ceremonially restricted dialogue with the client, picking up minute clues volunteered or inadvertently offered by the client. If a divination apparatus is used the diviner dextrously juggles with the many vectors and complexes of meaning and association with which the physical apparatus is endowed according to a body of professional knowledge in essence shared by all diviners using this apparatus, combining this with the process of verbal exchange during the session. As a result the divination yields a coherent and often very detailed account, naming specific supernatural causes (often to the extent that the exact genealogical position of the ancestor involved may be identified, or the living evil-doer is characterized in terms of sex, age, complexion, and significant anecdotal details of the attack), their effects in the form of illness and other misfortune, and remedies in the form of sacrifice, retaliation, protective medicine, or ritual training as the case may be. The specificity of the message, its symbolic and verbal virtuosity, the generous attention for the patient's predicament, and its being inadvertently guided by the client's input, produces the effect of opening up an entire world hitherto hidden, and stipulating forms of redress which restore the patient's grasp of his or her symbolic order: history, ancestry, obligations and future potential. The restoration of sense gives on (via performative ritual and sacrifice) to a restoration of self.

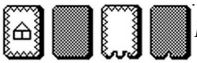
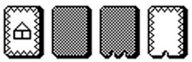
The divinatory apparatus is essentially a machine to produce stories that are convincing, moving, redemptive, and capable of identification by the patient. The four tablets, the several aspects under which each combination may be read at the same time, and other imagery with its now overlapping now contradictory contents)[11] provide the amazingly complex yet fairly systematic repertoire of possible interpretations. An essential stochastic element introduced by the throwing of the tablets. Every new throw (and sessions consist of at least a dozen throws, sometimes up to thirty or forty) to the patient and onlookers carries the suggestion that some blind, supernatural hand of fate and truth dictates the tablets to fall in a specific manner and compels the diviner to interpret them in one way and no other – as if the net is further tightening around the evasive truth that is searched for. Yet in fact each new throw offers the diviner a new opportunity to page through the entire interpretative repertoire available and make his selection, taking a new bend or shortcut through the maze, developing a promising point, abandoning a dead alley, and triggering

[11] A tentative analysis yielded the following basic aspects of all sixteen combinations: abstract, ancetral, bodily, generatioal, social, property and animal aspect. In addition, several combinations trigger standard interpretative exclamations from the diviner, while all have their specific praises full of symbolism. Finally, each combination of one, two, three or four tablets facing up implies a converse combination involving the remaining tablets which are facing down; manifest combinations are specified, qualified or reversed by their accompanying hidden combinations.

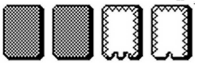
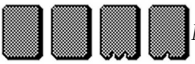
new reactions on the part of the patient. *The deception of deliberate (although intuitive) selection posing as blind necessity* could not be achieved without the appearance of objectivity achieved by the uncontrolled throwing of the tablets exactly as if they were dice.

The story-producing aspect was never clearer to me than when, at the Maipaahela lodge, I witnessed a small group of three adepts, young women, in their afternoon exercises of throwing the tablets and improvising interpretations. Fondly applying themselves to the task, as children absorbed in a board game, the women bend over the sacrificial goat skin spread out between them and tossed the virgin tablets in their hands (virgin since they had not yet been soaked in acrificial blood). One of the women (MmaBigi) threw and the others (Kwani and Ellen) watched and checked whether they agreed with her interpretation. The combination to come up in the throw was  *Zwibili* ([o]S[o]L),[12] and MmaBigi interpreted:

'The two children [Zwibili].... are at home.'.

using the complementary combination underlying Zwibili:  *Mbango* (K[o]N[o]), in its most innocent aspect of the home (specifically the fence post). The next throw brought out  *Mpululu* ([o]SN[o]), with its complementary down-facing combination  Take (K[o][o]L), and while the other women amusedly agreed MmaBigi continued:

'They are playing happily,... running about,... and the yard is peaceful.'

And so the story went on, making the children tie two strings  (*Mithengwe*, [o][o]NL), deciding to go and rest on a mat ( *Mashangulu*, [o][o][o][o]), *etc*.– all very serene and of a charming simplicity, the adepts enchanted that their efforts to bring the tablets to life began to succeed. From then on I understood that the purpose of the hours of relaxed joint exercise with the tablets was not so much to memorize the correct meaning of every tablet and combination (although that proves difficult enough), but to develop the ability to spin stories, of increasing depth,

[12] The four basic tablets are  *Kwame (K),*  *Silume (S),*  *Ntakwale (N) and*  *Lingwane (L)*, each identified by different, although often rudimentary, markings.

relevance and drama, on the basis the evolving sequence of throws. And in the professional sessions with real, medicated tablets, such as would take place a few times a week in the consulting room *cum* sitting room of the main house, one could see the leader and the most senior adepts display these skills to great heights of performative virtuosity.

This divinatory process, only loosely indicated here, offers the main turning points in the following two cases, which involve first an 'outpatient' and then a resident junior adept of the Maipaahela lodge. Their discussion will throw some further light on the career dynamics of *sangoma*hood (Joshua) and on the difficult question of the location, in social and historical space, of the pathogenic forces addressed in the lodge's healing practice – in the account of Litopo's case.

4.5. An abortive career? The case of Joshua

Joshua Ndhlovu was born in south-western Zimbabwe in 1937. A brilliant student, he finished secondary school and took a B.A. degree in English. Looking back he can detect in his adolescence one or two signs of an inclination to become a traditional healer, but these were eclipsed by his success in a modern career. In the wake of the massive war-induced migration from his region of origin to Botswana in the 1960s and 1970s, he settled in the southern town of Lobatse. There he married, had children, built a house, drove a motorcar, and was a successful secondary-school teacher for over fifteen years. In the early 1980s he had the opportunity to go to the USA, where he studied for a diploma in French.

After a few months abroad he was struck by a mental disturbance (described in terms suggestive of agoraphobia) which made him discontinue his studies, and after months of profound distress and confusion he returned to Lobatse. His wife's unfaithfulness and lack of understanding for his predicament aggravated his condition. He proved unfit to continue his teaching job, and resigned. A short course of cosmopolitan psychiatric treatment was soon discontinued when the patient realized, and with his verbal virtuosity brought home to the medical staff, that such therapy was irrelevant to his condition. Leaving his wife in charge of the house and the children, he returned to Zimbabwe in search of treatment, still in a state of severe mental disturbance.

In Bulawayo he came in contact with a spiritual group comprising both Africans and Europeans, and linking Christian inspiration to a respect for African religion and medicine; these contacts he found inspiring but they did not in themselves restore his mental health. He was received as a trainee in a *sangoma* lodge in one of the outlying townships of Bulawayo, where his condition was divined to be due to affliction by his paternal grandmother seeking to emerge in him. He was duly initiated as a *sangoma*, learning a personal repertoire of dance and song, and receiving the beads, cloak, skirt and pilgrim's staff of a Mwali adept – although he never accompanied the lodge's leader and other adepts on their infrequent visits to the central Mwali oracle of Njelele.

Restored to full health, having undergone in his late forties a metamorphosis from a drop-out western intellectual to a budding traditional healer, he returned to Botswana and settled in Francistown. Here he tried for a few years to establish himself as a trance diviner and healer. Business was generally low but he managed to secure in Francistown's new Block VII a SHHA (Self-Help Housing Agency) plot on which he started to build a four-roomed house and, at the back of the yard, a surgery with such basic paraphernalia as a python skin, drums, ancestral calabashes with sacred honey, a limited selection of herbs, *etc*. He made every effort to identify as a professional, to improve and

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broaden his diagnostic therapeutic skills, and to move in circles of other healers where he hoped to make contact with clients. He was not yet eligible to join one of Francistown's professional associations of traditional healers. With one of Francistown's most reputed *dingaka*, hailing from the same region in Zimbabwe but not a *sangoma*, he began to study the casting of divination tablets, although his preference remained with trance divination.

Although since the onset of his disease his sexual interest has been minimum (a condition said to be due to the fact that he is hosting a female ancestor, who must be propitiated for any – heterosexual – activity on the host's part), after a few years he became involved with his neighbour Elizabeth, a female head of household around thirty years of age, likewise from Zimbabwe. The love and fulfilment that Joshua had missed for many years he found with her, and he looked upon this as an unexpected and undeserved gift. When she became pregnant it was as if a broken vital chain was restored.

Yet Joshua was eaten by frustration. Elizabeth's income from employment and rent had to support him when, through most of 1989, no patients turned up at all. Never very self-confident of his status as a *sangoma*, he began (like so many traditional healers in modern Botswansa) to consider another metamorphosis again, that towards the status of Christian church leader, which he thought to be a more sociable and less lonely profession, closer to the people and with more response from them. The Bible began to compete with Shakespeare as his favourite reading, for which he had more time than he cared for. The sacrifice of a goat to his possessing ancestor, to take place at full moon on his Block VII plot and to be followed a *sangoma* dancing session, was planned for August 1989, but it did not materialize, partly for financial reasons, partly for a feeling of ritual incompetence on Joshua's part. In the same month, at a *Wosana* dancing session in Monarch, Joshua self-consciously dressed up in his ritual costume and volunteered a short performance, but without making any impression on the audience. However, at this session he met the leader of the Maipaahela lodge, and he was soon so impressed with her powers that he asked her to look into the stagnation of his practice. A long and dramatic divination session at the lodge revealed a combination of ancestral wrath and intrafamilial conflict as the causes of misfortune: earlier in 1989, Joshua's sister's son Aaron had asked him to accompany him to a church leader in Francistown's Donga township, and on that occasion Joshua had been persuaded to accept some medicine, through which the diviner in collusion with Aaron had meant to transfer the latter's misfortune to him; in punishment for this stupidity the possessing ancestor had tied up Joshua's practice. Deeply moved by this exceptionally long and dramatic divination session, Joshua agreed that the leader and adepts of Maipaahela lodge would spend a weekend at Block VII and stage the necessary rituals of redress there.

Immediately after a week at the lodge's Tshesebe rural outpost where in all secrecy (and to Joshua's horror when he heard about it) two adepts of the lodge were initiated into the demonic cult, the lodge population came to Block VII on a Saturday evening in September. As could have been expected, the other senior Francistown healers which Joshua had invited did not turn up. After collecting unprocessed tree branches from a distant supplier, beer drinking, and chanting, a replica of the lodge shrine was built at night in front of Joshua's house under the directions of one of the adepts; a goat was slaughtered there and its meat displayed on top of the platform, while its blood and selected intestines were buried beneath it. After the sacrifice a dancing session was staged behind the house; a relieved and triumphant Joshua entered into trance, as well (a rare event) the lodge leader herself. In the late morning dancing was resumed in the unroofed central room of the house; in a way supposed to be good for business, this attracted a considerable crowd of neighbours, who looked in through the openings where doors and windows were to be hung in a later stage of completion of the house and of financial success. Towards the evening the party returned to Maipaahela carrying some

of the meat and, as an initial payment, three metal window frames which had been waiting to be fitted. The ritual, though expensive, was considered a great success until, at noon the next day, the lodge leader died suddenly and under suspect circumstances.

Consultation with Albert, the leader of the Masemenyenga lodge (likewise Joshua's home-boy) soon offered Joshua a coherent interpretation of the intrigues, involving both the deceased's family and other Francistown healers, culminating in the leader's death. A surer sign that Joshua's sacrifice had been rejected could not exist, and at Albert's advice the shrine was demolished; the latter considered it alien to Ndebele forms of *sangoma*hood anyway. Accompanying two other / beginning adepts of Mma-Ndhlovu (my wife and myself) who found themselves stranded because of her death, Joshua soon travelled to Bulawayo to visit his lodge of initiation, and with the blessing of its leader and accompanied by a few of his fellow-adepts he made the journey to the Njelele oracle in the heart of the Matopos. The nocturnal experience at the oracle gave him a great sense of mystical fulfilment, and (even though his two companions were refused entry on racial grounds) he was deeply moved to be one of the many supplicants united there before what Joshua claimed was called the 'Mother of Spirits'. The oracle told him that despite recent setbacks he might yet have hope.

A few months later a healthy child was born and Joshua resumed teaching at a secondary school.

Having fled (or destroyed?) his modern world, Joshua for some years found refuge in the protective alternative world of *sangoma*hood, but he could scarcely summon the self-confidence, monomania, virtuosity, obsession with power *etc*. necessary for a successful pursuit of the career it offered him. The restorative effects of a new love and a new fatherhood (another inversion of the chain of filiation, back to normality, after ancestral possession had constituted the first inversion) made him less dependent on such a solution. A similar effect was brought about by his continued contact with alternative viable forms of symbolic production besides *sangoma*hood (Christianity, Western literature, my own academic research which greatly interested him, which – thanks to his introductory reading of anthropology in the USA – he could discuss with rare detachment and insight, and to which he made significant contributions as a free-lance research assistant in the later stages of my field-work). The opportunity to resume a career as a well-paid employee within a modern formal organization, rather than as a hand-to-mouth ritual entrepreneur (daily exposed to the terrifying powers of the occult and of rival specialists), tied in with his new responsibilities. Having been restored to health by the pursuit of *sangoma*hood, it was not necessary to continue to make his living as a *sangoma*.

Although within the inner circle of the lodge and the professional organisation *sangomas* may take pride in their specialty, there is very considerable shame and fear involved: no one with an alternative course will become or remain a *sangoma*, and in many cases (perhaps with the exception of those belonging to *sangoma* families, *cf.* Fig. 4.6) adepts only yielded to the forces pulling them to this cultic complex after having exhausted all other possibilities. It is a choice one makes in utter desperation, when there really is no choice any more.

These developments should have meant the end of Joshua's professional activi-

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ties as a healer. Dropping his identity as a *sangoma* altogether, however, would have been impossible without any major conversion fortifying him against the ancestral wrath that such a apostasis would incite; the church career he envisaged was supposed to offer such conversion.

Joshua described a tangential orbit with regard to the Maipaahela lodge, although his case informs us of the lodge's life in a particularly critical episode. More of a centripetal movement is seen in the case of Litopo, which for the rest displays striking parallels in terms of career and conjugal development.

4.6. Healing between intrafamilial conflict and modern society: The case of Litopo

Litopo is a well-educated Mongwato, born in Shoshong in 1952. When I first met him he had spent four months at the Maipaahela lodge. Although by no means the youngest adept he is obviously the least senior, and it is he who performs many of the menial tasks such as killing and butchering sacrificial animals and digging up vegetable medicine. In dancing sessions his attire cannot be distinguished from that of the others, but his movements are far more awkward, he has not entered in trance yet, and he does not know most of the songs which are in Ndebele; his only languages are Tswana and English. His esoteric knowledge of divination, sacrifice and healing practices is still minimal. He is still rather an outsider to the lodge, and looks with wonder at many of its practices, lacks the background knowledge to interpret them, and occasionally feels bullied by the lodge's forceful style of leadership. He has a clear and coherent conception of what had brought him to the Maipaahela lodge; the following anamnesis summarizes his own account:

> Until 1983 Litopo worked for the government of Botswana as a highly successful cooperatives officer. He had twice been sent to Scandinavia for training. He owned a motorcar. (His former, high standard of living was still clear from the few personal belongings he brought with him to the lodge.) He was married, with a few young children. All this was wiped out when towards the end of 1983 illness forced him to give up his job. His complaints were very severe headache; impaired vision; and pain between the shoulders.[13] Western medication only made these complaints worse. He went to a place in Malawi (100 km north of Blantyre) for treatment by a famous traditional healer. Here he stayed for two and a half years, but his complaints only got worse. He looks at his best remembered dreams of that period as revolving on the rejection of Western medicine:
>
> In one dream, after taking two pain-killing tablets, he vomits a huge quantity of such pills.
>
> In another dream he goes to a hospital to be treated for toothache; the doctor is not in and the nurse tells him to come back some other time, and gives him two pain-killers.

[13] Such pain is the surest sign of ancestral affliction: the patient's body takes literally the standard phrase (the combination KNL of the divining tablets) 'you are carrying a heavy load'.

As he walks out of the hospital he drops the pills and they break in two; after some hesitation he decides not to pick them up since he has to come back to the doctor anyway.

Litopo's Malawian healer advised him no longer to take Western medicines since 'his spirits' (still unidentified at that stage) apparently objected against them. Looking back Litopo feels that the Malawian failed because the treatment of the complaints was not combined with training through which the patient could become a healer himself.

After two and a half years Litopo gave up hope of being cured in Malawi, and requested his family in Botswana to sent money for the return journey. Meanwhile a letter told him that his wife had had a baby – clearly not his. Back home he and his family staged a sacrifice of a goat and beer to his ancestors, and his complaints diminished somewhat. This convinced Litopo that he must look further in this direction.

Still in Shoshong he placed himself under the treatment of a female healer who, convinced of the ancestral nature of his complaints, was confident that she could help him. She started on a course of treatment, but the patient ceased dreaming and became more and more confused. The healer claimed that this would get better with an adaptation of her therapy. As a rule, in the course of the therapy the healer or one of her adepts will dream of the specific type of garment which is favoured by the ancestor which is about to emerge in the patient. However, such dreams were not forthcoming. Later the healer dreamed of the patient wearing one type of garment, covered under another garment which however snapped off his body and fell on the ground. The healer could not make sense of this dream, and the treatment was discontinued.

Meanwhile the patient checked with his relatives whether any of his ancestors had been active in cults. None were found in the paternal line, but in the maternal line connections with the Tswana rain cult were found to have existed. Litopo than went roaming around Botswana looking for treatment.

In May 1989, he ended up in Francistown where one of his brothers is employed, and here he found his way to Mma-Ndhlovu, the leader of the Maipaahela lodge. In her first divination session it was already ascertained that in addition to the maternal ancestor with the rain-cult connotations (whom Mandhlovu is confident to handle in view of her own association with the Mwali cult), there is a paternal ancestor who seeks to manifest himself as well. A struggle was said to be going on between the two spirits as to who will be allowed to emerge first. This struggle not only explained the dream of the two garments, but also Litopo's entire illness. The treatment now consists in the training to become a *sangoma*. Further divination brings out that the paternal ancestor will be allowed to manifest himself first, after which the maternal ancestor will follow automatically. After a few months at the lodge Litopo feels much better. He has not lost interest in his family and national affairs, and obviously misses his children a lot. He intends to go back to Shoshong for two weeks at the end of September, in order to cast his vote in the national elections, and to try and persuade his wife to return to him: she is aware of his treatment and understands what he goes through, yet she has returned to her parents.

Litopo's paternal ancestor must have been reckoned, by the Maipaahela leader, to have belonged to another cult than the Tswana rain cult, otherwise there could have been no difference in garments: the garments identify the cult. As we have seen she was involved in the Kalanga-associated demonic cult. It makes sense to presume that it was this cult to which she was initiating Litopo, too: this being her specialty, it explains the rapid success of her therapy after so many years of suffering, and it also explains why Litopo had to come all the way to Francistown: it seems unlikely that

this Kalanga-associated cult has senior representatives in Shoshong.[14] The rain cult however, and hence his maternal ancestor, would indeed be taken care of 'automatically', because of the lodge's nature of a peripheral Mwali lodge.

Within the conceptual framework of *sangoma*hood, Litopo's case is clear: 'without himself or his senior kinsmen being in the least aware of this, the patient was torn apart between two rival ancestors each representing a different cult; after a long process of trial and error he happens to find a specialist who pursues the same combination of cults, therefore for the first time can diagnose his predicament properly, and can begin to effectively cure him.' The analytical problem is now that, by the standards of mainstream religious anthropology (but see p. 16, above), we have to formulate the mechanism of illness and therapy in a different idiom, since we cannot make it scientifically plausible that ancestors and demons in their own right (rather than as symbols or metaphors of something else) have distinct influences on their living hosts, particularly not if these hosts during most of the time that the alleged influence makes itself felt, are unaware of the cultic connection which is only later to be revealed and explained. A number of possibilities to make mainstream analytical sense of Litopo's case present themselves.

The first paradigm that comes to mind is one looking at the accumulative effect of social dramas spanning several generations. Marriage is a relationship between sets of people, who in and through the conjugal process get mobilized and articulate themselves *vis-à-vis* each other in ways which usually, in addition, are informed by other economic, political, ethnic, religious, kinship, residential *etc*. forms of structural opposition and conflict in the ongoing social process. The classic work of Turner and van Velsen (and the Manchester School in general) has sensitized students of South Central African societies to this type of social process, the shifting, factionalized alliances to which they give rise, largely in localized kin groups, and the social dramas that evolve around these themes, each involving a unique set of protagonists, events and trajectory, – a unique historicity – yet all displaying permutations of structural possibilities within the same social structure and culture. Often such a social drama can be shown to span decades, its disruptive tendency not spilt and dissipated within one generation but accumulated and (in the form of structural conflict within families, and in the form of mental conflicts within in the individual members) reflecting and re-enacting that unique historicity even if the participants are no longer consciously aware of its details – in fact, it is likely that the members of the family have a considerable reasons for structural amnesia in these matters. It is in this sense that intrafamilial conflict, and individuals' extreme mental reactions to it, may be said to become 'hereditary': not through genes, of course, but by response patterns which are peculiar to the members of a specific family which are repeated, for enforced and imitated, from one generation to another. In North Atlantic society, psychiatric research of family settings of

[14] But not altogether impossible: as Campbell (1979: 65-66) says: 'To this day there are fairly large Kalanga populations scattered as far afield as (...) Shoshong'.

neuroses as by Laing, or studies on the intergenerational cycle of parent-child incest, intrafamilial violence *etc*. converges with these ideas. The participants' concept of 'afflicting ancestors' then forms an effective shorthand to bring these patterns of pathogenic response within the scope of culturally-patterned discourse, and of symbolic redressive action. The divinatory identification of the point in time or in the family tree to which the disruptive effect is traced, may be entirely spurious in some cases, but it is also quite possible (in fact a point of my repeated personal experience) that the patient, suffering under this burden of his family history, in his verbal answers and other non-verbal reactions to the therapeutic questions in divination inadvertently expresses, once again, manifestations, or echoes pathogenic intrafamilial response patterns, which made him ill in the first place. A talented and experienced diviner / therapist can scarcely fail to pick up these reactions. The abundance of possible paths through the divinatory forest, the proliferation of interpretative stories which with every progressive throw of the tablets can be further spun out, often allows the diviner to end up with an interpretation which is neither stereotypical nor trivial, but which takes aboard oppositions reflecting the patient's conflict. Moreover such an interpretation becomes charged with authority as the awed patient witnesses how an apparently objective divinatory apparatus, in the hands of a stranger, tells a story which is totally new to him but which as it unfolds he is yet brought to believe is his unique life history. Thus reduced to recognizable and manageable proportions, the contradictions can then be resolved, and the patient absolved, through concrete (and typically expensive) sacrificial ritual specifically built around the story which diviner and patient together have constructed during divination.

According to this rough interpretative model, the story as told by the divinatory interpretation bears only a minimum relation with the reality of the patient's pathogenic intrafamilial past: it only seeks to abstractly rebuild, in metaphoric material, a vectorial system of conflicts and contradiction more or less congruent with the otherwise unknown thrust of family history. The specific ancestors featuring in any divinatory story of ancestral affliction do not stand for real events surrounding the patient's real ancestors. As far as Litopo's case is concerned, the association of the maternal and paternal ancestor each with a cult of his own would be historically spurious as well. These ancestors, and their postulated cult associations, would be largely artefacts of the therapy situation, reflecting the lodge leader's present involvement in several cults.

While such an approach, once much further worked out, might appeal to the positivist intellect, the essential questions remain.

If we accept that Litopo's dream of the two garments (and hence the conflict between two cults), to which he and his therapist lend key status, was not just a *post-facto* projection of the insights from MmaNdhlovu's divination into the earlier years of his quest for therapy, then how do we account for a situation where an apparently totally westernized, successful young Mongwato, who knows very little of his family history, yet comes up with a dream symbolism

which could hardly be interpreted in other terms than that of conflict between cults? Could early childhood experiences of a cultic nature (perhaps an actual confrontation between paternal and maternal relatives on this point), repressed from memory yet lurking as a mental time bomb, be responsible? It seems hardly credible, although without information on Litopo's childhood and adolescence it cannot be dismissed off-hand. It is important that the time of this dream the patient had already for years been exposed to the cultic idiom in which distinctive garments are of great importance; a fundamental cleavage or conflict may therefore have expressed itself through this imagery even if it had a totally different origin than cult differentiation.

Could it be that the familial domain as a locus of pathogenesis and redress is in itself too narrow? The existence, throughout Southern and South Central Africa, of ancestral affliction as a major model in the public discourse favours a participants' interpretation of mental illness in the particularistic terms of family history (of ancestors!), rather than where a detached sociologist would look for explanation: at the more comprehensive level of ethnic groups, societies, clashes of modes of production and world-views. Cults do not exist in vacuum, but have complex and far from straight-forward relations with political, economic and ethnic processes involving large sets of people and vast areas. Could it be that, despite the essentially trans-ethnic nature of cults today, such major historical processes as the Zulu aftermath (*mfecane*) on the one hand, the imposition of Ngwato and in general Tswana hegemony over the Kalanga (processes which began in the nineteenth century but still make themselves felt today in the political reality of South Africa and Botswana), were also carried through at a cultic level in the form of interaction between for instance the Tswana rain cult, the demonic cult of Kalanga connotations, and perhaps the *Isangoma* complex of primarily Zulu / Ndebele connotations – in such a way an undercurrent of ethnic conflict for some period found an expression in cultic opposition, symbolically and without the actors being fully aware of it? If so, such implicit *cultic* conflict would then be build into the structure of *ethnic* conflict in twentieth-century Botswana, – a lurking culture trait ready to come out in the symbolic expression of individuals. Here we may think especially of individuals whose (again) family history endowed them with double Ngwato / Kalanga identity or otherwise with conflicting loyalties along this ethnic boundary. We do not know if Litopo falls in this rather numerous category, and, if so, if this condition triggered his mental illness in the first place. But the emerging hypothesis has two advantages: it adds, to the narrow familial domain of a totally closed traditional worldview, at least the wider scope of regional ethnic conflict – in a part of Africa where the ethnic dimension of possession and membership has been repeatedly argued;[15] and moreover it can account, whereas the first model could not, for the assumed appearance of the theme of cultic opposition in Litopo's case prior to his contact with the Maipaahela lodge.

[15] *E.g.* van Binsbergen 1981b: 93, and references cited there.

But again, are we prepared to believe that this factor (notably the confusing cultic reflections of ethnic conflict) is what made Litopo ill, to such an extent that everything he had so successfully achieved had to be sacrificed and destroyed in his modern career? Frankly, modern Botswana, or modern South and Central Africa in general for that matter, appears to have more potent psychopathogenic material to offer than just that.

If the aetiology offered by the diviners could be assessed as if it were a scientific theory, we would immediately be struck by its parochial circularity: cults, ancestors and sorcery are the diviner's stock-in-trade, so the patient's problem has to be reduced to these three elements. The limitations of this position come out most clearly when expatriates from a largely alien cultural orientation submit to the cult's therapeutic apparatus and see their problems, too, rescaled to the dimensions of the familial domain and ancestral wrath. The cults have no idiom to discuss the wider, modern world and its political, economic and existential predicaments in terms derived from that world or meaningful in that world; yet we can safely assume that the patients' problems at least partly stem from that wider world. For instance, a possible reading of Litopo's earlier, medical dreams is that they suggest that his basic conflict had to do with incomplete access to, and partial rejection by, modern Western culture, as only symbolized by cosmopolitan medicine. What is needed most to pursue this line of argument is detailed information on Litopo's work situation and marital situation immediately before the onset of his mental disturbance; the same applies to Joshua's case. And alas, because I only know Litopo in the Francistown lodge environment and not in his Shoshong home, such detailed information is lacking, or is exclusively cast in the patient's own subjctive discourse.

So what do the diviners do? They ignore the input from the wider world, implicitly declaring it irrelevant and non-existent – from the same sense of immunity noted earlier on; instead the diviners re-introduce (or, in the case of the expatriate patient, introduce) the patient to a much more comprehensible, particularistic world, which essentially revives the archaic world-view of a small-scale society – and suggesting that the key to the patient's personal past lies in a return to the collective past. Having thus led away the patient from his earlier, devastatingly painful confrontation with and in the wider world, the therapists then set out to convince the patient that his misfortune makes sense in the terms of the narrow cultic world to which he or she has just been introduced. Next the therapists use the full skills of their symbolic and dramaturgical manipulation to address, and resolve, the problems once these have thus been totally dislocated and redefined.

The ancestral dimension of this therapeutic model (which is the lodge leaders' most cherished dimension, while the sorcery dimension is often presented by them as a poor men's version of the aetiology of misfortune) suggests that the pathogenic moment springs from remnants of ancient symbolic vitality ineffectively encapsulated, again as an ancestral time bomb, in a life of modernity whose detailed analysis is unnecessary from diagnosis and treatment. Translated in sociological terms this is close to approaches in terms of cultural lag, of survival, of a fragmented and dislocated yet potent traditional culture which at all costs – including ethnicity, cults, and individual mental illness, and a combination of these – seeks to break through the modern 'varnish' of urbanism,

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capitalism, and the state. We can understand why the cults must take this position; but when posing as sociological, such views of the fossilization of African culture are theoretically barren and politically paternalistic.

So far this argument has concentrated on the therapeutic end, on which I have no lack of data. In the process we have perhaps, like others before us, identified one possible mechanism through which such disruptive elements could end up in the minds of apparently successfully modernizing individuals: the intergenerational transfer of intrafamilial affects. But more important at this juncture is the discovery of the fundamental paradox of the cults: *their capacity to cure patients from the modern world by ignoring it*. The patients are cured, not because they are being restored to communion with some repressed pre-modern identity lurking at the depths of their souls, but because they are sucked away from modern alienation by the liberating force of a daring imagination, which selectively feeds on personal and collective historical themes. Along this line the radical difference between cults and Christian healing churches may be further explored: the latter, positively, take the modern world at least for granted and often for ideal, but reject and deny even that part of pre-modern history (*e.g.* the basic concepts of sorcery and possession) which they did incorporate. Meanwhile the most urgent task at hand would be different: to explore the pathogenic structural conditions of modern Southern African mass society, not just in the particularistic, ancestral terms of the *sangoma*'s imagination, but primarily in those of a liberating sociological imagination, revolving around such themes as erosion of family life under the impact of capitalist relations of production; class structure; political participation; and symbolic and aesthetic production and innovation in the face of mass consumption.

4.7. Conclusion: Cult, history and healing

The cultic phenomena discussed are difficult to place in social space: is their referent the micro dynamics of intrafamilial conflict, and intermediate ethnic arena, or the make-up of modern mass society in general? At the same time this opens up a field for historical questions. In the first instance questions concerning the history of specific cults, and what symbolic and organizational elements derive from what aspects of regional and distant cultures and societies. How have theories of causation and styles of cult organization changed over time, with the appearance of new political and economic realities? How have the interactions between cults developed, reshaping the cults themselves in the process. While these are more or less obvious, 'classic' historical questions (well in the tradition of Ranger & Kimambo 1971), the most attractive questions in this context I find those which raise the historical aspect to the power two, exploring not so much the cults' history, but their historicity. Can the dislocation and carrying-over of selected and no doubt transformed symbolic and ceremonial material, from a specific culture, and into new cultic ensembles

which are essentially regional and non-culture-specific, be regarded as a means to come to terms with history? In mt introduction to *Religious Change in Zambia (1981b*, I proposed that

> 'Among other things, religion seems to be a means for people to expose themselves to their collective history in a coded, de-historicized (fossilized?) form. And the scientific study, in other words the decoding, of religion is an undertaking which, among other disciplines, belongs to the science of history, not so much because religious forms *have a* history, but because religion *is* history.' (van Binsbergen 1981b: 74; italics added).

From this perspective, what does it mean when the members of the Masemenyenga lodge ritually dress up as Zulu warriors? When the lodges of Maipaahela and Monarch make their adepts dress in the *Wosana* costume although the personal link with Mwali oracles is confined to the lodge leader; and reproduce such Kalanga-associated cultural items as the demonic cult and branch platform shrines?

Such elements may make for local and regional variations, and may be exploited by individual ritual entrepreneurs in their quest for ever more impressive and captivating idiosyncrasies in the ritual market. But these particularistic elements do not preclude that the overall pattern of the cultic complex pursued by the lodge leaders is transcultural, capable of encompassing clients and adepts from a great many of ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the region, and likewise capable of being mediated in a lingua franca *and in an urban environment very different from the rural context in which the constituent cultic elements may have originated. For instance, we see members of the Maipaahela lodge of Khurutse, Ndebele, Ngwato and Sotho backgrounds engage in a demonic cult which from a Kalanga perspective may appear to be distinctively Kalanga, yet are not appreciated as such by these participants. Their involvement certainly is not aimed at 'the cultural reconstruction of the domestic domain' (Werbner 1989: 61 and* passim*) in which these adepts do not share, neither culturally nor in terms of their personal situation as women in town. Instead, they are simply concerned to complete the therapeutic trajectory identified by the lodge leader (whose own Kalanga affinities, despite speaking Ndebele, cannot be denied).*

Along with this dislocation from an original ethnic context, there is the basic cultic uniformity over large distances. It may be underpinned by a fundamental similarity between the cultures of the region, but it is also due to increased contacts, professionalisation, standardization, the impact of mass consumption and the state, and even the recycling of written or audiovisual records of such cults.

As such the cultic complex is far from being out of place in a Southern African urban environment – on the contrary, it offers solutions for some essential problems posed by that environment. Not being culture-specific, it can cater for the heterogeneity that is the reality of that situation. Not actively rejecting neither the modern matrix of capitalism, mass consumption and the state (but rather neutralizing these factors in a more roundabout way), nor rejecting the traditional world-view which links patients to their individual histories as members of a family and lends meaning and hope to misfortune, – and not succumbing to the temptation of rendering this world superficially comprehensible in the cheap terms of a sorcery idiom – this cultic complex appears

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to be in at least as good a competitive position as Christian churches and cosmopolitan medicine to address the existential problems of modern urbanites.[16]

There can be no doubt that the lodge's cultic complex mediates elements which are meaningful because they are historical. After all, history is the only thing left if you want to 'cure your patient from the modern world by ignoring it'. The complex does so at two connected levels, and part of its therapeutic effectiveness may derive from this very connection. On the one hand the complex mediates historical forms: a once viable and meaningful world-view of collective representations concerning power, causation, continuity, filiation, identity, and the material and corporeal vehicles of these concepts, which in other ways (certainly not in town, and only decreasingly in the villages) are only inadequately and fragmentarily reproduced in the lives of the people who are the potential clients of these cults. On the other hand the complex addresses the suffering individual as rooted in these forms through his personal history, and attribute his or her suffering to a temporary disruption of this rootedness.

> 'Why have you left your traditional culture? Why did you deviate from the ways of your fathers? (...) There is a royal stave waiting for you, destined for you if you could only revive your link with your paternal grandfather!'
>
> In these unexpected terms, spoken with force and full of reproach, the head of the Masemenyenga lodge began his trance divination for a client (myself) whose only conscious problem was the loss of valuable property: the unique and irreplaceable semi-final manuscript of *Tears of Rain* (van Binsbergen 1992b).

Invariably the lodge's cultic complex in its divination and possession stresses the central position of ancestors, not mechanically as just another aetiological category next to the High God, the spirits of the wild, and humans who commit sorcery, but as the essential ingredients which went into the making of the individual: the lines of his or her personal history, with which one must come to terms. By precisely identifying irate ancestors, and by stipulating ways of redress, the complex creates not only clarity and hope, but also a sense of finality and inevitability, which enables the patient to overcome both resentment and guilt, and inspires one to start off in a new direction and with a regained vitality which, one feels, derives not only from personal resources but shares in the entire stream of generations floating through one's body. The divinatory reconstruction of the underlying conflict takes on such sophistication and profundity that it manages to look at sorcery, however formidable it may appear at close range, as an almost irrelevant modern accident: the important question is why ancestors allowed their descendant to be so vulnerable, and once the ancestral puzzle is solved the ubiquitous sorcerers will be forced to keep their distance. The historical forms proffered by the complex are those of the times of the ancestors, it is the ancestors who allowed or caused the misfortune, and by acknowledging this sore spot and sacrificially acting on this knowledge, the patient gains a new freedom, not under ancestral oppression but with a

[16] With this qualification, perhaps, that one is struck by the intellectual, symbolic and emotive powers taken for granted among the members of the lodge communities, and *Sangomas* in general. These are unlikely to be at the disposal of the average member in any society. This condition may limit the range of eligible patients and of applicability of the complex: the Joshuas, rather than the Kitsos, of Francistown.

restored sense of personal history. The sacrificial part is essential, because of the alchemy of identification and dissociation, violence and gift-giving, submission and self-assertion, which it entails: the sacrificial animal is at once the patient, the complaint, and the ancestor; its violent death evokes both the suffering, its termination, the passage from living descendant to dead ancestor, and the patient's resentment; and the incorporation of the remainders of the sacrifice (meat, prepared skin, beads) in the body and everyday life of the patient is not only a reminder and a reassurance, but also a sign of victory of the living over the dead.

On the personal level this amounts to a psychotherapy of evident effectiveness and beauty; but on a societal level what we have here is a model of cultural continuity and the reproduction of meaning. As I have briefly pointed out in the introductory section to this chapter, in a society like that of modern urban Botswana there is a struggle about the appropriation and transformation of historical forms which derive from the local region rather than from worldwide mass consumption culture. In everyday urban life these historical forms scarcely have a place of their own in the urban setting, and they tend to exist vicariously: implied in the links urbanites continue to have with rural villages and cattle posts. In public life a narrow selection of stereotypified items of 'our traditional culture' has entered the official discourse: the traditional village kgotla – council, moot – meeting as a model for information transfer, mobilisation and decision making; the myth of the Urban Customary Court as constituting just another kgotla meeting; the folklorization of music and dance in the school curriculum; the official policy favouring interaction between traditional and cosmopolitan health care. These and a few others are the symbols, stripped of historical form and political power, which lend a harmless sprinkling of heritage to bureaucratic and capitalist rationality increasingly governing not only the state and the economy but also people's personal lifestyle, especially in town.

Christian healing churches have gone somewhat further in the selective adoption of historical forms, and on this basis they might to some extent be able to cater for forms of suffering which the public discourse interprets in terms of sorcery and spirit possession; but the cases we have discussed suggest that the churches' approach of these elements revolves on rejection and dissimulation, which drives the suffering individuals back in the arms of a modern society, their problem of meaning still unresolved.

In such a context the therapeutic potential of the cultic forms available at the Francistown lodges may be greatly appreciated.

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Chapter 5. The state and African Independent Churches in Botswana

A statistical and qualitative analysis of the application of the 1972 Societies' Act of Botswana

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Tension between coercion and consensus is inherent to any state system, and informs state-church relations. Post-Independence Botswana is of comparative interest in that the Botswana political culture has emphasized national consensus as the state elite's main stategy in controlling the civil society. While churches constitute a power-base irreducible to the state, state-church interaction shows how the state elite may safeguard its dominance without exploding consensus. Botswana's *Societies Act* (1972) defines the setting for such strategies, which vary from co-optation and state use of a religious idiom, via bureaucratic interference beyond the letter of the law (*e.g.* in state control over the nomenclature of churches) to the imposition of an alien bureaucratic logic. Limiting cases are provided by religious organizations pursuing a historic non-Christian idiom in the trappings of a church. The conclusion problematizes the proliferation of formal organizations in modern Africa, and argues the limited applicability of the *acquiescence* concept as elaborated by Matthew Schoffeleers.

5.1. Introduction: The Botswana post-colonial state between coercion and consensus

One of the principal puzzles in the analysis of the state (Doornbos & vanBinsbergen 2017), wherever and whenever, lies in the relationship between power and consensus: in the dialectics between on the one hand the exercise of power – often of a coercive and physically violent nature – by an elite who have appropriated state power and serve their own parochial interests by means of the state, and on the other the inclusive, super-personal nature of the state, which allows it (by ideological, symbolic and ceremonial means, as well as by extending concrete services and benefits outside the immediate elite circle) to be perceived by the general population of state subjects as worthy of support and identification. Study of the post-colonial Botswana state[1] is very interesting because the all-pervading and (in the first decades after the 1966 Independence) quite successful insistence on consensus, and a level of coercion and physical violence which, for modern African states and especially for the Southern African subcontinent, is reassuringly low, especially for a country that has long shared a border with one of the most violent states of the modern world, the Republic of South Africa under apartheid. In Botswana, structures of consultation and arbitration are present and active at all levels of public and private life, and where they do not exist they can be seen to emerge almost by *generatio spontanea*. It is common for such structures to cut across socio-political, cultural, ethnic and religious boundaries, so that the formal structure of political life is often dissolved in complementary opposition, where complementarity is stressed at least as much as opposition. In mid-August 1990 a major conference was organized in Botswana's second town, Francistown, at which the opposition parties were to unify in preparation for a final blow to the ruling party – the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which won the 1989 national elections virtually unopposed; however the conference had to be called off because the leaders had preferred to attend a private meeting with the BDP-affiliated President of the Republic![2] Such an event is typical of Botswana national politics, and passes without sarcastic comment. Open all-out confrontation is against the grain of Botswana public life – and the prevalence of sorcery beliefs and sorcery practices (as an idiom of hidden violence) among the Tswana today suggests that this trait is reflected in the private and domestic sphere.

'Peacefulness' is very much part of the Batswana's public self-image, and is claimed to have been just that since pre-colonial times. One of the reasons why the Kalanga ethnic group in that country stands apart and makes the others uneasy is that among them confrontation and conflict are more highly appreciated in their historic self-image and, to some extent, in

[1] *Cf.* Cliffe 1984; Crowder 1988; Decraene 1985; Holm *et al.* 1978; Magang 1986; Parson 1984; Parsons 1988; Picard 1987.

[2] Sources include *The Guardian* (Gaborone), 20.8.90, and author's field-notes.

their actual behaviour and expressions today.[3] However, it is unrealistic to attribute the unmistakably consensual orientation in the Botswana state and politics primarily to a hypothetical persistence of pre-colonial cultural patterns. For before such a claim could be made we would need a thorough assessment of social transformations in Botswana over the past century and a half: eighty years of Protectorate status, a longer existence as a South African labour reserve, the successful management of Tswana ethnic and linguistic hegemony in the colonial and post-colonial context, the vast opportunities for capital accumulation and mass consumption in a context of diamond and cattle industry since independence (1966), and the strategies of the state elite to inconspicuously serve their interests under an populist idiom of austerity, integrity, rural emphasis, pastoralism and development. While such an assessment is clearly outside our present scope, it is likely to reveal modern emphasis on consensus in Botswana as an active (and increasingly disputed) response to twentieth-century concerns rather than as pre-colonial continuity.

In this connexion not only alleged historical continuity but also an alleged rural and traditionalist orientation plays and important role in Botswana's official self-image, as propagated in countless governmental statements at home and abroad. Botswana is seen as an essentially rural and pastoral, traditionalist country. The economic boom after independence, caused by such factors as the diamond and meat industries, the customs union with South Africa and hence opportunities for sanctions-dodging industry under apartheid, and finally the economic opportunities that opened up after the termination of the war of liberation with Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, has created impressive affluence in the country. Class formation is in an advanced stage and the state's liberalist and capitalist inclinations further this process; on the other hand, the same state's populist and democratic orientations have so far ensured that a substantial portion of national wealth is used for the benefit of the general population – not so much by individual salaries and purchasing power but by collective state services especially in the medical and educational sphere. Urbanization is frowned upon as somehow going against the grain of the national ideal of an integrated, stable rural society; but also on this point the rule of law (specifically the freedom of movement as guaranteed under section II.14 of the Constitution of Botswana),[4] and the forbidding example of nearby South Africa with whose socio-political conditions under apartheid many if not most adult Batswana[5] had first-hand experience prior to 1990, have prevented the institution of effective urbanization-curbing measures in the first decades after Independence. In fact, Botswana's post-Independence policy of providing low-cost *urban* housing has been exemplary, even if that policy theoretically runs on the

[3] This would suggest, as an interesting hypothesis for further research, that sorcery is less prevalent among the Kalanga than among the various Tswana groups in Botswana today.

[4] Republic of Botswana 1983a *etc*.

[5] Here, *Batswana* (the plural form according to the Tswana language, using the personal prefix *Ba-*) will mean 'citizens of Botswana'; members of the ethnic group of the Tswana within Botswana will be identified as *Tswana*, in accordance with the Manchester School convention of dropping the local plural prefix when referring to African social groups.

basis of non-subsidy for growth – through repayable loans to individual house owners and service levies charged to them; both types of payment had run into huge arrears in the 1980s. Botswana used to be exceptional among African countries in that concentrated, ethnically fairly homogeneous towns comprising thousands of inhabitants have been a feature of pre-colonial society during the nineteenth century. But even the so-called 'tribal capitals', which under colonial indirect rule retained many of their pre-colonial functions, have continued to be regarded as rural and as a central part in the traditionalist self-image. Today, this self-image is very far from social reality. Not only have new towns emerged (including the country's two largest towns of Gaborone and Francistown, and mining towns like Selebi-Phikwe, Orapa and Jwaneng), but also have the tribal capitals by influx of immigrants and changes in their administrative and economic functions taken on more and more urban features in the ordinary sense. As a result, by 1990 more than 25% of the country's population could be said to live in an urban environment. The spread of wealth and modern amenities, by combined government and individual initiative, and facilitated by good roads and transport facilities and by the involvement of a considerable proportion of the population in circulation between urban and rural residences (for salaried employment, education, and rural production) both within Botswana and (to a decreasing extent) across its South African border, has meanwhile meant that (in terms of life style including modern mass consumption; patterns of kinship, residence and reproduction; and socio-cultural including religious orientation) traits which are commonly associated with the Southern African urban environment have begun to penetrate the rural scene and are rapidly transforming the latter. While this adds a relative note to the distinction between urban and rural in Botswana, the distinction certainly retains some value.

Through its popular support, through its symbols and ceremonies, its institutions, their legal basis, their personnel and material assets, the state generates and exercises massive power. But it is not the only institution in society to do so, and while part of the state's ideology is that it sees itself at the top of a pyramid of organization and control which theoretically encompasses the total society, in fact it often has to engage in interaction and negotiation with other foci of power which are generated in the local civil society and which, far from immediately and whole-heartedly giving in to the presumptions of state supremacy, engage the state in a complex and fascinating process of negotiation, legitimation, co-optation, challenge, manipulation, exploitation, conditional support, and whatever other options human politics may entail.[6]

By virtue of having internalized the ideals concerning statehood and consensus as sketched above, but perhaps primarily as a strategy aimed at perpetuating popular support and outside international acclaim and donor support, the Botswana state elite in its interaction with other, potentially rival foci of power

[6] For the impact of popular participation in such non-state foci upon the democratic process, *cf.* Shaw 1990 and references cited there.

outside the state, enters this game with a serious handicap: the more oppressive, openly undemocratic, violent options are largely barred. What remains is consultation; insistent and authoritarian persuasion; co-optation in exchange for substantial material and immaterial gains; a legalistic emphasis on laws, rules and procedures which because of the legal authority (in the Weberian sense; Weber 1969: 324 *f.*) they carry – in this highly literate and salariate society – seem to derive from an objective, impersonal source transcending individual and class power; the production and monopolizing of consensus-generating symbolism and discourses, *e.g.* in terms of development, the common good, the future, freedom, independence; and the adoption of such symbolic and ceremonial material as may already be available in the civil society, where it serves as condensation cores for the crystallization of non-statal power – images of parental authority derived from rural kinship patterns, of royal authority derived from traditional political authority (which has remained of considerable importance in Botswana); of communality, decency, purity and redemption as available in traditional and Christian religious idioms such as dominate in complex interplay the consciousness of the citizens of modern Botswana.

Christian churches are only one of the non-statal foci of power, along with chiefs, trade unions, traditional diviner priests and their organizations, other professional and recreational organizations, the specialists at symbolic production in such fields as literature, the arts, the university and the media, village elders, *etc*.

Viewed under this angle, the situation of the Independent churches in Botswana is part of the jigsaw puzzle sketched by the political scientist Picard:

> 'Much is made of the fact that Botswana is one of the few remaining multiparty [*sic*] states in Africa. Its formal pattern of political competition closely resembles that in North America and Western Europe and suggests a uniqueness to political developments in this small southern African country that is only partially warranted. Some academics and journalists focus on Botswana's "democracy" to an extent that borders on "Botswanaphilia," a pattern of infatuation not dissimilar to the "Tanzaphilia" of a decade ago.
>
> (...) What I am suggesting is the need to go beyond the formal assumptions of a multiparty [*sic*] political system in order to understand how the ruling BDP uses the advantages of its incumbency and the administrative mechanisms of the state to maintain its predominant political position within the country.' (Picard 1987: 172-173).[7]

A sophisticated study of the post-colonial state in Botswana would look not only at its formal organization, legal structure, class interests, structures of participation and decision in the sphere which is explicitly defined as that of politics, – it would also, and perhaps primarily, seek to study the processes of accommodation and confrontation between the state and non-statal foci.

Several dangers beset such a study. That of reification is perennial, and can only

[7] For related arguments, *cf.* Holm & Somolokae 1988; Molutsi 1988a, 1988b; Molutsi & Holm 1990.

be overcome once we realize that the state must be both a class instrument (the anti-reification antidote) and an expression of class-transcendent unity and legitimacy at the same time (the aspect which allows us to speak of 'the state' without having to apologize all the time for our reification). Another is that the presumptions of state power are so contagious that one is often tempted to view the non-statal foci as essentially secondary to the state, so that they could only be studied in a context of politics and state hegemony. Much of the social science of Africa in the 1980s can be reviewed in the light of this political overstatement, which fails to appreciate the relative autonomy of the non-statal foci as well as the potentially very different nature of their power and power bases, as compared with the state; at the same time such a review would reveal (*e.g.* by reference to the work of Bayart or Geschiere)[8] the tremendous heuristic power of precisely this overstatement. The most exciting and profound study of such actors as chiefs, diviners and mothers, or of such organizations as churches, or of such a diffuse cosmological and actional complex as sorcery, is not necessarily the one which concentrates on the ways all these non-statal elements in modern African society are captured by the state, or can be argued to challenge the state – for before we turn to the state we should try to understand the internal cultural and organizational logic of these non-statal elements. However, a state-centred approach is still much to be preferred to one which relegates the confrontation between the state and rival foci of power to mere pragmatic *issues* – *e.g.* (*cf.* Lagerwerf 1982: section 3.2) concern about African Independent leader's financial operations, possibly irresponsible healing methods, or alleged sexual debauchery – without making explicit that these foci by their very existence, and not just by these accidental issues which may be remedied, represent an alternative power the state cannot fail to respond to. Another danger is that of extrapolation on an insufficient empirical basis: while the social and historical sciences have considerable experience in the study of these non-statal foci, the subtleties of their interaction with the state often elude direct documentary or quantitative study, while insights gained from participant observation may be profound but difficult to generalize. A final danger lies in the temptation to jump to theoretical conclusions in a field were, due to the diffuse and transitory nature of the phenomena and the lack – as yet – of a common paradigmatic focus, enquiry is necessarily still exploratory.[9]

This sets the framework for the present study. It seeks to illuminate the interaction between one category of churches, African Independent ones, and the post-independent Botswana state. It does so with an emphasis on statistical and documentary data, as an expression of my growing conviction that theory is easier to supply, and to discard, than empirical data. Considering the wealth of penetrating case studies of, particularly, individual African Independent churches in Southern

[8] *Cf.* Bayart 1988; Geschiere 1986, 1990; for related discussions, *cf.* Doornbos 1990; Doornbos & van Binsbergen 2017; Rothchild & Chazan 1988.

[9] Of the latter danger, perhaps the insistence on African Independent churches' acquiescence *vis-à-vis* the state appears to form a case in point; *cf.* below, conclusion of the present chapter.

Africa, there is a need for quantitative overviews, even if for the time being these still have to be based on incomplete data. Churches in Southern Africa today exist in a complex, highly urbanized mass society, and in that context the rich and deep insights of the case study based on participant observation needs to be complemented (but, needless to say, can never be replaced by) statistical analysis which helps us to situate individual churches within broad societal patterns, and to appreciate the range of variation that exists.

The chapter consists of two main sections: an attempt to sketch a quantitative profile of these religious organizations where earlier accounts have been limited to more or less fragmentary case studies; and, once having cleared this ground, an assessment of these churches' specific interaction with the state in one particular locus which the state has created specifically for that purpose: the institution of the Registrar of Societies, as defined under the Botswana *Societies Act* of 1972.[10]

In the social-scientific and historical literature on Southern Africa, studies of churches have formed a prominent topic ever since Bengt Sundkler published his classic on *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (1949).[11] Such themes as social change in the subcontinent; its specific forms of labour migration, urbanization, participation in capitalist relations of production, and the growth of political protest; the African population's ideological and organizational responses to these processes in a fascinating variety of Christian and Christian-inspired idioms – primarily in the form of African Independent churches and the formulation of Black Theology and African Theology; the selective incorporation and transformation of historical religious forms in the context of Christianity; the confrontation, acquiescence and co-optation, as the case may be, between these religious forms and the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial and minority-regime states of the subcontinent – these various strands come together in what must be one of the world's most exciting regions for the study of the interaction between 'power' and 'prayer'.

[10] Laws of Botswana, chapter 18:01, Societies, Gaborone: Government Printer, 1/1977. Date of Commencement 9th June, 1972, pp. 1-14. Also in the same 1977 edition: S.I. 3, 1973: 'Societies Act, Registration of Societies Regulations (under section 33) (5th January, 1973): Arrangement of regulations', pp. A.1-3. And schedules (prescribed forms), notably Form A: 'Application for registration or exemption from registration of a society' (pp. A.4-5); Form B: 'Certificate of registration' (p. A.5); Form C: 'Certificate of exemption from registration' (p. A.6); Form D: 'Notification of rescission of exemption' (p. A.6); Form E: 'Notification of cancellation of registration' (p. A.6); Form F: 'Notice of change of a society's name or registered office or postal address, or change of constitution or rules, or variation of objects' (p. A.7-8); Form G: 'Notice of change of office-bearers' (p. A.9-10); Form H: 'Annual return' (p. A.10-11). And finally, on p. A.12: 'Second schedule (reg. 21) Prescribed Fees', setting application fee at P5.00, for search and examination of registers of registered societies at P0.25; of copy of or extract from any document in the custody of the Registrar, per folio of 100 words, P0.25; and certified true copy of or extract from any such document, per folio of 100 words, P0.50.

[11] From the voluminous literature, *e.g.* Bhebe 1979; Comaroff 1985; Daneel 1971, 1974, 1988; Fogelqvist 1988; Kiernan 1984, 1987; Oosthuizen 1968; Oosthuizen *et al.*1989; Schoffeleers 1988, 1991; Sundkler 1970, 1976; and references cited there.

The insistence on the 'African' element (in addition to 'Independent') in the designation of the category of religious organizations to be discussed in this chapter is more than perfunctory or redundant. Thus in my present research area, the Independent Church of Francistown is a mainstream Protestant body closely affiliated to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, and serving the religious and social needs of a few dozen Afrikaner families living on or hailing from freehold farms in the immediate surroundings of Francistown.[12] However worthy of respect and scholarly analysis, such a church falls outside our present scope – *not* because any somatic categorization (as ultimately implied in the term 'African', and in the distinctiveness of a church like the Independent Church of Francistown) would in itself be valid in social science analytical discourse, but *because such categorization, as employed by the participants of the local society, informs their own perceptions, choices and interactions to a very large degree* – as it does that of a very large (but hopefully declining) section of population of the Southern African subcontinent in general.

Much of the general concepts and emerging conclusions of this vast literature would seem to apply to Botswana which, however, in itself has only received a spotted coverage in this respect. When the present argument was conceived, no published academic study was available on mainstream, cosmopolitan[13] churches in that country. Independent churches in Botswana have received attention from such writers as Grant (1971; a study of conflict between chief and church in the tribal capital of Mochudi in the colonial period, Lagerwerf (1982; an exploratory study of women in selected independent churches), Werbner 1985 (reprinted 1989; a highly formal and abstract study contrasting three modes of imagery in Independent churches in Zimbabwe and Botswana), and Jean Comaroff (1985), who tries to situate the Zion Christian Church on both sides of the Botswana-South African border, among the Tshidi Barolong people, in terms of the processes of socio-economic and political change hinted at above. The all-pervading therapeutic dimension of the African Independent churches earned them a substantial discussion in Staugård's book on *Traditional Healers in Botswana* (1985), which however is necessarily limited by that author's uniquely medical concerns and frame of reference. Tshambani (1979) made an unpublished study of the Francistown Vapostori, and Parsons (1970) discussed Independency in the early colonial period. More passing references are available in such works as Schapera (1984) and Picard (1987: 126-128). In my

[12] Registrar of Societies, file H28/40/92: Independent Church of Francistown.

[13] By analogy with the more accepted term of cosmopolitan medicine, I use the term of cosmopolitan churches to denote Christian religious organizations which – however well established locally – by virtue of their name, doctrine and liturgy, internal organization, and their participation in international structures of representation and funding, clearly belong to well-established international and more typically intercontinental movements and bodies within the Christian faith. The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Dutch Reformed Church, Lutheran Churches, Baptist churches, the Jehova's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints *etc.* are cosmopolitan churches in terms of this definition. The distinction between church, sect and cult (Troeltsch 1931; Johnson 1966: 419 *f.*) – whose reference seems to be more specifically to denominational relations in North Atlantic society – cuts across this usage.

own work, based on field-work in Botswana's second largest town, Francistown, near the country's northeastern border with Zimbabwe, I am contrasting the therapeutic potential of the African Independent churches as active in that town, with that of the region's more explicitly 'traditional' religious forms (the Mwali cult – famous through the writings of Ranger, Daneel, Werbner and others[14] – and the mediumistic *sangoma* cult;[15] also I have sought to explain why even in a context saturated with ethnic conflict, like that of Francistown, the extent of ethnic reference in the local African Independent churches has remained at such a remarkably low level (van Binsbergen 1990b).

My argument in the present chapter situates itself at the national level of Botswana, and tries to arrive at a comprehensive view of that country's African Independent churches in their relation with the post-colonial state. Various complementary venues of enquiry would be open for such a project. One could look at patterns of mass mobilization, and trace mutually exclusive or overlapping participation of the people of Botswana in activities and organizations as defined, staffed and maintained by the state and the various churches respectively. Alternatively, one could spell out the explicit and implied world-views, the domains of symbolic associations and oppositions, as contained in the political and religious idioms proffered by the state and the churches; a necessary step in such an undertaking would be, of course, to ascertain the range of variation and the patterns and mechanisms of convergence, if any, between the various African Independent churches. A third approach, and the one on which I shall concentrate in this chapter, is to define a *locus of actual interaction* between the state and the African Independent churches, setting out the institutional framework for such interaction and tracing the process through which, within that framework but determined by it to only a limited degree, a political process evolves between state and African Independent churches as parallel and perhaps rival idioms and bodies of power in modern society.

Following in the footsteps of Leny Lagerwerf in her 1982 pioneering study, I believe to have identified such a focus in the office of, and in the legislation surrounding, the Botswana Registrar of Societies. Churches are societies in the sense of the *Societies Act* which was enacted in Botswana in 1972. As stated in the Societies Act, section 3:

> '(...)
> "society" includes any club, company, partnership or association of ten or more persons, whatever its nature or objects, but does not include –
> (a) any company as defined by the Companies Act (...)
> (b) any company or association constituted under any written law for the time being in force in Botswana;
> (c) any trade union registered under the Trade Unions Act.
> (d) any company, association or partnership consisting of not more than 20 persons, formed for the sole purpose of carrying on any lawful business;
> (e) any co-operative society, registered under the Co-operative Societies Act;

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[14] *Cf.* Werbner 1989; Ranger 1979, 1985a; Schoffeleers & Mwanza 1979; Daneel 1970; Mtutuki 1976; and references cited there.

[15] van Binsbergen 1990a (= chapter 4, above); also *cf.* 1991a and 1993a; 2003b: chs 5-8; 2015: ch. 3.

(f) any board of governors, local education authority, school committee or similar organization established under the Education Act;
(g) any building society registered under the Building Societies Act;
(h) any political party listed in the Schedule; or
(i) any society or class of society which the Minister may, by order published in the Gazette. declare not to be a society for the purpose of this Act.'

All churches operating within the Botswana are required to apply for registration or for exemption from registration as the case may be. In the process basic data on these societies are collected and stored in the Registrar of Societies' office in the Botswana capital of Gaborone, were they are in principle open to public consultation under the law (Societies Act, section 5b).

The juridical regime applying to churches in Botswana under the Societies Act (and this act is reminiscent of similar ones in operation throughout anglophone Africa) must be appreciated against the background of the constitutional provision for the 'protection of freedom of conscience', section II.11 of the constitution of Botswana (Republic of Botswana 1983a *etc*.):

'11 (1) Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section the said freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.'

The, fairly standard, limitative conditions stipulated further down in the same section provide the constitutional basis both for the Societies Act and for some of the general injunctions which the Registrar of Societies imposes on churches in the context of their registration:

'II.11.(5) Nothing contained in or done under the authority of any law shall be held to be inconsistent with or in contravention of this section to the extent that the law in question makes provision which is reasonably required–

(a) in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; or

(b) for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedoms of other persons, including the right to observe and practice any religion without the unsolicited intervention of members of any other religion,

and except in so far as that provision or, as the case may be, the thing done under the authority thereof is shown not to be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.'

It should be borne in mind, meanwhile, that state-church interaction in Botswana did not begin with the adoption of the Constitution or the Societies Act. The history of African Independent churches in Botswana – most of which remains to be written – has largely been the history of confrontation between these churches and the encapsulated neo-traditional tribal administrations seeking to uphold the monopoly of the one brand of cosmopolitan Christianity they had allowed within their territory, and considering church independency as an act of political subversion orientated not so much against the colonial

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state but against the *kgotla* (tribal headquarters). Even although the legal basis is now totally different, the Registrar of Societies unmistakably operates within the authoritarian and restrictive tradition of these colonial precedents.

National-level documentary evidence from that context will be used to augment, and put in the proper perspective, such inevitably limited observations and insights as I have derived from participation in Francistown African Independent churches since 1988. Meanwhile, the essentially qualitative (and therefore often fragmentary and arbitrary) approaches from documentary sources and participant observation[16] need to be backed by some quantitative argument, which helps to assess the scope of our object of study against the general background of Botswana society today. I would have wished that such a quantitative background were available from other sources. Now that this is not the case, the next section will be devoted to a preliminary quantitative analysis of churches in Botswana, and particularly African Independent churches.

Ever since David Barrett's *Schism and Renewal in Africa* (1968), which was based on statistical analyses most students of African Independency neither appreciated nor were in a position to check, quantitative approaches to this type of religious phenomena are regarded with a mixture of suspicion and amusement: 'one does not really want to suggest that anything meaningful and profound can come from counting, especially not in its modern form of computer cabbalism'. Yet in general, quantitative approaches have proved useful starting points in the sociology of religious organizations; but they should of course lead on to more penetrating qualitative approaches in which the dehumanizing effect of reducing religious subjects and their creations to mere entries in a data set, is overcome by a genuine encounter between human subjects, one of whom is the analyst.

5.2. Towards a quantitative profile of Botswana churches (a)

In the late 1960s, Barrett summarized the situation in Botswana with regard to African Independent churches in the following terms:

> 'Until recently most independent movements in Bechuanaland had originated in South Africa, being imported by migrant labourers from outside and by returning workers. Various types of prophet and Zionist churches flourished among the Bamangwato, Bakwena and the southern tribes; but few large tribal secessions of the type frequent elsewhere have occurred here. Soon after 1960, several new bodies arose in the north of the territory, being mainly healing sects of Zionist type. Although in 1966 [the year Botswana gained territorial independence] Independents [as members of a church type] in Botswana only numbered some ten thousand, their size and influence were growing daily.' (Barrett 1968: 24).

There is general agreement that in the past quarter of a century, African Independent churches in Botswana have seen a most remarkable growth. Yet it turns out to be difficult to measure that growth in concrete numerical terms. While

[16] Extensive quantitative data of churches were also collected as part of my social survey of Francistown.

studies like Werbner (1985) and Lagerwerf (1982) deal with categories of churches rather than with any one church in particular, I am not aware of any study which reliably and convincingly oversees the entire field on the basis of quantitative data.

5.2.1. The Registrar of Societies, other sources of data, and their analysis

What we have, in addition to qualitative analyses largely in the form of case studies, is a number of lists which together offer the crude data on which the following quantitative analysis is based.

Every year the Registrar of Societies is required to publish, in the official Government Gazette, a full list of all societies including churches which by 31st March of that year

(1) are registered,
(2) exempted from registration,
(3) have been cancelled in the course of the previous year, or
(4) are required to give proof of their existence.

The Registrar also keeps record of all societies' changes of name, constitution, objects, address, and officers, and of their audited accounts. Registered societies moreover are required to submit annual returns; this, together with greater restrictions on their initiative to change their name *etc*., constitutes the main distinction between registration and exemption from registration. The actual functioning of this administrative regime we shall examine in greater detail below; suffice it to say at this stage that the Registrar of Societies' office contains the main body of raw data on Botswana churches – cosmopolitan as well as African Independent and other.

In addition to the annual lists in the *Government Gazette*, these data have been made accessible by two researchers: the physician Staugård who included two nearly identical lists of 157 and 158 African Independent churches – with date of registration (Staugård's closing date is February 1984), number of members and location of headquarters – in publications on traditional healers in Botswana (Staugård 1985, 1986); and Fako, a researcher at Botswana's National Institute of Documentation and Research, who published a list of the registered churches of Botswana, with dates of registration, location of headquarters and number of congregations (Fako 1983). In 1983 the Central Statistical Office published part of the results of the 1981 national census in the form of a *Guide to the Villages and Towns of Botswana*, which for every locality in the country lists the names of the churches found there, if any (Republic of Botswana 1983b). Finally, Rev. Janson produced a list of the Spiritual Churches of Francistown, with their addresses. The advantage of the latter two sources is that they are not concerned with official registration, and allow us more than a glimpse of those Botswana

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churches which eluded the Registrar of Societies' attention.[17]

These various lists are presented by their authors without any analysis. When compared to each another they turn out to be strikingly inconsistent: the same church may be listed under several name variants (even within one and the same publication),[18] and different churches with similar names may be treated as one. Even when data collection for the lists was only one or two years apart[19] as is the case for the Fako and Staugård lists, there is an alarming lack of overlap between them:

		LISTED BY STAUGÅRD		
		yes	**no**	**total**
LISTED BY FAKO	**yes**	101	7	108
	no	36	89	125
	total	137	96	233

Table 5.1. Botswana African Independent churches as listed by Staugård (1986) and Fako (1983).

Note: Fako does not limit himself to African Independent churches but since Staugård does, only churches of that category have been included in this table.

Diligent comparison of the additional data provided on the churches (headquarters and year of registration), against the background of my participant observation among Francistown churches and of my perusal of a large number of files at the Registrar of Societies' office in 1990, enabled me to construct an aggregate list of 299 churches which I am satisfied existed as separate organizations at some point in time in the course of the 1980s. Entering such information as each list had to offer, and adding the data I collected personally, the result was a computerized data set which despite many missing cases on one or more variables, still allowed some initial quantitative analysis conducive to a comprehensive national-level profile, however tentative, of churches in Botswana. The fact that the data set spans a period of a decade means that, as an analytical construct, it includes, on the far edge, some churches which have since ceased to operate, and on the near edge, churches which have only emerged in the late 1980s.

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[17] Thus it is interesting to note that of the 56 African Independent churches from the 1981 Guide to the villages and towns of Botswana, which were ultimately included in my data set, only 22 were registered, 4 had seen their registration cancelled, and 30 had never been registered. While one appreciates the census officers' dedication to facts, one would not have been surprised had one found a different attitude, one leading to the suppression – at least in print – of the census evidence of non-registered churches.

[18] This is a feature even of the Registrar of Societies documents and official publications, which casts an interesting light on the legal professionalism of the functioning of that office.

[19] This period is so short that the emergence (and/or registration) of new churches and the disappearance (and/or cancellation of registration) of older churches can only very partially account for the discrepancies between the lists. According to my analysis as below, in 1982 18 new African Independent churches were registered in Botswana, and in 1983 only 1; while only with regard to 3 African Independent churches do I have evidence as to their cancellation in 1983. However, the discrepancy between Staugård's and Fako's list concerns 43 churches.

5.2.2. Types of churches, congregations and membership

I divided the churches in the data set into three broad categories: cosmopolitan churches (22 in the data set), African Independent churches (as many as 233), and a residual category of 7 churches which in terms of their organization, Southern African embeddedness and perception by the population might be mistaken to be African Independent churches, whereas in fact they belong to international organizations. The Apostolic Faith Church, founded half a century ago in the then Southern Rhodesia by European initiative, is a case in point. Regrettably 37 churches eluded the first classification according to type, and had to be treated as missing on this variable.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 65.849, DF= 2, P = 0.000
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	1028.891	2	514.446	9.523	0.000
WITHIN GROUPS	13018.662	241	54.019		

TYPE	cosmop	African Independent	other
NO CASES	21	216	7
MEAN	9.810	2.495	2.286

55 missing cases

Table 5.2. Testing the hypothesis: 'The various types of churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their number of congregations is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected

With regard to membership the 233 African Independent churches in the list range from 20 members, for an incipient church, to 10,700 for the wide-spread Zion Christian Church. Membership of the cosmopolitan churches is incompletely reflected in the data set but presumably could at a later stage be gleaned from other more or less accessible sources, *e.g.* the Christian Council of Botswana. The median church membership of the African Independent churches stands at 235 members, while their mean membership is 772.

Type and number of congregations. There is (Table 5.2) a statistically significant difference between the various types of churches as to their number of congregations within Botswana: against an average of nearly 10 congregations for the cosmopolitan churches, African Independent church on the average have between 2 and 3 congregations, and other churches just over 2.[20] Among the African Independent churches, the number of congregations ranges from 1 (the standard situation, found among 78%[21]), via 2 congregations (10%), to 68 for, again, the ZCC.

Membership of congregations in African Independent churches. These figures mean that the average congregation membership in the African Independent churches would stand as high as 310 members. On the basis of my participant observation in Francistown I would think that this is too generous an estimate when we interpret it in terms of actual attendance; it is likely that membership claimed in the annual returns to the Registrarof

[20] TYPE denotes one of the variables used in the analysis; a discussion of the various variable names c.q. abbreviations appears below, in the factor analysis section 5.3.2.

[21] Considering the relatively poor nature of the data available, percentages will be rounded to the nearest integer.

Societies (whence Staugård's figures on membership derive) includes not only an active core who participates in church life on a week-to-week or even more frequent basis, but also a diffuse halo of less active members who refer to the church activities only when they specifically need the healing practices which the church is offering. But since statistics on churches of other types, and internationally, would seldom appear to be restricted to the active core this probable over-estimate need not greatly concern us.

Urban and rural distribution of congregations. The African Independent churches in our data set together have 300 urban congregations (of which 11 urban congregations belong to the largest church of this type, the ZCC), and 280 rural congregations (of which as many as 57 belong to the ZCC again). Considering that at the time the data were collected c. 25% of the Botswana population lived in urban settings as discussed above, this points very strongly to the urban slant in Independency in that country.

Presence of African Independent churches among the Botswana population. With some sleight of hand we might even stretch the data to arrive at estimates of the presence of African Independent churches among the Botswana population. The 233 churches of this type in our sample span the entire decade of the 1980s, and include churches which may have disappeared in the early 1980s as well as churches which only emerged in the late 1980s. Since there is no reason to assume that the rapid increase of Independency in Botswana has come to a halt, it is likely that more churches emerged in the 1980s than disappeared; moreover, since it takes some time before African Independent churches catch the attention of the sort of formal bureaucratic bodies from which most of our data set derives, it is most likely that a considerable number of recently emerged African Independent churches has in fact not been included in our data set. In other words, even although our aggregate collection of 233 specific churches at no moment in the 1980s represented the unique set of the churches of that type then actually in existence, the number of 233 can be considered a conservative estimate of the actual number of African Independent churches actually in operation in Botswana. Since our best estimate of the membership of each of these churches is the average value of 772 members (precisely: 772.225), we can estimate the total membership of this churches in 1985 (the middle of the entire decade spanned) at 180,000 members (233 x 772.225 = 179,928.42). For that year the total population of Botswana was estimated to be 1,131,700 (Republic of Botswana 1986: 9). The membership of the African Independent churches would be an estimated 16% of the entire national population. While this is a most significant number in itself, we have to take into account that very few people qualify for membership of these churches before their late teens. In 1985, the estimated Botswana population 15 years of age and above was put at 51.8% of the total population; of this more or less adult age cohort, the membership of the African Independent churches amounted to as much as 31%. Therefore, according to my estimates nearly one out of every three adults in Botswana could be counted as a member of an African Independent church. What matters with such estimates is their order of magnitude, not the precise figure. The estimate figure becomes even more impressive when we contrast it with that of a mere ten thousand adherents (not even 6% of the present number) as mentioned by

Barrett for the mid-1960s, and by that time only about 4% of the country's population (aged 15 years and older).

5.2.3. The urban / rural dimension in Botswana churches

Rural presence. Considering the huge expanse of the Botswana countryside, and its population's extensive exposure to and participation in the outside world for over a century, it is to be expected that the range of number of rural congregations of the churches in our data set is considerable: its maximum lies at 61, again for ZCC. In the data set, 80 churches have one rural congregation – this often being a particular church's only congregation. The important point however is that many churches (as many as 168) have no rural congregations at all, while only 65 churches have only rural congregations and no urban congregations.

Church type and number of congregations in urban and rural areas. There is a statistically significant difference between the three types of churches as to number of urban congregations, as well as rural congregations. In both environments cosmopolitan churches have far more congregations than the African Independents and the others, which do not greatly differ from each other.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES[22]: CHI-SQUARE = 23.282, DF= 2, P = 0.000
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	81.383	2	40.691	11.118	0.000
WITHIN GROUPS	874.704 239	3.660			

TYPE	cosmop	African Independent	other
NO CASES	21	214	7
MEAN	3.333	1.290	1.000

57 missing cases

Table 5.3. Testing the hypothesis: 'The three types of urban churches in Botswana belong to the same population as far as their number of congregations is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 86.948, DF= 2, P = 0.000
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	533.455	2	266.727	7.359	.001
WITHIN GROUPS	8771.745 242	36.247			

TYPE	cosmop	African Independent	other
NO CASES	21	217	7
MEAN	6.476	1.203	1.286

54 missing cases

Table 5.4. Testing the hypothesis: 'The three types of rural churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their number of congregations is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

[22] The Bartlett test for homogeneity of group variances is a common method to assess whether a number of different samples have equal variances; for extensive discussions, and mathematical formulae, *cf.* Snedecor & Cochran 1989; NIST / SEMATECH s.v. '1.3.5.7. Bartlett's test'. Further *cf.* Freund & Wilson 2003.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 1.124, DF= 2, P = .570
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	0.070	2	0.035	.190	.827
WITHIN GROUPS	43.989 239	0.184			

TYPE	cosmop	African Independent	other
NO CASES	21	214	7
MEAN	.715	.664	.614

57 missing cases

Table 5.5. Testing the hypothesis: 'The three types of *urban churches* in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their 'degree of urbanity' is concerned'; the hypothesis is confirmed

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 1.124, DF= 2, P = .570
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	0.070	2	0.035	.190	.827
WITHIN GROUPS	43.989 239	0.184			

TYPE	cosmop	African Independent	other
NO CASES	21	214	7
MEAN	.285	.336	.386

57 missing cases

Table 5.6. Testing the hypothesis: 'The three types of *churches* in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their 'degree of urbanity' is concerned'; the hypothesis is confirmed.

Urban orientation. If we limit ourselves to the African Independent churches the relative urban bias in Botswana churches is again manifest: 55 African Independent churches have no urban congregation (while 159 have one or more), while 128 African Independent churches have no rural congregation (while only 89 have one or more). One could construct a simple scale of a church's 'urbanity': the number of its urban congregations expressed as a fraction of its total number of congregations; this scale of course runs from 0 to 1, and for the African Independent churches its mean lies well above .5, notably at .66; its median lies even at 1, since 58% of the African Independent churches in the data set boast an 'urbanity' score of 1. For reasons of simple arithmetic, the 'rurality' score is the mirror-image of the 'urbanity score. In interpreting this urban slant of the Botswana churches and particularly of the African Independent ones among them, it is important to appreciate that we are dealing with *relative* differences here between town and countryside – and in the light of the general discussion of Botswana above nothing else could be expected. Therefore it is little amazing that with regard to scores on these 'urbanity' and 'rurality' scales the three types of churches do not differ significantly from each other.

5.2.4. Bureaucratic incapsulation quantified: Churches and the Registrar of Societies

Since our argument in the second part of this chapter will concentrate on the Registrar of Society as the institutional locus where the interaction between the state and the African Independent churches in Botswana takes place, let us look at the information that analysis of our data set has to offer on this point.

Relative aloofness of churches vis-à-vis the Registrar of Societies. First an impression relating to one particular point in time: the Registrar of Societies' list of societies for 31st March, 1990. Of the 299 churches in out data set, 13 (4%) were exempted, 181 (61%) were registered according to the 1990 list, 3 (1%) were required to give proof of their existence, 1 (0%) saw its registration cancelled, and as many as 101 (34%) do not appear at all on the 1990 list under whatever heading. *In other words, out of early three hundred churches known to have existed in the 1980s, more than one third was out of the scope of the Registrar of Societies' attention by 1990: either because they had never been registered nor exempted, or because they had been cancelled earlier on and by 1990 were supposed to be no longer in existence.* For the African Independent churches alone these figures are very similar: 1 (0%) were exempted, 145 (62%) were registered according to the 1990 list, 3 (1%) were required to give proof of their existence, 1 (0%) saw its registration cancelled, and 83 (37%) do not appear at all on.

Registration status. Overlooking the entire period of the 1980s, we find that of the 299 churches in our data set (and with the limited information at our disposal) at least 13 (4%) were exempted, 181 (61%) were registered at some point in time and remained that way, at least 3 (1%) were required to give proof of existence, as many as 55 (18%) churches were registered and then later saw their registration cancelled, and 47 (16%) churches were never registered in the first place.

Registration status and type of church. A breakdown by type of church is offered by Table 5.7:

		TYPE OF CHURCH			
		cosmo -pol.	African Independ- ent	other	total
REGISTRATION STATUS	**exempted**	11	1	0	12
	registered	9	145	6	160
	give proof of existence	0	3	0	3
	cancelled	2	43	1	46
	never registered	0	41	0	41
	total	22	233	7	262

37 missing cases

Table 5.7. Registration status by type of church.

Table 5.7 shows that the exempted churches were almost exclusively found among the cosmopolitan ones; that the few churches required to give proof of existence were all African Independent ones; that virtually all churches which saw their registration cancelled were African Independent churches; and that the churches which were never registered are all African Independent ones. This suggest that with regard to bureaucratic treatment the three types of churches are significantly different; statistical analysis confirms this impression. Clearly, the Societies Act is used by the state to extend its control specifically over African Independent churches, while cosmopolitan and 'other' churches are largely left to themselves.

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KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR 299 CASES
DEPENDENT VARIABLE IS: RIG; GROUPING VARIABLE IS: TYPE

GROUP	COUNT	RANK SUM	MEAN RANK
**********	22	1463.0	66.50
**********	233	36666.0	157.36
2.000	7	849.0	121.28

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST STATISTIC = 326.45
PROBABILITY = .000 ASSUMING CHI-SQUARE DISTRIBUTION WITH 2 DF; 37 missing cases

Table 5.8. Testing the hypothesis: 'The three types of churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their bureaucratic treatment is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

The time dimension in registration. Registration went on at a considerable pace in the course of the years, as is clear from Table 5.9. After an understandable clutter in the first few years after the enactment of the Societies Act, registration dropped to a slower pace in the late 1970s, to pick up again in the early 1980s and settle to roughly 10 registrations per year in the second half of that decade. Further statistical analysis reveals that the three types of churches differ significantly as to year of registration: cosmopolitan churches were on the average registered in mid-1977, African Independent churches in mid-1980, and other churches in the spring of 1982.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES, CHI-SQUARE =.940, DF= 2,P = .625
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	212.494	2	106.247	3.764	.025
WITHIN GROUPS	6126.101 217	28.231			

TYPE	cosmop	African Independent	other
NO CASES	22	191	7
MEAN	76.5	79.555	81.286

79 missing cases

Table 5.9. Testing the hypothesis: 'The three types of churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as the period elapsed since their year of regiostration is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

No statistical evidence of bureaucratic reluctance, on the part of the Registrar, to register African Independent churches. The percentage of African Independent churches registered (Table 5.8) remained fairly constant over the years and reflects the 78% percent African Independent churches in the data set (and presumably a similar percentage in Botswana social reality). In other words, there is no evidence that the Registrar of Societies has undergone a change in his being prepared to register African Independent churches. However, within the category of African Independent churches there are statistically significant differences as to registration.

Registration status and number of congregations. When we look at our total data set of 299 churches, lumping the three types of churches together, statistical analysis reveals that there is a significant association between a church's registration status and the number of its congregations: the exempted churches have by far the largest number of congregations, followed by the few churches which have to give proof of their existence, after which come the registered

churches, those which saw their registration cancelled, and those which never cancelled, in that order. Conspicuity *vis-à-vis* the state may constitute the underlying explanatory factor.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 298.847, DF= 4, P = .000
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	2241.982	4	560.495	12.848	0.000
WITHIN GROUPS	12040.730 276	43.626			

REG	exempt	reg	proof?	canc	never
cases	13	168	3	52	45
MEAN	15.462	2.714	5.000	2.154	1.111

18 missing cases

Table 5.10. Testing the hypothesis: 'The registration status of churches in Botswana (as exempted, registered, *etc*.) belong to one and the same population as far as *number of congregations* is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

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	number of churches registered	**% of churches registered in this year, of total registered in entire period**	**number of African Independent churches registered**	**% of African Independent churches registered in this year, of total registered in entire period**
1966[23]	1	.4	0	0
1969	2	.8	1	50
1970	1	.4	0	0
1972	2	.8	2	100
1973	26	10.4	17	65
1974	37	14.8	26	70
1975	28	11.2	23	82
1976	9	3.6	6	67
1977	5	2.0	3	60
1978	3	1.2	3	100
1979	25	10.0	20	80
1980	10	4.0	7	70
1981	19	7.6	16	79
1982	20	8.0	18	90
1983	1	.4	1	100
1984-1990[24]	61	24.4	48	79

[23] The Societies Act has only been in operation since 1972, which renders the data referring to earlier years than 1972 problematic.

[24] At this stage in the analysis, churches registered between 1984 and 1990 are identified by comparing the Fako (1983), Staugård (1986) and Registrar of Societies 1990 list; subsequent perusal of back volumes of the Government Gazette may yield the specific years and might also lead to a slight correction of the figure of 61 as registered in this period.

total	250	100	191	76

49 missing cases (*i.e.* 47 churches for which we have established that they have never been registered, and 2 'genuinely' missing cases)

Table 5.11. Registration of Botswana churches per year.

Registration status and number of urban congregations. Lumping the three types of churches together, statistical analysis reveals that there is a significant association between a church's registration status and its number of *urban* congregations: the exempted churches have by far the highest score, followed by the three clustering types of registered churches, churches which have to give proof of their existence, and those which saw their registration cancelled, while those which never cancelled have the lowest number of urban congregations. The same relation holds between registration status and number of rural congregations.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES, CHI-SQUARE = 65.051, DF= 4, P = 0.000
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	161.746	4	40.436	13.149	0.000
WITHIN GROUPS	842.641 274	3.075			

REG	exempt	reg	proof?	canc	never
cases	13	167	3	52	44
MEAN	4.615	1.467	1.333	1.173	.659

20 missing cases

Table 5.12. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*) the churches of Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as number of *urban congregations* is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 291.440, DF= 4, P = .000
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	1223.308	4	305.827	10.353	0.000
WITHIN GROUPS	8182.837 277	29.541			

REG	exempt	reg	proof?	canc	never
cases	13	170	3	52	44
MEAN	10.846	1.235	3.667	.981	.455

17 missing cases

Table 5.13. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*) the churches of Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as number of *rural congregations* is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

Urban orientation and registration status. Since exempted churches (meanly cosmopolitan ones) tend to have more urban congregations but especially more rural congregations than the other registration categories, it is clear that it is

[25] *Cf.* Kerven 1977; Mogotsi 1983; Mupindu 1983; Schapera 1943, 1971; Tapela 1976, 1982; Werbner 1970, 1971.

the size, rather than the urban / rural aspect, that is involved here. That is again confirmed by statistical analysis of the relationship between the 'urbanity' score and registration status; there is a significant relationship, but now it is the registered churches (largely the African Independent ones) which have the highest 'urbanism' score, followed by a cluster comprising exempted, cancelled and never-registered churches, while this time the line is closed by churches whose existence is doubted by the Registrar of Societies. Of course, the 'rurality' score presents the mirror image of these findings.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 7.158, DF= 4, P = .128

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	2.860	4	0.715	4.143	.003
WITHIN GROUPS	47.286 274	0.173			

REG	exempt	reg	doubt	canc	never
cases	13	167	3	52	44
MEAN	.580	.749	.103	.593	.568

20 missing cases

Table 5.14. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status(as exempted, registered, *etc.*), the churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their degree of 'urbanity' is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 7.158, DF= 4, P = .128
20 missing cases

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	2.860	4	0.715	4.143	.003
WITHIN GROUPS	47.286 274	0.173			

REG	exempt	reg	proof?	canc	never
cases	13	167	3	52	44
MEAN	.420	.251	.897	.407	.432

Table 5.15. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status, the churches in Botswana (as exempted, registered, *etc.*) belong to one and the same population as far as their degree of 'rurality' is concerned'; the hypothesis is rejected.

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Cancellation of registration. The data only offer information on cancellation of registration in the 1980s; it is not clear whether such action was already taken in the 1970s, after the Societies Act had only been enacted in 1972. Of the 299 churches in the data set, 11 saw their registration cancelled in 1983, 43 between 1984 and 1990, and 1 in 1990. These churches had been registered for a period ranging from 4 to 15 years, with a mean duration of 9.5 years and a median value of 9 years. In other words, churches which saw their registration cancelled appear to have had ample opportunity to consolidate themselves and live up to the requirements for continued registration; considering the costs of the registration process both on the sides of the churches (time, travelling, correspondence, lawyers) and on the side of the Registrar of Societies (time, corre-

spondence), it is to be expected that churches are neither registered nor cancelled lightly; all the more amazing that in a decade yet as many as 55 (mainly African Independent ones met that fate.

5.3. Towards a quantitative profile of Botswana churches (b)

5.3.1. Aspects of registration among the African Independent churches.

When the preceding analyses are repeated for our 233 African Independent churches only, the following patterns become discernible:

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST ON 'MEMBERS' GROUPED BY 'REG'

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD
1.000	77	979.013	1916.456
4.000	33	251.061	355.683

SEPARATE VARIANCES T = 3.207 DF = 87.4 P = .002
POOLED VARIANCES T = 2.161 DF = 108 P = .033
123 missing cases

Table 5.16. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status, the African Independent churches in Botswana (as exempted, registered, *etc.*) belong to one and the same population as far as the size of their membership is concerned; the hypothesis is rejected.

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST ON 'YEARREG' GROUPED BY 'REG'

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD
1.000	144	80.319	5.401
4.000	43	76.930	3.173

SEPARATE VARIANCES T = 5.129 DF = 119.8 P =0.000
POOLED VARIANCES T = 3.914 DF = 185 P =0.000
46 missing cases

Table 5.17.Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status, the African Independent churches in Botswana (as exempted, registered, *etc.*) belong to one and the same population as far as the period elapsed since their year of registration; the hypothesis is rejected.

Membership and year of registration. With regard to membership and year of registration the relatively poor quality of the data only allow us to contrast two registration categories: the registered churches and those which saw their registration cancelled; within this narrow framework, *there turns out to be a statistically significant association between registration status and size of church membership*: the registered African Independent churches tend to be much larger than the cancelled ones. That the registered African Independent churches also have a significantly later date of registration than those which saw their registration cancelled appears to be a different problem: if we look at registration, and subsequent cancellation of registration, as a cycle into which an increasing number of African Independent churches are drawn in their contact with the Registrar of Societies, it is clear that those churches which were registered at an earlier also have the greatest chance of having already reached

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the later stage of that cycle, *i.e.* cancellation.

Registration status and number of congregations: total, urban and rural. Among the African Independent Churches, there is no longer a statistically significant association between number of congregations, and registration status. The relationship between number of urban congregations and registration status is still statistically significant, now highlighting particularly the difference between registered and never-registered churches, with the cancelled churches somewhere in between. However, with regard to number of rural congregations, registration status no longer makes a difference.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES, CHI-SQUARE = 203.155, DF= 2, P = .000

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	98.204	2	49.102	1.405	.248
WITHIN GROUPS	7303.267 209	34.944			

REG	reg	canc	never
NO CASES	133	40	39
MEAN	2.887	2.100	1.128

21 missing cases

Table 5.18. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*), the African Independent Churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their number of congregations is concerned; the hypothesis is confirmed.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 44.606, DF= 2, P = 0.000

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	20.269	2	10.135	3.455	.033
WITHIN GROUPS	607.259 207	2.934			

REG	reg	canc	never
NO CASES	132	40	38
MEAN	1.477	1.175	.658

23 missing cases

Table 5.19. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*), the African Independent Churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their number of urban congregations is concerned; the hypothesis is rejected.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 176.207, DF= 2, P = .000

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	27.333	2	13.667	.640	.528
WITHIN GROUPS	4482.441	210	21.345		

REG	reg	canc	never
NO CASES	135	40	38
MEAN	1.393	.925	.474

18 missing cases

Table 5.20. Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*), the African Independent Churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their number of rural congregations is concerned; the hypothesis is confirmed.

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Registration status and urban orientation. Registration status and 'urbanity' of the African Independent churches is again significantly associated: the registered churches score highest, followed by the cancelled ones, while the never-registered churches close the line. With regard to the 'rurality' scale this pattern is of course identical but reversed.

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 3.246, DF= 2, P = .197

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	1.185	2	0.593	3.265	.040
WITHIN GROUPS	37.581	207	0.182		

REG	reg	canc	never reg
NO CASES	132	40	38
MEAN	.73	.6	.553

23 missing cases

Table 5.21.Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*), the African Independent Churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their degree of 'urbanity' is concerned; the hypothesis is rejected

BARTLETT TEST FOR HOMOGENEITY OF GROUP VARIANCES: CHI-SQUARE = 3.246, DF= 2, P = .197

	ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
BETWEEN GROUPS	1.185	2	0.593	3.265	.040
WITHIN GROUPS	37.581	207	0.182		

REG	reg	canc	never reg
NO CASES	132	40	38
MEAN	.27	.4	.447

23 missing cases

Table 5.22.Testing the hypothesis: 'In terms of their registration status (as exempted, registered, *etc.*), the African Independent Churches in Botswana belong to one and the same population as far as their degree of 'rurality' is concerned; the hypothesis is (barely) rejected.

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5.3.2. Factor analysis of the variables in the data set (for African Independent churches only)

The above results show the same few variables from a number of complementary points of view. It is useful to attempt to arrive at a more comprehensive view. Factor analysis constitutes a powerful statistical technique that allows us to reduce the number of variables in a data set and to identify underlying factors which may in complex ways influence the behaviour of the surface variables and their interaction. For instance, if churches would tend to register immediately after emergence, and if churches would tend to grow at the same rate, then any association found between date of registration and church size would have to be attributed to an underlying factor 'date of origin', not directly measured in the data collection. Factor analysis upon the variables in the data set would mathematically construct such a factor, calculate the 'loading' (between -1 and +1) of

each surface variable upon that still anonymous factor, and allow us to suggest (*e.g.* as 'date of origin) its nature. For students of African divination this technique is easy to understand, inspiring, and exhilarating.

Factor analysis upon the variables in our data set comes up against the relatively poor quality of the data: the correlation matrix on which the analysis is based is only meaningful if missing cases have been deleted 'listwise', *i.e.* if a missing value on only one of the variables leads to exclusion of that case from the entire analysis. One strategy is to exclude variables with many missing cases from the analysis, thus reducing but not invalidating the matrix. Not only quality of the data collection but also the specific design of the analysis is involved here: *e.g.* churches which were never registered will inevitably show a missing value on the variable 'year of registration' regardless of the quality of the data. After some trial and error I limited my analysis to the African Independent churches in the data set, basing it on 13 variables and 93 cases which had no missing values on any of these variables. Most of these variables have been discussed above; some however particularly refer to Francistown: measuring a church's presence (at the congregation and headquarters level) in that town and in the rural region which surrounds it, and contrasting that information with other towns and other rural areas in Botswana. In view of the national-level focus in this chapter findings relating to these variables have not been presented here, but the variables as such are part of the data set and can help to highlight such underlying factors as it contains. Finally, either of the pair of variables 'urbanity' and 'rurality' had to be omitted in order to avoid problems of multicollinearity: spurious results due to the confusion of deliberately constructed arithmetical relations between variables on the one hand, and stochastic association on the other.

Factor analysis yielded the results presented in Table 5.23. The rotation method used is known as *varimax*. The criterion eigenvalue for retention of factors was set at .9; 1.0 would have been more elegant, statistically, but would have sacrificed the important fourth factor. The following abbreviations have been used for the names of variables: NOBRANCH, number of branches; URBELS, number of urban branches in Botswana outside Francistown; URBRA, total number of urban branches in Botswana; RURBRA, total number of rural branches in Botswana; RURELS, number of rural branches in Botswana outside the Francistown region; RURFT, number of rural branches in the Francistown region; MEMBERS, membership; YEARREG, year of registration; CHUFT, does this church occur with at least one urban or rural branch in the Francistown region?; HQFT, does this church have its headquarters in Francistown?; URBFT, does this church have an urban branch in Francistown?; URBANITY, number of urban branches as fraction of total number of branches; RIG is a slightly modified form of the variable REG = registration status. With the exception of RIG, all these variables have been measured on an interval or a dichotomous nominal scale, which justifies their inclusion in the matrix. RIG measures a church's positive interaction with the Registrar of Societies on an ordinal scale, from 'exemption' (1), via 'registration' (2), 'doubt / has to give proof of existence' (3) and 'registration cancelled' (4) to 'never registered' (5); strictly speaking such an ordinal variable does not belong in a factor analysis matrix, but the intuitive

conceptual unilinearity of the scale, and the variable's behaviour in the analysis once entered, yet would appear to justify its inclusion.

The four rotated factors together explain more than five sixth (83.619%) of the variance in the data set for African Independent churches, which is a very high percentage. The nice grouping of the variables with regard to their loadings on the factors makes it rather easy to interpret them, as in the next Table:

Church size. Factor 1 clearly amounts to an overall factor *church size*, as directly reflected in a church's number of total, rural and urban congregations, and its membership. It is noteworthy that also year of registration should have a significant loading on this factor: the larger the size of an African Independent church, the earlier its date of registration. Pending the collection of further data on churches' dates of origin and rates of growth, we might suggest various interpretations for this association: considering the truly exponential growth of Independent Churches in Botswana over the past quarter of a century, older churches have had more time to grow large. And, as a complementary explanation, larger churches are more conspicuous, cannot escape the Registrar of Societies' attention, and also have specific problems (the acquisition of building plots, conflicts over movable and immovable property in case of church schisms, the organization of raffles, *etc.*) for which registration is required and is positively sought by them; in the light of the latter explanation it might even be said that registration is a precondition for African Independent churches to grow large in the first place. The fact that the loading of the registration date on factor 1 is relatively slight suggests that factor 1 primarily measures numbers of people, and not (contrary to my example when introducing factor analysis) a time dimension concealed by membership figures which might increase over the years merely as a function of time.

original variable	ROTATED LOADINGS			
	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4
	interpretation of this factor (see main text)			
	church size	*Francistown bias*	*rural orientation / urban orientation*	*bureaucratic recognition*
NOBRANCH	**0.974**	0.146	0.107	0.036
URBELS	**0.936**	0.005	-0.180	0.029
URBRA	**0.925**	0.185	-0.206	0.046
RURBRA	**0.924**	0.107	0.309	0.027
RURELS	**0.889**	-0.007	0.299	0.012
RURFT	**0.736**	0.333	0.241	0.052
MEMBERS	**0.690**	0.142	0.034	0.319
YEARREG	**-0.594**	0.004	0.232	0.147
CHUFT	-0.297	**-0.923**	-0.028	0.011
HQFT	0.237	**-0.890**	-0.155	0.053
URBFT	0.360	**0.809**	-0.192	0.092
URBANITY	-0.081	-0.015	**-0.931**	0.097
RIG	-0.044	0.011	0.091	**-0.961**
VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY ROTATED COMPONENTS	5.977	2.497	1.322	1.075
PERCENT OF TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED	45.979	19.208	10.166	8.266

Table 5.23. Factor analysis on the data set: African Independent churches only

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(high loadings in **<u>bold underlined</u>**).

Francistown bias. Factor 2 seems to reflect little else than the inevitable *Francistown bias* in my data: although the majority of data also for cancelled and never-registered churches derive from other parts of the country, intensive field-work in one particular town and region fortunately cannot fail to yield data of a precision and scope not available from national-level bureaucracies and surveys. Meanwhile it remains remotely possible that, apart from the data collection factor, Francistown is genuinely exceptional with regard to Botswana Independency, as it has been with another type of Botswana voluntary associations: political parties. In a country whose Protectorate status largely reduced it to a remote labour reserve far away from direct confrontation with capitalist relations of production, Francistown has a unique history of capitalist encroachment and exploitation (through the early mines, the massive passage of labour migrants from all over Southern Africa, and the iron rule of the Tati Company which for almost a century monopolized and alienated land, agricultural production and trade in the Francistown region).[25] It is no accident that most political movements in Botswana originated in this town. It was also (*cf.* Lagerwerf 1982; Chirenje 1977) the first place for African Independent churches to become active, in the beginning of the twentieth century. However, any specific Francistown factor that cannot be relegated to the Francistown bias in my data collection can only be identified once we are satisfied that for other parts of Botswana data have been collected of the same overall quality as for Francistown. It is perhaps regrettable that the Francistown bias in my data seems to be responsible for 20% of the variance in the data set; on the other hand, we are lucky that that factor has been made explicit, and that it leaves more than 80% of the variance to be explained in more systematic terms.

Factor 3: Rural orientation and its complement, urban orientation. That it is not the urban nature as such of the Francistown environment that is involved in Factor 2, is clear from the minimal loading of the 'urbanity' variable on this factor. Factor 3 meanwhile is largely confined to this variable, and therefore should be taken to measure the *rural orientation* of the African Independent churches in the data set: when 'urbanity' is high, Factor 3 (because of its negative sign) is low.

Factor 4: Bureaucratic recognition. The last factor which was sufficiently powerful to be retained in the analysis is Factor 4, which again has a significant loading for only one variable: RIG; when RIG is low (when the church is registered, or better still exempted), Factor 4 is high, and it can be said to measure the degree of positive interaction with the Registrar of Societies' office, or let us say *bureaucratic recognition*.

It is important to realize that, as mathematical constructs, these four factors have been computed to be be mutually uncorrelated and irreducible. In other words, while the factor analysis identifies

(1) *church size,*
(2) *rural orientation and*
(3) *bureaucratic recognition*

as major dimensions along which any African Independent church in Botswana can be located in our data set and hopefully in social reality too, such statistical associations between these dimensions as we may find in the present data set will remain slight: the factor analysis implies that in principle these factors are independent.

5.4. Pastors and bureaucrats: qualitative aspects of church-state interaction in the context of the Botswana Societies Act

The quantitative analysis, however tedious and preliminary, has offered us at least a basic profile of the Botswana African Independent churches: their large number; their range of membership with the general tendency towards small especially urban churches of only one congregation; some elements of comparison with regard to cosmopolitan and other churches in the country; and their behaviour in the face of the Societies Act. The figures cited (233 African Independent churches having on the average fewer than 800 members each) show the extreme *organizational fragmentation* of these religious organizations, which certainly invites analysis (*e.g.* in terms of leader's ritual and organizational entrepreneurship, and of group dynamics among the adherents) but does not in itself preclude the convergence of these many differently named churches in matters of theology, liturgy, healing, functioning in the wider society (their co-operation at funerals is particularly manifest) and perception by the general public. One very important finding is that *the Botswana state does not have a total grip on these churches*: dozens of them were never registered yet function on a modest scale; a similar number saw their registration cancelled yet some of these, too, can be assumed to continue functioning outside the law.

Let us now turn to a qualitative analysis of actual interaction between state and African Independent churches.

- Given the authoritarian, populist consensuality of the Botswana state, the idiom of *co-optation* should little surprise us and will be discussed first. Co-optation can be seen as one of the possible strategies to contain and control, rather than offensively prohibit and ban, organizational foci in the civil society rival to the state. We shall see how it functions even with regard to ethnic issues which in Botswana may not create quite the same level of disruption as in many other post-colonial African states but which still are far more prominent than an inspection of the social-science literature on the country would suggest (*cf.* van Binsbergen 1994d, 1994e.
- A more obtrusive strategy, which is deeply embedded in the Societies

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Act and the institutions it has created, is that of the *imposition of a formal bureaucratic logic* upon the churches. This is clearly a form of state encroachment, but one which could also be seen as an essential service rendered by the state, in the interest of church adherents who have no positions of power in their organisation, and offering outside venues for arbitration and protection of interests. The peculiar impact, of this bureaucratic streamlining, on church nomenclature will be briefly discussed. Also we shall pinpoint some of the numerous cases of *bureaucratic overkill*, when the Registrar of Societies, not by virtue of any specific legislation but simply tempted to ride his own hobby horses and make the churches feel the extent of state power, imposes demands upon the churches which run so much counter to their doctrine, liturgy and general orientation that they have to present an official bureaucratic front, a compromise to bureaucratic discourse, which may greatly deviate from actual church practice.

- Finally, the case of the wealthy and powerful Guta ra Mwari church shows us where this may lead: to the limits to effective and positive state intervention in the internal affairs of churches. The bureaucratic forms imposed under the Societies Act become mere empty shells, and the state's relative powerlessness *vis-à-vis* the symbolic, financial and physical power generated in that church is only too manifest.

5.4.1. Co-optation and the use of a non-statal idiom circulating in the civil society

We have said that co-optation and the use of a non-statal idiom circulating in the civil society (concretely: state officials publicly and officially adopting the discourse of ministers of religion) constitutes one of the strategies open to the Botswana state in its interaction with rival foci of power in the society, including African Independent churches. One example out of many is the speech which the Minister of Social Welfare, Culture and Registration, under whose department the Registrar of Societies falls, pronounced on the occasion of the opening of the nineteenth branch of the Spiritual Healing Church, in Tutume (North Central District), July 1987, at the invitation of the church's Archbishop Rev. Motswasele. Having arbitrated in a series of vicious conflicts involving this church in the previous years, relations between the Cabinet Minister and the Archbishop would appear to have become quite cordial. The Cabinet Minister's speech reads as an inside account, and a PR statement (not on behalf of the state but of the church) at that. After sketching the history of the church since its inception in the village of Matsiloje, near Francistown, in 1950 with the appearance of the prophet Mokaleng Jacob Motswasele (*cf.* Lagerwerf 1982), the church is now claimed, by the Cabinet Minister, to have 18,000 members in

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1986.[26]

> 'To me, Chairman, this is an indication of the church's accomplishment in bringing souls to Christ. It is also an indication of good progress under good management.'[27]

The Cabinet Minister then proceeds to sum up the socially beneficial projects of the church, including the Boikango Bible Training Institute, an inexpensive day care centre in Mahalapye ('and yet in other Day Care Centres parents pay P60 or more per month!'[28]), Paje Primary School, a Mother's Union started by the mother of the present Archbishop, in which connexion

> 'I was gratified to learn of the active involvement of the church in the society beyond the spreading of the gospel.'[29]

Typical (since it reflects a standard insistence, on the part of the Registrar's office, with regard to unhealthy conditions of baptism which ought to be avoided)[30] is the Cabinet Minister's praise of the church's baptism pools:

> 'On realizing the number of reported deaths due to drowning during baptism, and also I presume as a response to health campaigns, the church decided to build baptism pools in Mochudi, Mahalapye and Mmadinare. The Mahalapye pool, not surprisingly [since church headquarters are located there] is the most up-to-date with dress rooms for women and men.'[31]

The Cabinet Minister ends, not with a statement on how the state sees its relationship with the African Independent churches, *but with a minute's silence for those founding members of the church, including the prophet, who died in the years 1964-1983...*

5.4.2. Bureaucratic interference beyond the letter of the law

A totally uncritical, pious, statement such as the Cabinet Minister's at the occasion of the Tutume branch of the Spiritual Healing Church would little suggest that at less public and festive occasions, in the familiar recesses of the bureaucracy, the Registrar of Societies imposes the most far-reaching demands on churches, particularly during the phase when they are still applying for registration. At this stage, and under the sanction of non-registration, a host of conditions are imposed which often are far more specific than the Societies Act stipulates.

In fact, registration is a society's *right* under the Societies Act:

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[26] This very high figure, although offered by the Acting Registrar of Societies who wrote the Minister's speech (!), is not supported by my quantitative data and has not been entered into the statistical analysis in section 2.

[27] Minister's speech 25.7.87, encl 71 in file H28/40/27.

[28] Minister's speech 25.7.87, encl 71 in file H28/40/27.

[29] Minister's speech 25.7.87, encl 71 in file H28/40/27.

[30] See below, discussion of guidance letter.

[31] Minister's Speech 25.7.87, enclosure 71 in file H28/40/27.

'6.

(1) Every local society shall, in the manner prescribed and within 28 days of the formation thereof or of the adoption thereby of a constitution or of rules, regulations or bye-laws, make application to the Registrar for registration or for exemption from registration under this Act.

(2)

(a) Subject to subsections (3), (4) and (9), upon application being made for registration, the Registrar shall register any local society.

(b) exemption only by Minister

(c) issue of certificate, 'which shall be prima facia evidence of registration or exemption'

Moreover, the Act is very specific as to the conditions under which registration may be refused:

6.

(3) The Registrar may refuse to register, and shall not exempt from registration, a local society where he is satisfied that such local society is a branch of, or is affiliated to or connected with, any organization or group of a *political nature* [my emphasis] established outside Botswana.

(4) The Registrar shall refuse to register and shall not exempt from registration a local society where –

(a) it appears to him that such local society has among its objects, is being used for or is likely to pursue or to be used for, any unlawful purpose or any purpose prejudicial to or incompatible with peace, welfare and good order in Botswana, or that the interests of peace, welfare or good order in Botswana might otherwise be likely to differ prejudice by reason of the registration of such local society.

(b) it appears to him that the terms of the constitution, rules, regulations or bye-laws of such local society are in any respect repugnant to or inconsistent with any written law;

(c) he is satisfied that the application does not comply with this Act;

(d) he is satisfied that the society does not exist; or

(e) the name under which the society is to be registered or exempted –

(i) is identical to that of any other existing local society;

(ii) so nearly resembles the name of such other local society as, in the opinion of the Registrar, to be likely to deceive the public or the members of either society; or

(iii) is, in the opinion of the Registrar, repugnant to or inconsistent with any written law or otherwise undesirable.'

St Anna's Church is now a well-established African Independent church in Francistown's Donga township. The church applied for registration in 1979, enlisting from the start the services of the local law firm of Mosojane & Partners. In addition to the usual technical-legal criticism of the draft constitution the following objections were phrased by the Registrar against the constitution:

'(a) Clause 9 which is about spiritual healers. I would be grateful if you could remove this clause from the constitution. The healing of [sic] churches is greatly causing concern to medical authorities in this country for such reasons that [sic]

(i) there is proved risk that such churches through their healing activities may delay ill people to seek competent medical advice while there is still time

(ii) That the constitutions of healing churches never specify who [*sic*] to be held liable

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> in case of death.'[32]

Healing is practiced in virtually all African Independent churches in Botswana (Staugård 1995, 1986), and the experience of traditional healers' associations in Botswana is that they are highly regarded by the government. Somewhat to my surprise therefore, the law firm accepted the point on healing, but their reply is not without an edge; with regard to liability they say:

> 'We have enough laws in this country which adequately cover such situations.'[33]

Further points are made in subsequent correspondence, in which the law firm, on their client's behalf, seeks to recover some of the ground that the Registrar has claimed as falling under his competence:

> 'We also observe that you require that the Bishop should be a person capable of performing the duties imposed by the Societies Act. Is this a necessary provision in the Constitution of a Church? Do you seriously require that before a man become a Bishop he should first of all have studied the Societies Act?'[34]

And again eight months later, when (little surprising, after such letters) registration is still not forthcoming:

> '...our clients as well as ourselves are not satisfied that we understood what is really required, for instance, we do not know what qualifications for a Bishop are acceptable to you. No minimum qualifications have been laid down in the law. Freedom of worship is enshrined in our constitution not only for the educated but also for the illiterate.'[35]

In order to appreciate this obstinate and sarcastic stance of the lawyer involved it is useful to know that not only is he a Kalanga ethnic activist finding pleasure in the kind of confrontations that Tswana abhor, but also a major politician in the Botswana People's Party (BPP), a major opposition party for which he was presidential candidate in the 1984 elections. As a lawyer, a politician and a ethnic activist he has a keen understanding of the authoritarian consensuality of the Botswana state, and seeks to challenge it at whatever occasion, often with a very witty choice of words; the reading of his letters written on behalf of Francistown-registered churches greatly added to the pleasure of my work in the Registrar of Societies' office. Nor does his case stand on its own. Challenges of the Registrar of Societies' authoritarian and unfounded action *vis-à-vis* the African Independent churches can be found in the correspondence by other law firms on behalf of their clients. And I suppose Mosojane's attitude may owe something to that of his predecessor in the BPP, that party's founder Matante, who shortly before his death referred to the Permanent Secretary of the relevant Ministry

> '...complaining that the Registrar of Societies was interfering in the internal matters of the church. He was objecting to the acceptance of the new constitution submitted by

[32] Registrar of Societies to Mosojane, 22.11.79; enclosure in H28/30/71 – I, St Anna's church.

[33] Mosojane to Registrar of Societies, 14.12.79; enclosure in H28/30/71 – I, St Anna's church.

[34] Mosojane to Registrar of Societies, 18.1.80; enclosure in H28/30/71 – I, St Anna's church.

[35] Mosojane to Registrar of Societies, 22.8.80; enclosure in H28/30/71 – I, St Anna's church.

Mr Molapisi...'[36]

Finally, on 14 January 1981, St Anna's church is registered, two and a half years after its first application. No specific clause on healing is retained in the constitution, but under the 'aims and objects' we still read:

> '(d) Spiritual Healing through the Powers of the Lord Jesus Christ.'[37]

In other words, the Registrar did not succeed in suppressing the church's healing concern from the public record. However, two other striking clauses among the aims and objectives suggest that the contact with the Registrar of Societies has not remained without its impact:

> '(e) to protect all members of the Church from all forms of exploitation.[38]
>
> (f) to work together with other organizations such as Village Development Committees, Parent-Teachers Associations *etc*. and hand in hand with the Government.'[39]

Phrases like the latter crop up time and again in constitutions of African Independent churches. Thus the first clause of the constitution of the Guta ra Jehova church (GRJ) reads[40]

> '1. A person entering Guta ra Jehova should produce his Passport, Registration Certificate or Identity Card and Marriage Certificate. G.R.J. co-operates with the Government. Single women should bring their Father's or Guardian's Identity Card for recording. After this, each should confess his or her sins to God. You then go and sit in line. Guta ra Jehova sings for you.'

Clearly, accommodation to the state – and the desire to be seen accommodated to the state –, is one of the effects of the registration procedure. Probably, however, these phrases should not be taken as signs of actual submission to the state, but as verbal attempts to create, through lip service, as much freedom from state intervention for the church as its leadership feels is necessary. In the case of Guta ra Jehova this did not really help: the church saw its registration cancelled, partly as a result of failure to submit annual returns. In other cases, when cooperation between church and state is put to the test of protracted arbitration procedures and the division of church property after schisms, tempers can fly high and threats may be exchanged back and forth between the Registrar and the clergy: threats of being declared an unlawful society from the former side,[41] of being punished by the divine powers or the sorcery attacks of

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[36] Minute 2, 5.12.1980, by G.K. Eustice, Acting Principal Administration Officer and later Registrar of Societies, enclosure in H 28/30/22 – I, The Holy Free Corner Stone Apostolic Church. This is the church referred to in the statement concerning Matante.

[37] Constitution, enclosure in H28/30/71 – I, St Anna's church.

[38] While this clause certainly reflects one of the aims of the Registrar's involvement with the African Independent churches, it is quite possible that this particular phrase was included at the initiative of Mr. Mosojane, the opposition politician.

[39] Constitution, enclosure in H28/30/71 – I, St Anna's church.

[40] Guta ra Jehova constitution, enclosure in H28/30/38.

[41] *E.g.* Registrar of Societies to Molapisi, 29.9.80, in H 28/30/22 – I.

the religious leaders from the latter.

The issues that came up in the registration of St Anna's Church are typical, and repeated in many of the files of the Registrar of Societies' office. Despite Mr Mosojane's remonstrations, the Registrar's insistence on minimal qualifications for the clergy of African Independent churches obtained the (mere) appearance of formalization when it was included in a guidance letters by means of which the Registrar has sought to reduce correspondence on church registration, by offering what comes close to a model constitution for African Independent churches – an extreme example of the alien imposition of a bureaucratic logic. The first circular of this type[42] phrased this requirement in the following terms:

> '9 Appointments of Ministers and [*sic*] Religion including Bishops, Deacons, Evangelists [*sic*] Lay Preachers and others
>
> Please state that qualifies [*sic*] member to become a head of the Church, Bishop, Minister, Deacon, Evangelist, Preacher or any other positions of clergymen. State academic qualifications and their minimum qualifications in theology. State how they are elected and appointed to those positions and provide for their terms of office. Please note that it is also important to indicate which body or bodies are empowered to ordain such members as Ministers and to suspend or withdraw the right to Ministry from a member so ordained and revoke the appointments.'[43]

The guidance volunteered by the Registrar of Societies is a strange – but for Botswana rather usual – mixture of paternalistic meddling and sound practical advice. The letter concludes as follows:

> 'I take this opportunity to state that Churches are allowed to make any other provisions they consider essential for their operation in addition to the required provisions stated above. You are also advised to do the following:
>
> 1) Elect members of the governing body or of any other committee who you beleive [*sic*] are able to perform the duties assigned to them including the keeping of proper records of meeting and members. The respective members should be able to manage your financial affairs and property, and perform duties imposed on them by the law.
>
> 2) *Churches are also advised to undertake measures to ensure that members are not baptised in ponds, dams or rivers which are polluted. Stagnant water should be purified with proper chemicals by those who know when and how they are used.* [emphasis added] Measures should be taken to ensure that what is given to the sick causes no harm. There has been a number of cases reported about people who died as a result of administering harmful things to them or giving over [*sic*] doses.
>
> 3) Hand over the property or whatever has been acquired in the name of the former Church if you are breaking away.
>
> 4) Choose a different name from the names of the registered Societies. No new name

[42] 'Application for registration of a church', circular, Department of Culture, Registration and Social Welfare Matters, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, P/Bag 00185, Gaborone. Author's collection; undated but believed to date from the mid-1980s.

[43] 'Application for registration of a church', circular, Department of Culture, Registration and Social Welfare Matters, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, P/Bag 00185, Gaborone. Author's collection; undated but believed to date from the mid-1980s.

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should resemble the name of any registered Society in any way.
When you submit your application please ensure that you bring along with you or send the certificate of your clergymen showing their theological or bible training. Please send certificates under registered cover. Copies will be made and originals returned, and submit copies of minutes of meetings when your constitution was adopted and when your office-bearers were elected.

Yours faithfully
Registrar of Societies'[44]

5.4.3. Controlling the nomenclature of churches

Churches and other societies are registered under a particular name, and on this label depend all other juridical aspects of the interaction between churches and the state, or between churches and members of the public. The bureaucratic logic requires names of organizations to be clearly distinct and free from possible confusion.[45] As a result, the registration process often involves an alteration of a church's name at the Registrar's demand.

Let me cite one illuminating example out of the many that are available in my notes. At the far traditional end of the Botswana Independent churches exists the Hosanna Religious and Traditional Association, registered on 16 April 1981.[46] In a first reaction to this association's application the Registrar of Societies replied:

'Your society is a religious one and that should be reflected in the name.'[47]

Within three weeks this suggestion was adopted by the society, offering as the new name 'Mwali Religious Traditional Hosanna Association',[48] but registration was to meet with further conditions. In a long letter the Registrar of Societies

[44] 'Application for registration of a church', circular, Department of Culture, Registration and Social Welfare Matters, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, P/Bag 00185, Gaborone. Author's collection; undated but believed to date from the mid-1980s.

[45] Societies Act 6 (4) (e).

[46] Gaborone, file no. H28/90/75 – I. The 'traditional' element in this association is so strong that Staugård doubts whether it is a church (1986: 83; on p. 84-85 Staugård copies the constitution of this society). Through his personal activities and those of his wife, the president of this association, the Mwali High Priest for the Southwestern region Mr Vumbu Ntogwa and as such probably the principal traditional religious authority in northeastern Botswana, does participate in two other churches of a more explicitly Christian designation; *cf.* Werbner 1989: 341, n. 3. However, the principles at work here illustrate the accepted attitude of various Registrars of Societies in the 1980s, and are not affected by our judgment as to the truly ecclesiastical nature of this association. Other examples will be taken from less peripheral nor ambiguous church organizations. Incidentally, 'Hosanna' means: 1. biblical praise; 2. Mwali adept; 3. Apostolic follower of the Zimbabwean church founder Masowe (*cf.* Daneel, 1971: 86, 88, 178, 339-41; Werbner 1989: 257 *f.*). 'Hosanna' (2) is often pronounced, and written, as 'Wosanna.' Probably the word in the sense of Mwali adept has an origin independently from the Biblical word, but of course in a context of Independent churches the phonetical convergence of the words offers endless opportunities for symbolic *bricolage*.

[47] Registrar of Societies to Hosanna *etc*. 20.3.78.

[48] Hosanna to Registrar of Societies, 13.4.78.

cites a great many technical legal objections against the self-styled constitution which had accompanied the application – incidentally, along with letters of recommendation from headmen in the North-East district – but the principal objection lies not there:

> 'Your constitution is not in order due to the following: –
>
> (1) Your preamble has no relevance to your society. You will recall that during our long discussion in my office, you reiterated that although your Association believes in the miracles of divine Mwali, you also practice customs handed down by the ancestors. This explains why your society is religious (although it is not a Christian society) and traditional. You can leave out the word Mwali and call your association 'Hosanna Religious and Traditional Association.'

The point may seem slight but it is of the greatest importance: without any reference to powers conferred by the law, the Registrar of Societies succeeds in deleting the crucial catchword, Mwali, from the society's name, and offers advice on the society's interpretation of its own goals and orientation. In a context of Tswana (particularly Ngwato) cultural hegemony in Botswana, where the sizeable language group of the Kalanga and the associated ethnic identity are constantly in the defensive, this deletion is highly significant: it excises, with the word 'Mwali', a major symbol of Kalanga traditional convergence and of multi-ethnic identification across the Botswana-Zimbabwe border. The Registrar of Societies uses his prerogatives to prevent a minority ethnic identity in Botswana to manifest itself publicly at the national level and gain respectability and recognition there. Of course one has to realize that 1978 was at the height of the Zimbabwean war of liberation, when border communities were considerably harassed as a result of hostilities spilling over from the Zimbabwean side; at the time, of course, relationships between the Mwali cult and the freedom fighters were close.[49]

In the end the society had to enlist the – no doubt expensive – professional services of 'Mr Richard Lyons, Attorney, Notary and Conveyancer'. After further correspondence in which the Registrar of Societies insisted that, in the society's draft constitution, the provision for the management of property was insufficient, the society was finally registered in 1981. With the exception of 1983, when a reminder had to be sent by the Registrar of Societies, it has duly submitted its Annual Returns and the file reflects no further difficulties between the office and the association.

Although the underlying ethnic and political element in the registration of this society is unmistakable, its being mixed with traditional and international concerns may have been at least as important as its involving the Kalanga. For in a politically apparently far more sensitive case, registration – this time of a cultural association – did not meet with much objection: that of the Society for the

[49] *Cf.* Lan 1985; and general writings on the Mwali cult as cited above.

Promotion of the Ikalanga Language,[50] an initiative of students at the University of Botswana, and ever since its inception a source of heated debate both at the national and at the regional, Francistown level. In a letter dated 19th September, 1983, the Registrar of Societies did request specific cosmetic changes that did not affect the society's obvious nature as a focus of ethnic mobilization. In response to a clause on the teaching of Kalanga in schools, he commented:

> According to the present government policy on education only Setswana and English languages are taught in schools and used over the radio. Could you please[51] amend this clause to ensure that it is in line with the spirit of the present government policy (...)[52]

And while the constitution of this ethnic association wisely opened the membership to 'all Batswana',[53] the Registrar, as if in ethnic collusion with the applicants, comments sweetly:

> 'Could you substitute the word Batswana with Citizen of Botswana to avoid any misinterpretation. May I be informed why the membership is not extended to any interested person.'[54]

This contrasting evidence on the handling of ethnic aspects of voluntary associations would suggest that the strategy of the state via the Registrar of Societies is *not so much to prohibit but to control*: to exercise influence upon these associations precisely by encapsulating them in a bureaucratic structure – rather than debarring them from the sort of recognition, stable internal structure and outside accessibility that functioning under the Societies Act might produce.

After this ethnic excursion, let us return to African Independent churches. Their proliferation of names, and the remarkable variability these names turn out to have even in the hands of supposedly legal specialists like the Registrar and his staff, has already mentioned in the first section of this chapter. While the professional variability suggests that the legal formalism characterizing the discourse of the Registrar of Societies is in itself not an aim in itself (in the sense of Weber's bureaucratic logic) but an idiom for something else that needs further investigation, the point I now want to make is that this proliferation of names is in itself partly a result of the churches being captured within a bureaucratic logic, where each church through its name can only occupy one fixed and unequivocal niche in the 'nomenclatural space'.

The names of the African Independent churches in their endless permutation of always the same few elements such as 'in Zion' and 'Apostolic', or the name of a biblical figure preceded by the epithet 'Saint' (usually abbreviated to 'St'), show

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[50] File H28/90/258 – I, registered 7.8.84.

[51] Note the difference in tone from that applied in the Hosanna case.

[52] Registrar of Societies to Society for the Promotion of the Ikalanga Language, letter dated 19.9.83

[53] This is the term under which the citizens of Botswana are normally designated in Botswana colloquial discourse, but also – and this is the essence of Tswana hegemony – the ethnic designation for non-Kalanga, Tswana-speakers.

[54] Registrar of Societies to Society for the Promotion of the Ikalanga Language, letter dated 19.9.83

that these churches largely draw from a common pool of imagery and identity reference. A detailed formal analysis of the list of well over two hundred names in the data set yields clusters of reference and imagery by which church families stand out and testify to a common recent history of ideological innovation and organizational fission. A strikingly permutational logic appears to be at work when we overlook the entire list: often distinctiveness in nomenclature (and hence as an organizational body) is achieved by the insertion of additional naming elements which give the impression of a productive series, *e.g.*

church name	formal representation of that name
Africa[n] Gospel Church	B+A
Africa[n] Born Full Gospel Church	B+C+D+A
After the Birth of Christ Full Gospel Church	E+D+A

where

A = Gospel Church; B = Africa[n]; C = Born; D = Full; E = After the Birth; [...] optional addition

Note: formally speaking C and E could be regarded as transformations of each other

Table 5.24. Three examples of church nomenclature.

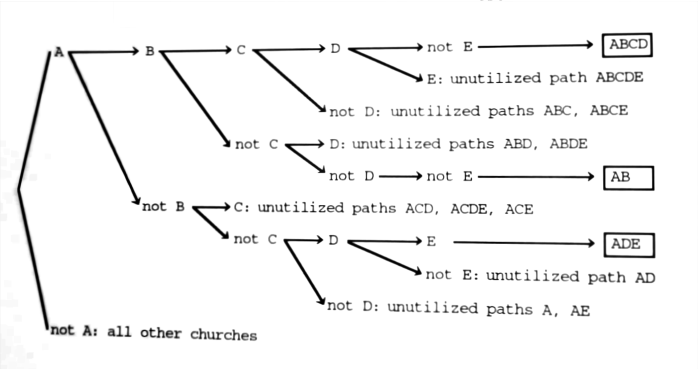

Fig. 5.1. Permutations of possible church names in Botswana.

We note that the permutational potential has been far from fully utilized; the unutilized paths suggest that theoretically one could expect further churches of this 'family' to be named as follows (reading de dendrogram from top to bottom):

Africa[n] Born After the Birth of Christ Full Gospel Church (ABCDE)
Africa[n] Born Gospel Church (ABC)
After the Birth of Christ Africa[n] Born Gospel Church (ABCE)
Africa[n] Full Gospel Church (ABD)
After the Birth of Christ Africa[n] Full Gospel Church (ABDE)
Born Full Gospel Church (ACD)
After the Birth of Christ Born Full Gospel Church (ACDE)
After the Birth of Christ Born Gospel Church (ACE)
Full Gospel Church (AD)

Gospel Church (A)
After the Birth of Christ Gospel Church (AE).

While some of these permutations are freakish (partly because of the intuitive interchangeability of 'After the Birth of Christ' and 'Born'; however, some of the names in the data set are equally freakish in appearance), most would make perfectly acceptable names for African Independent churches in the Botswana context; the fact that none as yet appear in the data set may even cast further doubt upon the latter's completeness!

This example could be augmented by dozens more. One is strongly reminded of the logic of group differentiation by the binary opposition of group-associated symbols (names of groups; names of deities, saints, totems, animal species, food taboos associated with each group) which has played such a large role in the analysis of social organization (*cf.* Lévi-Strauss 1962b; van Binsbergen 1985a). Even such frequently used elements as 'Zion', 'in Zion' and 'Apostolic' among the African Independent churches in the data set, which are apparently saturated with theological meaning and which have played such a major (but often misleading) role in the classification of African Independent churches, can often be seen to be used in just this sense of differentiation between groups which otherwise, in nomenclature, membership, doctrine and history, would appear to be adjacent. One major point of interaction between these churches and the state lies precisely in this contrasting nomenclature, and reinforces the permutational tendencies signalled here.

Thus the nomenclature of the African Independent churches should not exclusively be viewed from a point of view of specific contents. There is the tendency among analysts to take the church name as a deliberate statement of the group's location within a broad spectrum of church types, of doctrinal and organizational variation: 'Zionist', 'Apostolic' *etc*. A closer examination of the hundreds of African Independent churches in our data set would suggest that the use of these broad inclusive labels in the church name is often ornamental, and does hardly imply specific doctrine and liturgy. The church's specific, contrasting identification through its often highly complex name serves not so much to situate that church in a broad category encompassing scores of churches, but to offset it against adjacent, very similar churches, with which that particular church often has a relationship as parent / child and of sibling / sibling in the context of church fission. In this respect the church name serves the same function as the specific church uniforms, church flags, the specific combinations of colours featuring in these textile artifacts, badges,[55] emphasis on cotton threads of specific colours to be used in healing, imposition of food taboos on certain animal and plant species. All these are devices to mark group identity and group boundaries, in a context where (because of the relative absence of doctrinal and liturgical differences, the considerable 'shopping around' of peripheral members, and the fissiparous activities of the church leadership) boundaries between

[55] Such as the conspicuous ZCC badge, available in two varieties – 'dove' and 'star' – reflecting a church split which has not yet led to a differentiation of the name itself.

churches are weak and need to be constantly reconstituted.

5.4.4. The imposition of an alien bureaucratic logic – and its social gains

Registration involves a church in a process of accommodation *vis-à-vis* the state, in which as a condition for registration the state manages to impose upon the church a bureaucratic logic that is often irrelevant and alien to its original orientation. Names chosen for such good reasons as personal preference, a prophet's dreams, their time-honoured emotional and symbolic power (Mwali!), distance from yet recognizable association with a parent body from which one has broken away, are put to the test of bureaucratic adequacy, ethnic and linguistic acceptability, juridically unequivocal identification. Offices, election to which is supposed to be governed by divine inspiration or hereditary succession, have to be re-defined so as to fit in with, *e.g.*, 'the democratic spirit of the Botswana constitution'. Unspeakable conflicts which ought never to arise in a living, inspired church, yet do, have to be considered and catered for long before they inevitably do arise. Repressed aspirations of capital accumulation through religious entrepreneurship are confronted by the Registrar's insistence on provisions for the management of movable and immovable assets. The widow's penny collected at church gatherings has to be subjected to audited accounts...

But the result is not just an encroachment upon charismatic authority and informal, 'traditional' forms of organization. The power which is being generated in African Independent churches in Botswana is not only a diffuse orientation in the wider society, offering people subjectively meaningful alternatives and prohibitions in such fields as worship, healing, consumption of food and drink, patterns of recreating and reproduction. We are also, and primarily, looking at a highly successful mode of generating spiritual, therapeutic, financial and often also sexual power within the internal circle of the church, between leaders and adherents. Like all structures of power in any human society, the African Independent churches of Botswana are potential structures of internal extraction and exploitation. Perusal of numerous files of correspondence at the Registrar of Societies' office, as well as personal interviews with the government officials involved, have convinced me that they see the state's responsibility largely on this point. This converges with Lagerwerf's view:

> 'One of the rights bestowed upon Botswana's citizens with Independence was freedom of religion. This right greatly enlarged the possibilities for diversification [of the independent churches], since neither the chiefs nor the established churches could interfere anymore [sic]. So it was not long before many independent churches emerged, either as local branches of a South African or Rhodesian church or, increasingly, as breakaways [sic] from the independent churches already existing in Botswana. For various reasons (...) this development became of great concern to the government, finally leading to the Societies Act of 1972 which aims at the effective control of societies, including spiritual and healing churches (...). The latter were not always at ease with the government's attitude and underline their wish to be in line with the government's aims of nationbuilding [sic]' (Lagerwerf 1982: 46).

We may be critical of the authoritarian way in which clear, standard, legally sound

formulae are imposed also in situations where the churches' own draft constitutions, however conspicuous as the work of legal laymen, might yet be adequate while retaining the essential flavour of original expressions of identity. But at the same time exploitation and conflict do occur, with a regularity and a vehemence which makes it often difficult to see a sinister plot towards state encroachment behind the Registrar's insistence on good legal handiwork.

Moreover, such insistence is in the professional and personal interest of this officer since, under the Societies Act, he and his Minister (of Social Welfare, Culture and Registration) are responsible for adjudication, and the allocation of assets, in case of severe conflict tearing an association apart. It is not only the registration of new churches which takes up the time of the Registrar's office, and to which with the exponential growth of African Independent churches has created a considerable backlog of pending applications; perhaps as much time is spent on the handling of minor and major conflicts. For the researcher this has the advantageous implication that precisely church conflicts are reflected in extenso in the Registrar's files.[56]

The extent to which financial and symbolic power are generated in Botswana African Independent churches can be gauged from the following example, that of the Guta ra Mwari (City of God)[57] church (GRM) which was registered in 1974, soon after the enactment of the Societies Act.

5.4.5. Guta ra Mwari (City of God)[58]

This church, originally established in Francistown as a branch of a Zimbabwe organization founded by the prophet T. Tayali in 1961, is one of the African Independent churches in Botswana whose assets have rapidly grown to impressive heights. The church first applied for registration in 1973 and since 1975 its audited accounts are available in the Registrar of Societies files. From the start the church laid much emphasis on the financial offerings members were to make. At the moment of confession, the sum of R 9.20 had to be paid,

> 'and this confirms your confession. And you are allowed to offer some thanksgiving of-

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[56] Very rich material is available, *e.g.*, on the Spiritual Healing Church (file H28/40/27), one of Botswana's first and major African Independent churches, which also received extensive treatment in Lagerwerf's study, and which through schism, conversion and otherwise is connected to a considerable number of other local churches. Further *e.g.* St Anna's church, H28/30/71 – I; Holy Free Corner Stone Apostolic Church, H28/30/22 – I; and many others.

[57] The addition between parentheses is part of the original name, and is debatable as a translation of the main Shona name; 'Assembly of Mwari' or 'Assembly of God' would seem to be more appropriate, but would have created a conflict with other already existing churches. Note the spelling difference with 'Mwali' as used in the context of the Hosanna Religious and Traditional Association, *supra.*

[58] File H 28/30/38 – I; registered 18.10.1974.

> fering thereafter and God will give you according to your power in return.'[59]

These gifts come in the place of Sunday collections.[60] In a later draft constitution the financial aspect is spelled out in a way reminiscent of a commercial enterprise – a road show perhaps:

> 'On your confession you have to fulfill [*sic*] the will of God, the Creator[61], by offering as follows:
> – a couple $ 10.00 [added in ball-point: R10.–] [62]
> – when a husband or wife comes later, $1.20 per month
> – single adults $10
> – children over 16 year of age accompanied by parents $1.20 (R 1.20) and under 16 free
> – children under 16 years without the company of their parents $10 (R 10)
> b. There is no credit on reception and all offerings will not be refunded.'[63]

The church claims a monopoly of healing as far as the adherents are concerned, although the draft constitution leaves them a nominal freedom to visit the hospital ('when they are not within the reach of GRM services').[64]

After an apparently minor revision of the constitution (the main alteration was the cancellation of a clause concerning the annual examination of under-age members for virginity) the church was registered in 1974. In 1975, church takings amounted to R566.58, with R351.20 cash at bank. Already in 1976, with R500 offertory, harvest gathering fees of R294.45 and R727.84 cash at bank, the church could afford to make a donation to the celebration of national Independence Day – no doubt to make up for its foreign, Zimbabwean connotations at a time that the Francistown region was greatly troubled by the war in Zimbabwe. The annual revenue steadily rises and is duly recorded, to *e.g.* in 1982: total offertory of P20,071.12 and cash at bank of P12,986.82, assets in the form of furniture and fittings assessed at P1,600.46; church equipments P441.34; building P3,120.20, and motor vehicle at P9,000. In the financial year 1985 the capital amounted to P62,321.44.[65]

While the church was in full expansion, financially and as to membership,[66] it came under a nasty cloud. Guta ra Mwari became surrounded by remarkably

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[59] Clause 12 from an undated early draft set of rules, enclosure 1 in H 28/30/38 – I, probably early 1970s.

[60] Clause 13 from an undated early draft set of rules, enclosure 1 in H 28/30/38 – I, probably early 1970s.

[61] This is the literal meaning of the name Mwali.

[62] In the early 1970s, the SA Rand was still the Botswana currency. Later the Pula (P) was introduced, roughly equivalent to Dfl 1. The $ is Zimbabwean.

[63] Rejected by the Registrar of Societies on 3.5.73, Registrar of Societies to Guta ra Mwari.

[64] Draft constitution rejected in 1973 by Registrar of Societies, clause b.

[65] Audited accounts, File H 28/30/38 – I.

[66] An undated letter from the Guta ra Mwari to the Registrar of Societies, by P.M. Senau, c. 1986, claimed 'more than ten thousand members in Botswana'.

widespread allegations of sorcery and ritual murder.[67] It is reputed to be particularly popular among businessmen, who find in the church the means to enhance their professional success. Popular rumour has it that such success is brought about at the expense of the sacrifice of one of the member's children, preferably a first-born son, who is to be killed in a staged car accident. Similar popular beliefs concerning success medicine of commercial and ritual entrepreneurs extend all over the subcontinent to at least the Zambian Copperbelt; and with regard to Zambia at least, they were not entirely unfounded.[68] The original constitution and other materials do contain a few sinister hints, *e.g.* on learning to accept death as the 'second stage', the first being birth.[69] And such clauses as:

> 'II. Congregation will bear responsibilities for burial matters of registered members of G.R.M.'[70]

> 'Members are not allowed to wear mourning clothes'[71]

begin to take on a different implication.

It is only in 1987 that the Registrar of Societies confronted the church, largely on legal-technical flaws in the constitution which his office had accepted thirteen years earlier, in the first years of the Societies Act. However, official concern does not stop at legal technicalities:

> 'I am concerned about the financial burden you seem to place on your members. Could you please indicate how often these fees are charged and what they are really used for?'[72]

A new constitution is drafted, but this time the Registrar is not so easily satisfied:

> 'The proposed revised constitution which you have submitted very recently in compliance with our letter of 19 September 1988 was not drafted on a democratic basis – it is therefore not in keeping with the democratic ethic of Botswana.'[73]

Within a few months a detailed critique of the earlier draft is offered to the church's General Secretary. It is pointed out that the church has no provision for: discipline; settlement of disputes; procedures for meetings; voting; removal from office.

> 'It is important that the church in Botswana should not seem to be, or be passive [*sic*] entity when the church relies on the *ordinary person's* contributions [original emphasis]; when the church raises funds and incurs debts in the name of the people. The gen-

[67] Author's field-notes.

[68] Author's field-notes.

[69] Early draft constitution Guta ra Mwari, clause 5.

[70] Early draft constitution Guta ra Mwari, clause 11. In 1973 this clause was changed to exclude those who have been members for less than two years.

[71] Constitution rejected by Registrar of Societies in 1973.

[72] Registrar of Societies to Secretary Guta ra Mwari 8.4.87.

[73] Registrar of Societies to Nat. Secretary Guta ra Mwari, 16.12.88.

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> eral body should have a substantial degree of influence on all matters which affect them. The concept of the CHOSEN TWELVE [the church's governing body according to the then prevailing constitution] would perhaps require explanation or description in the constitution. As it stands it implies hereditary succession or arbitrary appointments which possibly transcends the comprehension of the ordinary members.'[74]

This criticism is replied to in a sophisticated and elegant letter,[75] which is accompanied by a new constitution. The lively details of the earlier constitution, on healing, liturgy, fees, sex, marriage, virginity, *etc*. have been entirely replaced by a legally competent blueprint of what looks like a well-oiled modern organization. The Registrar of Societies is still far from convinced:

> 'Your constitution at article 26 totally rejects the very essence of the fundamentals of the Botswana Constitution. Your constitution deliberately flouts the intent of the Societies Act.'[76]

She chides the church for the absence of democratic procedures, of an Annual General Meeting, and of a Special Annual General Meeting, adding (somewhat overstating the law):

> 'Note that this aspect is not a religious function [in other words, that the Annual General Meeting should not be a mere prayer meeting] but a lawful requirement for management purposes.'[77]

The matter is further complicated by the fact that Guta ra Mwari asked the Social Justice Officer, a senior official in the same Ministry, to intervene; he finds the amendments to the earlier constitution acceptable. Meanwhile however it turns out that the real issue is not in legal technicalities or even financial exploitation of adherents. The general rumours concerning the church appear for the first time on official paper, albeit undated (c. 1987):

> 'We have gathered from unconfirmed sources that the Guta ra Mwari society is not a religious organization as such. It is believed that they are an organisation that practises healing, bringing riches to those who aspire for it, or making it possible for those who wish to be married [*sic*]. When the treatment has been administered and the miracles realised, human sacrifice is a matter of must. The society was registered in 1975, and one wonders how many people have been sacrificed.
>
> Also it is alleged that once you join the society you *cannot* [original emphasis] leave, if you do so, a lot of mishaps strike your family.
>
> Despite the fact that I do not have full evidence to substantiate the allegations I am worried as we have received applications for appointment as marriage officers from some Ministers of GRM. (...) I do not think such a responsibility should be passed onto individuals who purpote [*sic*] to be Christians, when their deeds are highly questionable.'[78]

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[74] Registrar of Societies to General Secretary Guta ra Mwari, 17.3.89.

[75] General Secretary Guta ra Mwari to Registrar of Societies, 28.4.89.

[76] Registrar of Societies to General Secretary Guta ra Mwari 10.10.89.

[77] Registrar of Societies to General Secretary Guta ra Mwari 10.10.89.

[78] Registrar of Societies to Deputy Permanent Secretary, undated memorandum in Guta ra Mwari file, c. 1987.

The file does not contain any written reaction to these uncommonly serious allegations. Personal questioning revealed that the matter had been allowed to lapse: where was the civil servant who dared confront an organization so sinister and powerful? The one time when one feels the Registrar of Societies had every reason to declare a society unlawful, such action is not even officially contemplated. The point is not, of course, whether the allegations made in the Registrar's files against the Guta ra Mwari church were objectively true: to ascertain such truth would be outside the scope of the present argument, and would in any case require a far wider range of data than I have at my disposal. But while it cannot be my task to pass judgment on the Guta ra Mwari church, it was certainly the Registrar of Society's task to do so, and the point is that in the face of serious written allegations, the Registrar apparently did not have the power to act.

Which means that here we have reached one of the limits of state control over African Independent churches: when the idioms of power they represent are considered to be superior to state power, or to belong to a realm where state protection is not considered adequate. Mystical powers of manipulation, acquisition and destruction – sorcery – cannot be confronted under the Societies Act; and even if the Registrar tries to substitute insistence on technical-legal provisions instead, the state power she can muster is probably inadequate. This also means that in this case at least, the good intentions of protecting the masses against Independent Churches as exploitative structures, have utterly failed. The bureaucratic forms of church organization as demanded by the Registrar become empty formulae, which are easily exchanged for others; behind them a totally different process goes on inside the church, not only completely uncontrolled by the state but even sanctioned by the respect and protection state recognition affords.

Meanwhile our statistical analysis has brought out some of the other limits of state control over the churches: inconspicuity (because of small size and/or recent emergence), and – at the other end of the spectrum – established status as a cosmopolitan church.

5.5. Conclusion: Beyond acquiescence

Already the great pioneer of the study of Southern African churches, Sundkler, pointed out that the narrowly political perspective (in the sense of the churches' alleged challenges of the state) with regard to the African Independent churches is far from fertile. His pronouncements on this topics (however inspired by the deesire to protect African church leaders under apartheid) have formed the starting point for much perceptive research ever since:

> 'Claims that "political" reasons are behind the Separatist Church movement miss the mark. The few instances of radical party affiliations of certain Ethiopian or Zionist groups do not offer sufficient proof of any definite political trend; and even admitting the existence of much outspoken anti-White propaganda in most Independent

> Churches, one should not forget that the attitude of the leaders and masses of these Ethiopians and Zionists has on the whole been loyal, not least during the trying experiences of war.' (Sundkler 1970: 296; apparently WWII is meant)

Writing on the Rolong Tshidi who straddle the Botswana / South African border and whose ethnic cousins are the Rolong of Matsiloje and Moroka – some of the cradles of Independency in the Francistown area –, Jean Comaroff in her book *Body of Power Spirit of Resistance,* adds a new note to this discussion. Acknowledging a certain indebtedness to my own analysis of the Lumpa church and Zambian religious change in general (van Binsbergen 1981b), she situates the specific local form of the Zion Christian Church in the context of overall symbolic change under the impact of capitalism and the modern state:

> 'The purposive act of reconstruction, on the part of the nonelite [*sic*], focuses meaningly on the attempt to heal dislocations at the level of experience, dislocations which derive from the failure of the prevailing sign system to provide a model for their subjectivity, for their meaningful and material being. Their existence is increasingly dominated by generalized media of exchange – money, the written word, linear time, and the universal God – which fail to capture a recognizable self-image. These media circulate through communicative processes which themselves appear to marginalize people at the periphery; hence the major vehicles of value have come to elude their grasp. In these circumstances, efforts are made to restructure activity so as to regain a sense of control. Repositories of value, like the Zionists' money, are resituated within practices that promise to redirect their flow back to the impoverished, thus healing their affliction.' (Comaroff 1985: 253)

Her, and my own, attention for symbolic reconstruction, and its undercurrent of political and class struggle, will be intuitively appreciated as illuminating and profound. However, the matter must be even more complicated than that, for Comaroff's reading of the churches as symbolic protest would politically amount to a rejection of the state and the modern economy, of which very little can be found in the material brought together in the present chapter. Her analysis immediately invoked the critical reaction of another writer on Botswana churches, Richard Werbner (1986), who points out that in actual practice the Zionist churches' tacit support for the apartheid state constitutes a major hindrance to socio-political reform in Southern Africa. Werbner's views converge with those of Matthew Schoffeleers in the Netherlands (1991).

Schoffeleers views the relationship between African Independent churches and the state in the perspective of political acquiescence (*cf.* van Binsbergen 1981b: 57 *f.*), claiming that these churches' emphasis on healing would re-orientate the actors' attention from the national and political to the individual plane when it comes to these actors' conceptualizing and redressing of sources of evil in life and society. The present argument complements this approach, by looking at the organizational and legal aspects of church / state interaction. By concentrating, as the acquiescence perspective does, on the *world-view* propounded by the African Independent churches, we risk to overlook the fact that the bureaucratic organizational form of these churches in themselves requires serious study in its own right. Having grown up and functioning in a society where formal bureaucratic organizations are the principal structural format of social

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life, North Atlantic academic observers may be accused of myopia when they have, with few exceptions, failed to problematize the successful implantation, rapid spread, and creative adaptation and transformation of the imported model of the formal bureaucratic organization on African soil since the end of the nineteenth century, both in a state context (the colonial and post-colonial state, its executive apparatus, and state-controlled institutions such as schools, hospitals, marketing boards *etc.*) and outside the state: voluntary organizations including churches, recreational and professional bodies *etc.* (*cf.* van Binsbergen 1991d). These fundamental societal forms, which have so revolutionarized the pattern of social organization existing in Africa before the colonial period, ought not to be taken for granted. They are not the mere organizational vehicles for power and ideology generated elsewhere, outside their scope: they are the increasingly widening beddings of social life in Africa, where power and ideology are being generated in their own right, as a reflection or a result of organizational processes rather than as an external influence upon such processes.

The emerging picture turns out to be somewhat more complex and less uniform than the acquiescence approach would lead us to suggest. The African Independent churches appear to form what Sally Moore (1978) so aptly called a 'semi-autonomous field' with regard to the state, and our data suggest a number of possible ways in which this field can be linked to the state. Those emphasizing acquiescence and seeking to explain it in terms of individual healing emphasis, are primarily interested in how the churches interfere, or rather do not interfere, with the state. Throughout my present argument my emphasis, by way of compensation, has been on how the state interferes, or fails to interfere, with the churches. But in fact these two questions are but two sides of the same coin.

The state with its universalist legal apparatus on the abstract level takes for granted that the churches fall under its control, and on the practical political level does seek to bring the churches under its hegemony. Yet in actual fact it is clear that the power of the state over the churches is far more limited. When it comes to the larger cosmopolitan churches, their early registration and easy exemption suggests an eagerness, on the part of the state, to co-opt the support of these formidable, internationally well-connected organizational bodies, which constitute such a vital part of the civil society. But also with regard to the larger African Independent churches we have seen how the state – *e.g.* in the case of the Spiritual Healing Church – readily adopts a Christian idiom of expression, so that in a secular constitutional democracy like Botswana a high-ranking government official offers a formal governmental statement which sounds like a fully-fledged sermon. Here the state seeks to co-opt non-state-derived organizational powers in society without the slightest insistence on its own prerogatives or hegemony. A term like 'acquiescence' would not quite do justice to this situation, since it is not the church which keeps aloof from the state, but the state which adopts an extremely accommodating attitude *vis-à-vis* the church.

Taken to its extremes, we have the situation of Guta ra Mwari, where the state

fails to confront even suspected criminal acts, and practically admits its incapability to impose its control. The case makes clear that ultimately the legal, bureaucratic authority as embodied in the state (in other words, a secular, impersonal and democratically-controlled premise of power) is defeated in confrontation with a time-honoured premise of power that revolves on notions of supernatural intervention and election, sorcery, secrecy, and the manipulation of humans (even to the point of human sacrifice) for economic gain, – provided this premise is articulated in an effective organizational form whose public manifestations (feign to) emulate the very forms of formal bureaucratic organization which the state has taken itself and which the state seeks to impose on churches. Superficially one might characterize the Guta ra Mwari position as acquiescent – after all, the state is not openly challenged, but simply ignored, from a position of secure non-state-derived power. But in fact the position of this church is far too cynical and manipulative *vis-à-vis* the state to be called 'acquiescent'. Nor is this a case of nativistic or traditionalistic withdrawal: in its emphasis on ritual means (admittedly an application and transformation of an ancient local repertoire) alleged to ensure entrepreneurial success in a thriving modernizing economy, the church seems to be largely an attempt to generate power independently from the state, and thus to organize modern life along modern goals but bypassing the state. This position is reminiscent of that of such writers as Bayart (1988) and Geschiere (1986, 1990), who see in modern sorcery in Africa – largely outside a formal church contexts – a popular mode of political action, in which the post-colonial state is being challenged. In the awareness of people in Francistown, Guta ra Mwari stands out as a rather unique case, which tends to inspire the majority (the non-joiners) with a great deal of fear and avoidance. One wonders if the case is really so unique. As I know from very extensive first-hand experience, the pursuit of economic gain through drastic 'magical' means forms, besides healing and the need for spiritual advice, one of the main concerns of clients consulting non-Christian ritual specialists (foremost *Sangomas*) in modern Botswana; one should therefore be surprised if Guta ra Mwari would be the only case of this concern spilling over into the domain of African Independent Churches. Perhaps we should make a more rigid distinction, in this connexion, between healing, on the one hand, and intercession for economic success, on the other; although Guta ra Mwari professes to offer healing along the same lines as other African Independent churches, its manifest concentrating on success intercession might be interpreted as a departure from the healing idiom which would render the acquiescence-through-healing argument no longer applicable.

The amazing success of Guta ra Mwali, in terms of membership, economic assets and freedom in the face of state law, shows that state-church dynamics in Botswana has to be understood, partly, as a dialogue over premises of power and their effective organizational articulation in the civil society. In this dialogue the state can afford to occasionally adopt the idiom of established churches and larger African Independent churches like the Spiritual Healing Church: their basic premises of power (articulated in formal bureaucratic or-

ganization) converge, and whatever theocratic inspiration the church may have nurtured originally, is given up in exchange for formal state recognition and protection, which makes it possible for these churches to appeal to the state when they need arbitration in their own ranks, and when they seek to expand in the wider society in terms of assets (such as church plots, raffles, training institutes) which only the state can provide or legitimate.

In independent Botswana, new African Independent churches typically emerge in a penumbra beyond direct state interference, and our statistical analyses have shown that as long as they remain very small and do not seek a more than minimal and local impact on society, they may subsequently wax and wane, without the state even noticing. The majority of these churches however move out of this penumbra towards the state centre, seek registration, and in the process (against the background of an authoritarian attitude towards African Independent churches dating back to the colonial era) are subjected to far greater state interference with regard to their doctrine, organization and therapeutic practices, than would be stipulated by the letter of the law. Are they on their way to join the cosmopolitan churches and the established African Independent churches? Or are many more only seeking cover under the appearances of acquiescence, while in fact following a track that would bring them closer to the Guta ra Mwali position? Or is there, in addition to this symbolic challenge under the cover of bureaucratic dissimulation, yet another trajectory, that which leads to open challenge of a theocratic or even military nature – as in the well-known case of the Zambian Lumpa church?[79] The acquiescence perspective would suggest that in the course of the latter development, churches would have to discard individual healing for a more political, theocratic conception of good and evil; but then, even in the Lumpa church, healing was a central concern.

There is yet another dimension to state-church interaction in the context of African Independent churches in Botswana. Our statistical analysis has highlighted the strong over-representation of urban congregations. Although many rural congregations exist, Independency is the expression *par excellence* of people in the process of urbanization and, by implication, of extensive involvement in the capitalist mode of production. In a continent where uncontrolled urban masses have constituted the main nightmare of colonial and post-colonial governments, the urban bias in Botswana independency must constitute a significant factor in the state's attempts to control these churches and force a formal bureaucratic logic upon them.

Finally, the example of the Hosanna Religious and Traditional Association brings out another aspect of the limitations of state control over religious organizations through the Societies Act. Underneath the somewhat surprising adoption of a modern state-defined juridical form, such an organization is primarily concerned with historic continuity: it seeks to safeguard the Mwali cult

[79] *Cf.* van Binsbergen 1981b and references cited there.

in the modern age. The state-registered association is only one facet of the cult today, and in addition (as closer observation and participation reveals), parallel to the bureaucratic mode, it retains – in historic and institutionalized ways as set out by Werbner (1989) – the cultic territorial organization, circulation of cult leaders, pilgrims and money, and the cult's symbolic and ritual repertoire, none of which are stipulated by the formal constitution as deposited with the Registrar of Societies. *The partial adoption of a new bureaucratic form is only an attempt to ensure that one can go on doing what one has been doing for, literally, centuries.* The same could be said for Botswana's several associations of traditional healers,[80] one of which (the Kwame (Legwame) Traditional Association of Botswana) in fact constitutes the modern face of another branch of the Mwali cult, having its Botswana headquarters not in Ramakgwebana (like the Hosanna Traditional and Religious Association) but in Nata, two-hundred kilometres northwest of Francistown.[81] In these cases, as in those of many independent churches, the adoption of a state-defined bureaucratic form allows religious leaders and therapists (through the acquisition of bank accounts, plots and buildings, motor vehicles, shops *etc*.) to expand into a modern economy whose conditions are largely set and controlled by the state, without fundamentally altering the premises under which leadership is gained and exercised, and under which the cult is organized. Here modernity and continuity go hand in hand in a way which is typical for present-day Botswana, and which may well help to explain the country's peculiar cultural and political stability.

These are some of the questions for further research. A note of caution, meanwhile, is in order with regard to the role of the church leadership. I have far from escaped the usual tendencies towards reification, and spoken of the state and the churches as if they were actors in themselves. Instead, of course, what we witness is the interaction between state officials and church leaders. To the extent to which churches form a semi-autonomous field *vis-à-vis* the state, church leaders can be said to straddle both structural domains, and by their activities as ritual and organizational entrepreneurs or brokers determine the dynamics of their mutual relationship. Church leaders are not only seeking to further the collective interests of their church through the formal means provided by the state; they also have their personal agendas, and not infrequently church assets end up being appropriated by individual church leaders. As a far wider range of case material than can be presented here indicates, the leaders' balancing of perceived individual and group organizational interest, and the

[80] Notably Kwame (Legwame) Traditional Association (file no. H28/30/34 vol. I, registered 2.5.1977) and United Herbalist Association (file no. H28/80/91 vol. I, registered 2.3.1979. Two other such associations mentioned by Staugård (1985: 229) no longer function legally if at all. As a qualified traditional healer, I have been a member of the Kwame (Legwame) Traditional Association since 1990, and have twice been taken to the Nata High God shrine in order to be confirmed in religious office, *cf*. van Binsbergen 1991a.

[81] Incidentally, both cultic headquarters have extensive relations with African Independent churches and, as High God shrines, are involved in the empowerment not only of non-Christian therapists but also of church leaders.

way this management is supported or challenged by the subaltern leadership and the followers at large, enables us to trace, and to a large extent explain, the trajectory of individual churches in their relationship to the state. The occurrence of many non-registered churches, on the other hand, shows that for these churches, and their leaders, the services the state could offer are not always essential for their spiritual and material orientation.

In order to study these specific trajectories and strategies we would have to leave the aggregate approach on the present study, and return to detailed case studies. The latter will provide explanations for the patterns which the quantitative study merely brought out but cannot begin to explain: why – beyond the effect of state support through registration, which I discussed in the context of factor analysis above – do some of these churches grow so fast and others do not?; why are some of them rapidly disintegrating while others manage to retain their unity without fragmenting into smaller church bodies breaking away? why do some adjacent African Independent churches co-exist in considerable harmony and spiritual fellowship, while others are at daggers drawn? Some of the most important questions that should be asked with regard to the African Independent churches in Botswana cannot be answered from the perspective of state-church interaction alone. The extensive literature available on church dynamics in other countries in Southern Africa, and particularly Daneel's (1971, 1974, 1988) monumental study of southern Shona churches in Zimbabwe, creates a favourable background for such further research. In this wider context of the sub-continent as a whole, further study should also explore the extent to which the perception of state-church relations in Zimbabwe and particularly South Africa has influenced Botswana state officials, and particularly the Registrar of Societies, to adopt specific attitudes *vis-à-vis* African Independent churches in Botswana, particularly those (like many of the larger ones) which originate from those countries. One would suppose that the acquiescence argument would not quite work out the same way in a totalitarian South Africa of the 1970s and 1980s, in UDI [Unilateral Declaration of Independence) Rhodesia (1965-1980), in independent Zimbabwe, the democratic South Africa since 1993, and in the populist democracy of Botswana since 1966, even if the legal instruments for state interventions might be shown to be similar.

Finally, is the churches' accommodation *vis-à-vis* the state merely a strategy to create freedom from further state interference? Are those which do register perhaps not very different, in their political and social aspirations, from those that escape registration? The test lies in the extent to which the churches not only, inevitably, generate social power outside the state, but also aspire to have this power extended to fields of social life monopolized by the state. Being reticent and populist, the Botswana state's claims in this respect are far less expansive than those of many other African states, where every case of student protest or every minor administrative row may automatically be interpreted as a challenge of the state and invoke state action (a repeated theme in the works of Bayart and Geschiere). To judge from their constitutions, theocratic tenden-

cies are hardly developed among African Independent churches in Botswana; but then, we have to realize that these constitutions are primarily formal instruments meant to function in a context of church / state interaction. For an adequate assessment of theocratic orientation, which would pose challenges even the Botswana state cannot afford to ignore, we have to go and look elsewhere. And as the studied peacefulness of Botswana public life is slowly eroded, in the most recent decades, by public riots and state violence which show that the careful texture of consensus is being rent by mounting class conflict, party-political conflict and *anomie*, August 1990 saw a case of church leaders being imprisoned for failure to respect such national symbols as the flag and the national anthem.

The peculiar emphasis on consensus in Botswana socio-political structure has prevented the dilemma's, cleavages and contradictions typical of peripheral capitalism, to find explicit political expressions and solutions. The exponential growth of African Independent churches must be understood in this context: offering symbolic, organizational, financial and therapeutic responses for existential problems engendered by modern conditions but hardly confronted by the state in *e.g.* its educational and cultural policies.

It is possible that the present aloofness and accommodation of African Independent churches *vis-à-vis* the Botswana state is only a passing phase, and that ultimately the demands of symbolic reconstruction which Jean Comaroff so rightly stresses (also *cf.* van Binsbergen 1981b), will lead to more extensive and possibly violent confrontation. However today, a quarter of a century after this was first written, this has not yet happened – the establishment of majority rule in neighbouring South Africa, and its consolidation over much the same period, has substantially altered the parameters at play between state and church in Botswana, in ways that invite further research.

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