Botswana’s *Makgabaneng*: An Audience Reception Study of an Edutainment Drama

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L. Meghan Peirce

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This dissertation titled
Botswana’s *Makgabaneng*: An Audience Reception Study of an Edutainment Drama

by
L. MEGHAN PEIRCE

has been approved for
the School of Media Arts and Studies
and the Scripps College of Communication by

______________________________
Rafael Obregon
Associate Professor of Media Arts and Studies

______________________________
Gregory J. Shepherd
Dean, Scripps College of Communication
ABSTRACT

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Botswana’s Makgabaneng: An Audience Reception Study of an Edutainment Drama

Director of Dissertation: Rafael Obregon

Makgabaneng is a serial radio soap drama that addresses critical HIV/AIDS awareness and behavior change issues in Botswana. Based on the MARCH strategy (Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV/AIDS), this drama aims to help change risky behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS through modeling and reinforcement. Specifically, Makgabaneng aims to provide listeners with higher levels of HIV knowledge that will lead towards prevention and less stigmatizing attitudes towards those affected by HIV/AIDS. This study serves as an audience reception analysis of Makgabaneng. Through triangulation methodologies, a better understanding is gained of how citizens of Botswana interpret and make sense of the edutainment series. A survey evaluation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations contribute to the final conclusions of this study. Accordingly, this audience reception study provides a deeper understanding of how listeners of Makgabaneng construct themselves and their environment through the edutainment media.

Results from this analysis demonstrate some areas where the program could improve. Fans believe that the drama is targeted towards youth, excluding Makgabaneng’s actual target audience of individuals’ aged 10-49 years; participants expressed sentiments of tuning out any message that centers on HIV/AIDS due to message fatigue; the absence of church and religion proved troublesome to many; fidelity and the risks of multiple concurrent partnerships are talked about in the drama more often...
than the other five recommended PEPFAR themes. The most empowering messages were targeted towards females only, resulting in male fans only seeing negative behavior as the norm in society; discrepancies also exists between the ways in which traditional and modern fans interpret the same storylines.

However, fans of the program express sentiments of being generally satisfied with the production of the program; they believe the drama is similar to what real-life is like in Botswana; and the most enthusiastic fans of the drama are using storylines to initiate conversations about the storyline in real-life situations. This demonstrates the potential of *Makgabaneng* as an HIV/AIDS public health development intervention to help facilitate social change.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Rafael Obregon

Associate Professor of Media Arts and Studies
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As a media cultural studies scholar, I have always been interested in the way popular culture is reflected in the everyday life. My research interests have centered on the process of individual negotiations of media artifacts, and how this sense-making process contributes to the way in which individuals see the world. This research has most often pointed me towards close readings of media texts, for the purpose of critically analyzing issues of political economy, hegemony and representations. As a critical scholar, I am not interested in ultimate ‘Truths’. I do not ask questions that point me towards consummate answers. Instead, I believe that multiple realities exist and that human behavior is the result of a complex sense-making process. More importantly, I am a scholar who, above anything else, is interested in the way individuals live.

I believe that media holds a crucial role in this sense-making process. Its power influences the way cultures, ideologies and societies evolve. Naturally, my curiosity in the way individuals live has led me towards questions regarding media’s potential as a resource in positive social change. Thankfully, the Media Arts and Studies doctoral program at Ohio University has allowed me to work closely with its Communication and Development Program. Through this scholarship, I have been able to research how media is utilized in public health intervention in development contexts to help facilitate social change. Often, these interventions are done through Entertainment-education strategies.

“Entertainment-education seeks to capitalize on the popular appeal of entertainment media in order to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier and happier lives” (Pant, Singhal & Bhasin, 2002, p. 36). This definition itself infers a
complex process of audience identification, modeling and individual social construction. Unfortunately, this process has largely been ignored by scholars in the dominant communication for development paradigm. Arguably, the Communication for Development and Social Change field has conceptualized the role of communication in international development, including public health initiatives through three theoretical strands: Modernization, Dependency and Participatory Theories (Tuft, 2000; Waisbord, 2001; and Singhal & Rogers, 2003). These theoretical strands have been defined in many different ways: Tuft (2000) conceptualized them as theories, Waisbord (2001) and Melkote (2001) conceptualized them as paradigms, and Obregon & Mosquera (2005) and Morris (2003) conceptualized them as models. The Modernization approach is centered on information diffusion and transmission models, mostly interested in individual behavioral effects; Dependency is a critical approach that examines media as a tool for promoting dominant ideologies, and Participatory approaches prove much more interested in audience involvement and participation regarding issues of individual and collective empowerment.

Entertainment-education as a widely-used strategy in public health intervention has evolved through the same continuum, with first generation strategies positioned more in line with Modernization approaches; second generation strategies positioned as more Dependency approaches; and third generation strategies positioned as more Participatory approaches (Tuft, 2005). While this body of literature points to the importance of more audience-centered interventions and research, many entertainment-education interventions still draw on elements of the dominant Modernization paradigm, which
proves incredibly top-down in nature, where participants are regarded as objects of a predetermined media effect (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). This Modernization approach largely seeks to fulfill donor agendas and provide statistical ‘Truths’ regarding the individual behavior change process.

Unfortunately, media cultural studies research demonstrates how complex this media reception process, which also includes the reception of entertainment-education programs, truly proves. These complexities caused an epistemological shift in the 1980s, calling for more qualitative audience reception analysis that branch away from the more dominant media effects paradigm (Tufte, 2000; Morley, 2006; Fiske, 1987; and McKee, 2003). Based on this understanding, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine a public health entertainment-education intervention by exploring the role of the audience from a communication for development and social change perspective. Thankfully, Ohio University holds a long-standing and unique relationship with the entertainment-education initiative, Makgabaneng. Makgabaneng is a serial radio soap drama that addresses critical HIV/AIDS awareness and behavior change issues in Botswana. Through this partnership, I was able to pursue all of my interests through an audience reception study that fulfills the following four objectives:

First, this study examines the generalized consumption patterns among fans of Makgabaneng. This is done by looking at the amount of time spent with the drama, as well as the media context of participants. Second, this study looks at the most likely interpretations of Makgabaneng, by uncovering the story’s most salient themes, as well as the audiences’ interaction with the five recommended PEPFAR themes (fidelity,
alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with HIV positives and abstinence). PEPFAR is the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. It is defined as, “the U.S. Government initiative to help save the lives of those suffering from HIV/AIDS around the world” (PEPFAR, 2011). This analysis will also explore what issues are of most concern to Botswana citizens. Third, it examines how audiences are identifying with the radio drama. This portion of the analysis is based on the Entertainment-education MARCH Model and examines how fans of Makgabaneng relate to the storylines and characters presented in the drama. It also looks at differences between gender, tradition and modernity. Finally, this study looks at how audiences of Makgabaneng construct their own lived reality through the radio drama. This portion of the analysis provides a better understanding of how fans of the radio drama define themselves and the world around them. Based on these objectives, this dissertation will make recommendations regarding future entertainment-education interventions in public health, with a particular emphasis on their research and evaluation components and a focus on the use of more audience-centered approaches. It also provides a deeper understanding of the audience sense-making process.

Dissertation Overview

In order to fulfill these objectives, the literature review for this dissertation proposal has been divided into five key components:

First, the literature review explores the cultural studies paradigm and the role of the audience in the mass media process (p. 11). Though many scholars regard the
influence of media consumption in various ways, it is imperative to understand the assumptions made in this research study. Particularly, this media studies portion of the literature review will demonstrate why the audience reception and sense-making process is such a critical piece towards the monitoring and evaluation process of entertainment-education driven public health interventions.

Second, the literature review looks at the history of cultural storytelling and the importance of soap dramas in culture (p. 26). It will discuss the political economy of soap operas and advertising, how they have pushed forth dominant ideologies and globalization, their connection to government, as well as how they have historically been used to educate about social health issues. This analysis is important, as it helps explain how cultural power is exerted by a dominant group over other groups, also known as cultural hegemony (Durham & Kellner, 2001).

The third component serves as a comprehensive literature review of entertainment education and social change (p. 37). There has been an important shift in the behavior change and edutainment literature, particularly within the field of communication for health, development and social change. This meta-analysis explores how the discipline is currently evolving. It focuses on specific communication and social change theories, audience reception theories, and how new research calls for more audience-centered approaches and alternative monitoring and evaluation techniques. Specifically, this analysis situates Makgabaneng in the larger context of the communication for health, development and social change field through a review of how it has transitioned from the
dominant Modernization paradigm, to more critical perspectives such as Dependency Theory, and the alternative Participatory approaches.

Fourth, the literature review explores the MARCH behavior change strategy that relies on edutainment to achieve its objectives (p. 70). This is completed through a case study of Botswana’s Makgabaneng (p. 77). The radio soap drama Makgabaneng uses social psychology theories to produce behavioral change messages, and holds a very interesting history regarding its rise as an official NGO organization (Cole, 2005).

Finally, this study explores elements of Botswana in further detail (p. 107). This includes their fight against HIV/AIDS, economic struggles, as well as many cultural contexts necessary towards understanding the political, and socio-cultural dimensions of this country. These are all necessary literature components to understanding the complexities of an entertainment-education, or edutainment as it will be referred to in this analysis, audience reception study.

Now that we have explored the foundation of literature that this study is based, it is important to shift attention towards the research methodologies that will be utilized. Triangulation of research methods were used to examine the generalized consumption patterns among fans of Makgabaneng, the most likely interpretations of fans, how audiences identify with the radio drama, and how fans construct their own lived reality through the storyline. This was done through a survey, interviews, focus group discussion, participant observation and field visitations. Each of these methodologies serves a unique purpose in answering research questions.
The way in which audiences might make meanings out of media texts have largely been studied through the use of textual analysis (McKee, 2003). This study will utilize elements of a textual analysis to further understand how audiences in Botswana might make sense of radio programs focused on health issues. While this methodology proves incredibly useful in answering questions about interpretations, it also holds some limitations. Particularly, textual analyses are often media-centric in nature and do not provide detailed information regarding specific audience interpretations and interpersonal dialogue surrounding the text (Tufte, 2000). Therefore, a triangulation study is necessary. Consistent with this knowledge, the following research design is utilized:

Episodes 865-896 of *Makgabaneng* were read prior to data collections. These episodes were the most recent scripts broadcast during the time of data collection, as well as the most recent frame of reference for fans of *Makgabaneng*. These episodes were read once as entertainment before administering a survey to provide a broader understanding of what the content in the drama is like, a second time to identify reoccurring themes within the radio drama as highlighted by the researcher, and a third time to link these themes in connection to one another after interview discussions for the purposes of making multiple and secondary interpretations.

This analysis then highlights the themes and patterns of HIV/AIDS messages, by providing information regarding how *Makgabaneng*'s audience potentially interprets the program, as well as the drama’s balance between entertainment and education. This is important information, as it provides critical insights into the most salient themes of *Makgabaneng*, how likeable positive character role models are portrayed, and how
preferred donor themes exist within the text. A more detailed list of research questions can be found on page 105. By combining elements of a textual analysis with other methodologies, the researcher is also able to explore multiple and alternative readings based on information from the other methodologies, and the media environment in which Makgabaneng is situated in Botswana. Furthermore, it helps us to understand how culturally specific the storyline in Makgabaneng proves, as the researcher is not a member of the Botswana culture. If this drama could easily be aired anywhere else in the world, perhaps cultural contextualization could be improved.

A survey was designed and distributed to 224 residents of Botswana, aged 16-49. Drawing on the recommendations of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and current entertainment-education literature, this survey assessed consumption demographics, media access, HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes towards Makgabaneng, character identification, storyline preference, sense of empowerment, HIV/AIDS stigma, attitudes and behaviors regarding fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with positives, stigma, abstinence and birth control.

Once these components were completed, I was better able to understand the story of Makgabaneng and possible audience interpretation patterns. This insight helped me design an interview guide suitable for fans of Makgabaneng to use during the focus group discussions and interviews. Four focus group interviews were conducted, that lasted approximately 60-90 minutes each, and was loosely structured based on Tufte’s (2000) interview guide in his book on audience reception, Living With the Rubbish Queen. All questions used in this study were included in the interview guide, and several additional
questions were added based on recurring themes and other similar studies that examine how audiences interpret drama storylines. At least 8-10 participants participated in each focus group interview, and they were divided between individuals aged 16-19, 20-24, 25-34, and 35-49, with males and females in the same groups. These age categorizations have been determined by the targeted audience of Makgabaneng (up to 49 years of age), and the World Health Organization’s youth and adult classification (Tang, Petrie & Rao, 2007).

The breadths of arguments made in this analysis are based on 42 interviews with fans of Makgabaneng. Interviews with participants lasted an average of 15-30 minutes each. Participation in the study was voluntary, and individuals were self defined fans of the drama. Sampling recruitment was mostly done through a key informant in the capital of Botswana, Gaborone. The key informant is a respected leader in Botswana who grew up in a rural village and currently resides in the urban capital of Gaborone, and therefore has connections to both regions. We used convenience sampling to find self-defined fans of the radio drama.

Finally, this triangulation study included participant observation and field visitations. Field visits were completed to the main office of Makgabaneng where informal interviews were conducted with employees and fans. Home visits were also conducted to explore various home media environments with various friends of the informants. These additional components allowed for more intimate familiarity with the culture and people most familiar with these initiatives. Additionally, more in-depth
interviews were also completed with select employees of *Makgabaneng* to expand on themes found within the initial informal interviews.
CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL STUDIES MASS MEDIA PARADIGM AND EDUTAINMENT

The literature on entertainment-education for development and social change has gone through many substantial changes over the years. This study highlights this evolution in order to explore how audience reception studies can enhance and strengthen work in this area. Rather than intervention evaluations being based only on predetermined variables or donor recommendations, this study argues that evaluations should give greater voice to the audience. By understanding how fans make sense of storylines and create community dialogue surrounding the drama, more will be known regarding how audiences interpret messages that are part of these public health interventions, and how they apply them to their daily lives.

Cultural studies holds roots through the inflections of Marxism, semiotics, post-structuralism and ethnography (Fiske, 1987). This paradigm stems from a critique of the Frankfurt school’s hypodermic model of direct effects. It instead incorporates a two-step model of mediated influence where individuals use media for their own purposes.

In the late 1970’s, Stuart Hall developed an encoding/decoding model, which argued that meaning is regarded as a socially constructed entity, rather than believing an ultimate Truth out exists. Here, meaning is seen as a product of an encoding and decoding process (Hall, 1974).

In the 1980’s and 1990’s, media cultural scholars in the United Kingdom began looking at the role of media in this process and how it influences public understandings
through audience activity (Kitzinger, 2004). It is against this backdrop that audience research is now understood. As demonstrated through this Cultural Studies research paradigm, modern Audience-Centered Theories focus on understanding the complex audience sense-making process (Durham & Kellner, 2001). Here, the audience plays a much more active role. In fact, they are often regarded as a ‘user’, suggesting that they play a much larger role than simply ‘receiving’ a text. The assumptions of this paradigm believe that audiences exist among a larger cultural environment, and this environment consistently advances various meanings and identities. Audiences respond to these stimuli differently by negotiating their meaning in complex and paradoxical ways. Media is important to this self-construction, as it plays such an important role in contemporary society (Durham & Kellner, 2001).

Media is considered a cultural agent, a medium that is able to circulate meaning. Characters presented through media are not just representations, but also serve as encodings of a particular ideology (Fiske, 1987). Audiences are able to negotiate through these encodings to make sense of whom they are, and how they fit into the world they live (McKee, 2003). Values, experience and media environment all play an important role this process. Individuals hold different sense-making systems and are able to see the world in a variety of manners. Therefore, it is important to note that a researcher can never uncover or find a correct reading of a particular media text. Cultural Studies research holds a variety of reception research, where audiences are examined among the realms of political, policy, technological, economic and social theory. By developing this
multi-level conception of audiences, a better understanding is gained of the audiences’ activity and resistance towards media text (Livingstone, 1998).

Different taxonomies are utilized as theoretical groundings regarding perceptions of the role audience play among various theoretical approaches that guide E-E strategies. For example, Social Psychological Theories are based on the mass media effects tradition. Here, the audience plays a much more passive role regarding media consumption. Contextual Theories are a more critical approach that regards media as a dominating force, which promotes prevailing ideologies. Audience-centered Theories regard audiences as much more active in nature, where media is negotiated against individual experience and values in a person’s sense-making process (Sood, Witte, & Menard, 2003).

Tufte (2005) argued how Entertainment-education, the conceptual underpinning of this study, has evolved and adapted to these changing perceptions of the audience through three generations of E-E interventions. First generation entertainment-education interventions were utilized to distribute information and raise awareness aimed at individual behavior change, largely based on Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. Here, audiences played a very passive role as a receiver of information. They are able to comprehend and regulate their environment and make meanings regarding what they see (Bryant & Oliver, 2009). Through these experiences, people process symbols and transform transient experiences into models that later serve as guides for action. By viewing corrective adjustments of others during behavior production, people earn through
modeling. They may not necessarily need to experience those same behaviors in order to make a change (Bandura, 2004).

During the 1990’s, second generation approaches began to emerge. These interventions were critical towards structural barriers to individual behavior change in a society. More participatory components were then added to strategies. This approach posits that audiences are more interactive; however the goal is still for information to be transmitted onto audiences, and for these to take action regarding use of social and health services and or attitudinal and behavioral change. The third generations of E-E initiatives posits that development problems are not a result of a knowledge gap, but rather the result of structural and power inequities. Instead of focusing on individual behavior change, third generation strategies focus on empowerment and dialogue. This approach is based on the active role of audiences to negotiate meanings and construct their lived reality. These three generations clearly illustrate the E-E theoretical continuum, which is grounded on the history and evolution of communication for development and social change. In order to understand this further, more must be known regarding the history of Communication for Development and Social Change.

Communication Approaches to Development and Social Change

Development Communication has its origins as International aid programs that help with areas that struggle with poverty, illiteracy, poor health and a lack of economic, political and social infrastructures and refers to the application of communication strategies and principles in the developing world (Waisbord, 2001). Development is
synonymous with “political democracy, rising levels of productivity and industrialization, high literacy rates, longer life expectancy, and the like” (1). Since its conception in the 1950’s, Development Communication has moved away from a Dominant Paradigm that compares underdeveloped societies to developed Western ideals, to a more thorough understanding that communication can aid interactions, massive mobilization, universal participation in decision making on matters of public interest and in the process of implementing national goals (Beltrán, 1967).

The mission of Communication for Social Change research is, “to help people living in poor communities communicate effectively so that they can be the best advocates for the change needed to improve their lives, communities and countries” (CFSC, 1999). Social change can happen through a process of community dialogue, leading to collective action that affects the welfare of communities as a whole as well as their individual members. The model of Communication for Social Change (CFSC) describes an iterative process where community dialogue and collective action work together to produce social change in a community that improves the health and welfare of all of its members (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002).

Entertainment-education is just one possible Development Communication approach to social change. It is unique in its use of mass media in the development process. However, it is important to note that a multiplicity of theories and concepts emerged over the past fifty years in the field of Development Communication (Waisbord, 2001). Literature has referred to this field of study in many different ways (i.e.: Development Communication, Communication for Development, Communication and
Development, amongst others). For the purposes of this study, and for simplicity, Communication for Development and Social Change will be referred to as Development Communication. Development Communication has been defined as the “strategic application of communication technologies and processes to promote social change” (Morris, 2003, 225). The initial goal of Development Communication was to raise the quality of life populations, increase income and well-being, eradicate social injustice, promote land reform, freedom of speech and establish community centers for entertainment (Melkote, 2001). However, these developmental goals are constantly changing based on contextual needs of specific interventions.

Three major trends within the history of development communication theories are Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory and Participatory Theory (Tufte, 2000, p. 8). One of the biggest challenges in Development Communication is conceptualizing these definitions, but this analysis has been guided by the work of Waisbord (2001), entitled *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication: Convergences and Differences*. It is important to know what assumptions go along with each theory.

Behavior change models have been the dominant paradigm in the field of development communication. “Different theories and strategies shared the premise that problems of development were basically rooted in lack of knowledge and that, consequently, interventions needed to provide people with information to change behavior” (Waisbord, 2001, 2). This early generation of development communication was mostly dominated by Modernization Theory.
Modernization Theory tends to be simple, ideal and mechanical. This perspective portrays development as a linear process where a country must pass through five phases in order to become modern. Here, the aim is to be a production of fully developed societies of mass consumption. Media transmits an idealized picture of the lifestyles in which modernization theorists held as their ideal (Tufte, 2000). The assumption of Modernization is that after an innovation is developed; widespread adoption will follow in a highly predictable and systematic process.

However, research began demonstrating how users’ initial attempts at implementation do not often lead to effective behavior change. Diffusion theorists view communication as a one-way process, where opinion leaders mediate the impact of mass media communications. Therefore, early adopters tend to be more involved in local organizations, better educated, and hold community leadership roles (Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Melkote, 2001). These criticisms led to new camps of thinking regarding the behavior change process.

Dependency Theory was developed in the 1960s. It served as a critique of the modernization process. Researchers from this paradigm do not believe that the problems of third world countries would disappear as soon as development occurs in the form of economic growth and industrialization (ie: Sood & Rogers, 2000; Tufte, 2000). International capitalism is the root of developmental problem, not the solution. This is because developed nations profit from commerce while peripheral nations suffer from unequal exchange process. In this theory, media promotes cultural imperialism and strengthens dependency on consumerism.
Dependency analysis was most influenced by Marxist and critical theorists who believed that the problems of the Third World reflected the general dynamics of capitalist development (Waisbord, 2001). Development problems responded to the unequal distribution of resources created by the global expansion of Western capitalism. Here, the problems of the Third World are presented as political, rather than the result of a lack of information. By turning to mass media as an individual resource in fighting these problems, dependency theorists believed fundamental problems of media access and content were being ignored.

Participatory Theory emerged in the 1980’s, even though its roots go back to the 1950’s and 1960’s, and criticized many of the underlying assumptions of Modernization Theory. However, unlike Dependency Theorists, the focus of Participatory Theory is not only critiquing media power structures and consumerism. Instead, it shifts towards facilitating individual and collective empowerment of the people and community participation. The role of the audience is much different in this approach, as audiences play an active role, rather than serve as a receiver of information. This approach can be seen as a form of cultural studies and looks at popular culture as an outlet of everyday life as the popular sectors of society. It examines the needs, histories, trajectories and distinct socio-cultural profiles (Tufte, 2000). “The role of mass media in the process of development has been a central issue, but ultimately the debate has been not only about a new communication order, but also a debate on a new global order—a political discussion about power and a more just development of society” (12).
In this theory, the goal of communication moves towards sparking interpersonal dialogue to promote cultural identity, trust and commitment (Waisbord, 2001). Communication is able to provide a sense of ownership to community members through sharing and reconstructing experiences. Rather than disseminating information from the top to the bottom, it is a process where everyone discusses possibilities together. This more human-centered approach believes that the role of media and technologies should be used to supplement, rather than dominate interpersonal methods (Waisbord, 2001; Gray-Felder & Deane, 1999).

E-E Intervention Continuum

These Development Communication Theories help guide various strategies, models and interventions for social change. The intervention most often associated with mass media is entertainment-education (E-E). E-E can be categorized across two conceptual continuums: diffusion and participation. The diffusion model is based on Roger’s Diffusion of Innovations Theory, central to the modernization approach of the 1950s and 1960s (Morris, 2003). Here, behavior change is the goal of communication campaigns and is achieved by educating individuals, or Knowledge/Attitudes/Practice (KAP). By providing knowledge, individuals begin having a shift in attitudes, which then influences how they practice. These types of campaigns are generally completed through mass media. Diffusion models are very much based on media-centric and ‘magic bullet’ theories of effects (Waisbord, 2003).
Roger’s Diffusion of Innovations Theory (also referred to as Diffusion of Innovations and/or Diffusion) suggests that a new idea is able to spread through media outlets overtime among members of a targeted community (Haider & Kreps, 2004). Social change occurs as a result of this process based on the diffusion, adoption or rejection of these new ideas. This process involves four main interacting factors: an innovation, communication channels, social systems and time (Haider & Kreps, 2004). Over time, audience members pass through various stages. Audience member must adopt, implement and confirm recommended messages (Svenkerud & Singhal, 1998). Rogers explains how individuals negotiate media messages with existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adapters (Des Jarlais, Sloboda, Friedman, Tempalskki et al, 2006). If adoption is successful, individuals could initiate new desired behavior through commencement or end undesirable behaviors through cessation (Haider & Kreps, 2004).

Participation model is more grounded in the assumption that behavior change is a horizontal process, not vertical (Morris, 2003; Gray-Felder & Deane, 1999). It stresses the importance of community dialogue for empowerment (CFSC, 1999). Pant, Singhal & Bhasin (2002) found that by using participatory approaches to media design, one is better able to include and reach the voices of the targeted and hard to reach listeners.

Paulo Freire is one of the most influential thinkers to inspire the social and cultural movements in the past two or three decades. His work believes that the individual is able to intervene actively in his or her own process of becoming aware and conscious of his/her own reality. The dialogue of the social commitment and the constant
dialectic between action-reflection-action are core elements in what has become to be known as the “Paulo Freire method” (Freire, 1969; Tufte, 2000).

Freire (1969) believed that in order to move people from the point of emergency to critical transitivity, interventions must spark three matrices: People must engage in an active dialogue of critical and criticism-stimulation; education program content must be changed; and breakdown and codification techniques must be used. This methodology is based on horizontal dialogue between persons.

Singhal and Rogers (2003) explain how Freire, author of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1970, argues that most political, educational and communication interventions fail because technocrats design them based on their own personal view of reality. Instead, the teacher should serve as a learner and the learner should serve as a teacher. True participation does not involve a subject-object relationship, only a subject-subject relationship. The audience does not need to be filled with expert knowledge. “Once the oppressed, both individually and collectively, begin to critically reflect on their social situation, possibilities arise for them to break the “culture of silence” through the articulation of discontent and action” (232).

An illustration of the many strands of Development Communication and Social Change, as well as the positioning of E-E interventions, is illustrated below in Figure 1.
There are several criticisms of entirely participation model. According to Waisbord (2003), participatory approaches must be sensitive to the convenience of short-term solutions, recognize the implications of foreign manipulation, translate participatory ideas into actual programs, be sensitive to uninterested communities, and understand that participation may actually deepen community divisions. Most of these challenges could be avoided if they are carried out in communities where agencies already hold linkages.
One of the most important things to consider is that basic needs, such as food, shelter and clothes, must be met in a community before empowerment is possible (Dutta, 2006). However, participation does not necessarily mean financial engagement. Participatory Communication for Social Change includes any process through which people define themselves what they need and how to get there, through dialogue (Parks, 2005). “It utilizes dialogue that leads to collective problem identification of solutions to development issues” (3).

In a study by Husain & Shaikh (2005), a village was given condoms free of cost. However, they found that the likelihood of using the condom actually increased if the individual had to pay for it. This is consistent with Participatory Communication for Social Change, as by purchasing the condom, an individual is actually taking part and becoming an advocate for the cause. Participation makes provider-client relationships more egalitarian (Dutta, 2006). Active participation in political process is critical to the readjustment of structural forces that exist as the core of the problem.

It should be noted that these two models are not completely antagonistic to one another. Researchers draw on components from both conceptual matters, as even participatory projects require some sort of information transfer (Morris, 2003). However, most E-E projects situate themselves in one of these categories. In general, one can determine where a campaign is situated between these paradigms by examining the outcomes. The diffusion model is more concerned with changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices, and the participatory model is more concerned with empowerment, community building and social equity (Morris, 2003). Because E-E strategies rely so
heavily on mass media, they tend to be regarded as diffusion models. However, the most successful campaigns are those that include a community-based interpersonal communication component. MARCH is one of the edutainment models that hold this component through its reinforcement element. However, Petraglia (2007) analyzed MARCH and found that the “reinforcement element of MARCH has received less attention than it deserves” (499). Rather than regarding reinforcement as the repetitious interpersonal addition to edutainment campaigns, Petraglia argues that ‘reinforcement’ can also be accomplished through audience reception. Through the sense-making process, audiences are able to reinforce many of the elements of the E-E program.

Clearly, the focus of exposure research is on the number of individuals receiving specific predetermined intervention messages. However, this study argues that it is more telling to know how people are interpreting the intervention message. Rather than asking questions regarding exposure, frequency and understanding consistent with intended messages, this study explores questions of sense making and personal reality construction.

Though many of these theories hold incredible points of differences among their approaches, there are many points of convergence that have been achieved in the past few years. These include the need of political will and empowerment, a “tool-kit” conception of strategies that provide different diagnosis for different contexts, an integration of “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches, a combination of multimedia and interpersonal communication, and an inclusion of both person and environmental approaches (Waisbord, 2003).
In summary, modern E-E research has gone beyond individual-level behavioral change to looking at interventions and processes at the community-level. They can either model individual self-efficacy, an individual’s perception of his or her capability to deal with and control a situation, or collective efficacy, how a group expects to achieve a goal (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Strategies must motivate their audience by stimulating interpersonal communication among peers.

Though it may be easy to dismiss communication theory in the implementation of E-E strategies, research shows that interventions based on theory hold a better chance of success than those that are not (King, 1999). Moreover, theory makes it easier to understand why or why not an intervention proves successful. Researchers argue that it best if theory is utilized in the production, monitoring and evaluation stages. Therefore, is important to understand the theoretical background of production, monitoring and evaluation. More importantly, it is necessary to understand how each of these influences audience reception of E-E interventions. Though it is clear how research has come to realize the importance of audience sense-making in the reception process, the complexities of this process remain unclear. It is only through thorough audience reception studies such as this that we will come to understand these stages better.
CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL STORYTELLING AND SOAP DRAMAS

Storytelling has evolved as one of our most primary and powerful forms of communication (Ohler, 2008). Individuals have always told narratives with hopes of passing down traditions through generation to generation. It is fitting to examine the telling of stories in order to gain a sense of a particular culture in time, as stories are a reflection of the values and ideologies within society. Through its deepest roots, stories were told orally and passed down through generations of families. Today, mass media has allowed us to record these retelling of stories, and produce mass amounts of them. “The phenomenon we identify as folklore permeates all society assisted by mass media” (Degh, 1994, 1). Just because these stories today are being told through a different medium, their value is hardly diminished.

Folklore is the art of storytelling within a culture. Through folklore, “a similar lesson, theme or structure pattern is resembled, recycled and re-taught. Stories provide cultural continuity” (Levine, 2006). Folklore “is the product of an ongoing historical process that consolidates the interaction of literary and oral, professional and nonprofessional, formal and informal, constructed and improvised creativity” (Degh, 1).

These folkloric messages are retold by the thousands through mass media broadcasts. “The omnivorous mass media of television, films, records, and radio absorb and engulf all kinds of folk themes and formulas, to spew them out to their giant audiences in a cultural feedback” (Dorson, 1972, 42). Each program represents similar structure and content that is very telling of the way a culture lives. Perhaps these
archetype stories are even more meaningful today because their existence is broadcast to such widespread masses. For this reason, it is important that media content production is similar to the behaviors of real-life culture. “In order to create a sense of presence, virtual reality should come as close as possible to our daily visual experience” (Bolter & Grusin, 2002, 2).

Soap Dramas

Perhaps one of the most permeated and repetitive story formats told through global media is the daytime serial drama. Serial dramas have proven successful because they are able to capture the attention and the emotions of the audience and provide repetition and continuity with their audiences. Each and everyday these stories unfold in the living room of their audiences’ home. Serial soap dramas allow for setbacks and multiple subplots through character building, as well as address the same theme through multiple scenarios (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Serial dramas provide a common narrative that audiences can discuss at an interpersonal level, much like “water cooler talk” in the United States.

Daytime serial dramas, or soap operas as they are referenced in America, hold roots in consumerism and advertising. They are most often cited with beginnings as a vehicle to reach housewives who made everyday purchasing decisions in the household. In the late 20’s the female commodity audience proved easily targetable, as they could be easily reached in the daytime, doing housework, listening to episodic serial dramas on NBC or CBS (Durham & Kellner, 2007). This audience became an important consumer
target, as they were seen as an impressionable group with a high amount of spending power. For this reason, Gledhill (1992) believes that soap stories have always operated within the frameworks of domestic realism and romance. Though much has changed in soap programs, modern melodramatizations follow very repetitive scripts, much like traditional folklores, but vary according to the contemporary popular culture of which they exist.

“The soap opera has distinct roots in both English and French serial novels, which were carried over time in magazine and newspapers. U.S. radio, and later, television took this idea and developed a particular form of soap opera, to entertain and draw loyal audiences over time, but explicitly also to sell soap” (Durham & Kellner, 2004, 690). Soap companies then worked with advertising agencies to take the genre abroad, specifically to Latin America. Soaps were then adapted to the genre of Latin American culture, aiming stories at both men and women. This is an example of a global form of soap dramas being localized for the expression of local identity. “In fact, in Brazil and India, among others, the soap opera became a prime vehicle for creating elements of a national culture and spreading them among localized and regionalized audiences that had not always shared a great deal of common culture” (691).

Weibel (1977) explains the most frequent and repetitive themes found within soap dramas, including the evil woman, the great sacrifice, the winning back of an estranged lover/spouse, marrying back of an estranged lover/spouse, marrying her for money or respectability, the unwed mother, deceptions about the paternity of children, career vs. housewife, the alcoholic woman and occasional man (56). These patterns can be
consistently found in soap dramas across the world. Moreover, audiences have begun to hold certain expectations regarding the genre. These predictable casts make it very simple for audiences to create identifications with protagonists and root against the antagonists. 

Demonstrating the repetitive nature of the soap storytelling format, Brown (1987) highlights eight generic characteristics of soap operas: 1. Serial form which resists narrative closure. 2. Multiple characters and plots. 3. Use of time which parallels actual time and implies that the action continues to take place whether we watch it or not. 4. Abrupt segmentation between parts. 5. Emphasis on dialogue, problem solving and intimate conversation. Male characters that are sensitive men. 7. Female characters who are often professional and otherwise powerful in the world outside of the home. 8. The home, or some other place that functions as a home, as the setting for the show (4).

These patterns of media production are an example of Drama Theories. Drama Theories look at the role people play or the scripts that they follow in their daily lives. Bentley’s Dramatic Theory breaks theater genre into five categories: tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, face and melodrama (Bentley, 1967). The structure of each of these categories provides the framework for creating character archetypes in soap dramas, whether that be television, radio or theater. This includes providing specific and easily recognizable tones, anecdotes and characters (Singhal, Cody, Rogers & Sabido, 2004). These patterns are similar to the ones you would see in soaps all across the world and can be combined with Weibel’s (1977) most frequent themes found within soap dramas. Overall, Weibel (1977) explains how soap dramas are designed so that fans tend to deplore the victimizers and identify with the victims. There are little instances of
redeemable villains with a soft side. Identification is done in very black and white terms, thus making it an interesting media text to examine when interested in behavior modeling.

Modleski (1979) explains this identification process further. Gender roles are often the standard to which identification happens. Male protagonists tend to be the highest source of power to which everything else centers around. What makes soap dramas unique from other television dramas is that rather than providing closure and consummate stories, soaps never end. These incessant conflicts and events could become frustrating to viewers if they feel as though they have little control. Audience letters are great examples of this phenomenon. “Thousands and thousands of letters [from soap fans to actors] give advice, warn the heroine of impending doom, caution the innocent to beware of the nasties” (12). This process of audience feedback demonstrates the real, salutary anxieties that viewers feel. Because of these frustrations, producers tend to shock viewers with protagonist/antagonist shifts sparingly. A character can be a nuisance to a soap community for decades without any moral redemption. Their entire existence is based on getting in the way of others’ happiness. This is what makes the genre so ideal for behavior modeling.

Every genre of media text holds its own rules and strategies for organizing characters and information. McKee (2003) speaks of some of the rules of a soap drama. “If a character makes it into the title sequence of a soap opera then she is part of the central community, whereas characters who don’t are always somewhat on the outer no
matter how long-running they might be” (94). These unspoken rules of a genre are a powerful tool for making sense of the texts.

Fiske (1987) cites women fans of soap operas as highly competent readers of the texts due to their critical understanding of the conventions by which it is constructed. This involves a constant and subtle negotiation and renegotiation of the relationships between the text and the social to make pertinent and pleasurable meanings from the text (19). Women understand the intricate variables that make a soap genre. This becomes important to educational initiatives interested in utilizing the mass media form because soap dramas are not educational by nature. “All soaps are highly sexual, and many women use terms more conventionally applied to male pornography to describe their reaction to them” (Fiske, 1987, 186). The soap opera places much emphasis on sexuality, and so it can become difficult to write in storylines of sexual responsibility. When storylines are altered in order to educate audiences, one must question whether the media text stays true to the genre. It is important to keep in mind that while this research focuses on television, this holds true across all storytelling media, including radio dramas.

Soap Dramas and Government

Governments tend to rely on mass media when uniting and/or sending messages to its people. However, not all citizens are always willing to listen to their government, especially those with a strong background of deception. South Africa is an interesting case study, due to its complicated history of segregation, apartheid and racial bias. Though there are incredible cultural differences between South Africa and Botswana, this
example easily demonstrates how external factors contribute greatly to the way audiences interpret media products within a country.

South African media was often seen in this country as a mouthpiece of the government. After World War II, the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) was established as the only legally public service broadcasting network on radio. This monopoly allowed the South African Nationalist government to distort messages and prevent some groups, specifically Afrikaners from forming opposition movements. These actions further perpetuated the nations’ racism.

There are numerous examples of the South African government manipulating media to fulfill their agenda. On February 12, 1987, the minister of law and order, Adriaan Vlok, admitted that “13,300 people, a high proportion of whom were children, had been detained” under emergency regulations. It is estimated that 78% of these detainees were mentally abused and interrogated. “These events were largely unreported because of draconian restrictions on the communications media.” (Thompson, 236). It was not until 1990 that the Nationalist Government began taking steps towards an entirely democratic country. In 1994, South Africa finally held their first multi-racial elections. However, the struggle for equality is far from over.

SABC’s monopoly ended once democracy began to spread in 1994 (Bush Radio, 2009). South Africa is not unique in its struggle to balance government media control. At this time, there were an estimated 10 million radio sets in South Africa, broadcasting in 11 official languages. There are currently over 100 community radio stations throughout South Africa, and their sole objective is to inform and educate the poor on issues that
these populations had little opportunity to learn about before. The success of these educational community radio programs sparked future educational initiatives around the world. Moreover, it demonstrates the importance of understanding the relationship between audiences and their government, as well as the necessity of localized and participatory media production.

Cultural theories broadly explain how members in a community cannot escape the culture in which they live. By studying the way that people interpret their environment, one will be granted insights into the history of social systems of that culture. Cultural Theories examine “how individuals confer meaning upon situations, events, objects, relationships—in short, their lives” (Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990, xii). “Cultural theories help demonstrate not only how a behavioral pattern sustains a social system but also how that system-maintaining consequence, in turn, sustains the behavioral pattern” (105). This demonstrates the process of individuals socially constructing themselves through a popular media product. Assuming that media is an institution of social power and social system, an examination of cultural reactions to media will lead to an understanding of how individuals live and eventually evolve.

Barnard (2006) used this approach to explain how soap dramas on South African Televisions proved themselves as an agent of “Truth and Reconciliation” because of their parallels to political events occurring during the time of broadcast. Soap dramas are a cultural production that may seem very separate from the federal government at face value. However, this separation is refreshing to fans that may otherwise see the government as a deceptive body. This research points to modern soaps in South Africa
working with political and social institutions to transform the country. Because such a disparate technology gap exists in South Africa, Barnard (2006) believes that future scholarship needs to examine the broad ideological work of policy, programming, reception and production, rather than just media content.

Through this literature, we now understand the power of soap dramas due to their seemingly separation from the government. Even if soaps air on government stations, audiences may feel more identification with characters if settings portray that of a given localized community. Viewers may approach that media with a much less jaded attitude than something that does not reflect their everyday life. In order to understand this further, it is imperative that we look further into cultural proximity.

Cultural Proximity and Audience Negotiation

Castelló (2010) explains how important cultural proximity is for audience engagement. Cultural proximity is the process of incorporating educative, cognitive and emotional elements of the audience’s immediate surroundings into a piece of media text. Scholars who study soap operas and telenovelas have done much research to try and understand this connection. Castelló explains, “Discourses on society and culture proposed at production level are received as being 'proximate', but that this perception is not just national, cultural or linguistic. Cultural proximity also incorporates educative, cognitive and emotional elements and aspects related to the audience's immediate surroundings” (207). Each of these variables proves difficult to measure and account for at the production level.
Tufte (2000) explains how telenovelas, a form of Latin American episodic soap drama, “can articulate mass emotional involvement, stimulate national unity and also political or civic action” (1). They have proven themselves as a space where fiction and reality merge into a metaphysical discourse. Tufte’s research further examines telenovelas in Brazil due to their reoccurring and strong presence in the everyday life of citizens. They are regarded as a cultural expression of the everyday, and “respond to some of the continuous changes occurring in the everyday life of the viewers. In this way telenovelas become more than mere consumer items produced for commercial reasons. They reflect the cultural characteristics of, and concerns arising from the disruptions present in the complex societies of today” (4). In order for maximum audience engagement, storylines must incorporate elements of everyday artifacts into the lives of its characters.

Gledhill (1992) explains how dramas represent ideological affiliations through various means, including circulation, audience perceptions and perceptions of realism. This explains why the same drama can be interpreted differently according to the culture of consumptions (e.g. the ability of *Dallas* to be broadcast and enjoyed all over the world, despite being an American cultural product). Fans are able to identify with, and find pleasure in the content, according to the experiences going on in their own lives. No two cultures produced the same reading of the *Dallas* text.

Cultures are able to take the story and characters of the soap drama, and negotiate meanings that made sense in their own environment. When interpreting a television program such as a soap drama, audiences identify through cultural negotiations of
identity formation (De Bruin, 2001). However, this is not to say that the global influence of dominating empires is not present. In most Brazilian soaps the American lifestyle is reinforced with a “Brazilianized face” (Durham & Kellner, 2007, 304). This is a reflection of cultural domination of American Hollywood. It is important to note that through the sense-making process, different groups are able to evaluate programs according to their own socially constructed environment. Therefore, knowledge and culture are often offset against the stories and characters involved. Clearly, a connection exists between institutions of power, culture and media.

Through this section, a better understanding was gained of the important role storytelling has played in extending human tradition and culture throughout history. Soap dramas have proven themselves as a modern form of folklore, due to their repetitive nature and easily identifiable characters. We also gained an understanding of how governments and other organizations have utilized soap dramas as a vehicle to relay a message or to spark behavior change. This is possible because audiences tend to regard their daily dramas as something very separate from the government. We also learned how identification and modeling is maximized through cultural proximity that incorporates localized elements of real life into storylines. Clearly soap dramas are a great illustration of how the three variables of power, culture and media merge together into a national broadcast of great influence. In order to understand the power of this influence further, we will now turn our attention towards the theoretical underpinnings of entertainment-education for social change.
CHAPTER 4: ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

As discussed, the field of communication for development and social change (CDSC) has evolved over the past four decades toward a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and how they can get it (Gray-Felder & Deane, 1998). Development Communication refers to the application of communication strategies and principles in the developing world towards political democracy, rising levels of productivity and industrialization, high literacy rates and longer life expectancy (Waisbord, 2001). By promoting political, economic and educational growth, interventions tended to model strategies after Western developed societies (Inkeles & Smith, 1974).

Over time, the field of development communication has clearly evolved toward two very different positions. The first position argues that development problems stem from a lack of information among populations. The second position believes that power inequality proves the underlying problems of development challenges (Waisbord, 2001). These dyadic paradigms have approached diagnoses, recommendations and intervention implementations differently at every level. Arguably, the aim of both camps is to remove constraints for a more equal and participatory society (Waisbord, 2001). However, how each paradigm attempts to achieve such change is very different.

The dominant paradigm has evolved from modernization theories and emphasizes diffusion of media technologies. Rogers (1976) highlighted the five stages of Diffusion of
Innovations to explain this process. This paradigm recognizes the role media plays in increasing awareness, and the importance of interpersonal communication in the decision-making process. In that process it has added various theoretical approaches and models towards development, including social marketing, health promotion and entertainment-education, which will be discussed in deep detail later (Waisbord, 2001).

Many criticisms of this dominant diffusion-centric paradigm exist (Melokote & Steeves, 2001). The second strand of development communication, which has evolved into the notion of communication for social change, believes that the largest challenges to development are due to an unequal distribution of power and resource rather than a lack of knowledge, and that interventions should incorporate more participatory approaches in their strategies (Beltrán, 1967). Participatory-centered theories and approaches include the use of media advocacy and social mobilization (Waisbord, 2001).

Many points of convergence exist between these two paradigms, and it is widely believed than an integration of elements from both approaches prove most effective. Arguably, Communication for Social Change (CFSC) may be seen as a hybrid example of this type of integrated approach.

The mission of CFSC research is to assist with an iterative process where community dialogue and collective action work together to produce social change in a community that improves the health and welfare of all of its members (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002). This approach combines elements of both diffusion and participation. CSC stresses the need for monitoring and evaluation efforts through
community dialogue and feedback at all stages (Waisbord, 2001). In order to achieve its goals of CFSC incorporates individual behavior change theories as well as change in broader social issues, such as poverty and gender. This has led to the emphasis on a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and how they can get it (Gray-Felder & Deane, 1998).

In that context, it is important to understand how entertainment-education, though formally believed to be a diffusion-centric development tool, has transformed over time towards a more CFSC approach (Waisbord, 2001). This can only be done through an examination of the history of oral storytelling, the earliest theoretical approaches as well as various generational transformations and applications of the strategy.

Storytelling

It may be difficult to understand the process of how a culture can be influenced by a mass media entertainment storyline. However, media scholars have studied this phenomenon for years. “Television and movies are the new folklore. It intertwines the old and new, the mundane and miraculous and presents adventure and personal struggle” (Levine, 2006). As previously discussed, humans have historically told stories where, “a similar lesson, theme or structure pattern is resembled, recycled and re-taught” (Levine, 2006). Often times, these stories are told with hopes of diffusing information or to teach a lesson.

Singhal, Rao, & Pant (2006) explain why narratives are so influential in people’s lives. Humans are natural storytellers who employ narrative logic while processing
discourse in their environment. Therefore, in accordance with Social Learning Theory, individuals are able to identify with fictional media characters and learn through their behaviors, even without experiencing those behaviors themselves. This identification can prove so strong, that individuals may actually relate to media characters as close personal friends, a phenomenon known as parasocial interaction. Due to the limited interpersonal interaction with audiences, Social Learning Theory is based on elements of the dominant paradigm of development communication.

Even if individuals are able to distinguish between what is real and what is fictional (and media studies tells us that this is most often the case) the hope in all storytelling is that audiences are able to form some identification with entertainment characters and be moved by the story. This identification and emotional reaction towards fictional characters can be utilized to teach positive life lessons, while also entertaining audiences. This process is called entertainment-education.

In order to best understand the complexities of the entertainment-education process, it is imperative that a concrete understanding of the theories and objectives behind its implementation is gained. “Entertainment-education seeks to capitalize on the popular appeal of entertainment media in order to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier and happier lives” (Pant, Singhal & Bhasin, 2002, p. 53). It involves a process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate audiences in order to increase knowledge about an educational issue (Singhal, Cody, Rogers & Sabido, 2004). As simplistic as this description may prove, the actual process of behavioral change is complicated, and described differently between
individuals. Generally through, it involves creating favorable attitudes, shifting social norms, and changing overt behavior. The strategy also branches away from the diffusion-centric dominant paradigm of development communication towards a more participatory CSC approach. This change will also be highlighted in the analysis.

E-E programs are able to hit on audience emotions and retell narratives until the stories become popular narratives of a culture. For example, if the goal of society is to spark youth to become involved citizens who engage in positive and worthwhile discussions related to HIV/AIDS, then every political meeting, village gathering, and presidential press release could carry a similar message of HIV prevention to the masses. Individuals in this society would consequently begin to grow up in this open environment and would be better prepared to battle the virus (Singhal, & Howard, 2003). They would pay even more attention to the message if it proved entertaining in nature. Thankfully, soap dramas hold such strong roots as a popular, repetitive and entertaining mass media outlet.

The purpose of this section is to further conceptualize what E-E is, explore its history and its origins, highlight some of the most influential campaigns, understand its theoretical foundation, compare different developmental approaches, highlight production challenges, and explore different methods of monitoring and evaluation. Through this review of literature a better understanding will be gained of the direction that E-E is moving as a whole, as well as how to evaluate existing campaigns such as Makgabaneng.
Conceptual Evolution of Edutainment

The utilization of entertainment-education interventions has come a long way since audiences were viewed as simply passive receivers of information. We now know that in order to best use media as a communication for development tool, researchers must view audience reception as an active task with responsibilities such as active listening, reciprocal exchange, and critical thinking (Slim & Thompson, 2006). However, this has not always been the case. That is why it is important to understand the theoretical background of entertainment-education for social change.

The Beginning of Entertainment-Education

Two organizations drove the beginnings of E-E projects worldwide: Population Communications International (PCI), a non-governmental organization from New York City, and Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Communication Programs (JHU/CCP). Since these initiations, media and communication professionals all over the world have recreated various E-E strategies. Most notable are the work of Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication in South Africa, Media for Development Trust in Zimbabwe, Africa Radio Drama Association in Nigeria, Puntos de Encuentro in Nicaragua, Minga Peru in Peru and the Netherlands E-E Foundation in the Netherlands (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Most of these strategies exist in the form of radio and television soaps that incorporate public health messages into their storylines. Viewers of these programs are able to enjoy conflict filled suspense dramas while
simultaneously receiving education regarding their personal health. By 2003, E-E had spread to over 100 projects in 50 countries (Singhal & Rogers, 2003).

The Sabido Dramas, named after the Vice President for Research and Scriptwriter at Televisa in Mexico, Miguel Sabido, were the pioneers of E-E in the 1970’s (Refera, 2004). The success of those dramas led to the formulation of the Sabido methodology, which is based on character development and plot lines that provide audiences with positive, negative and transitional characters that impart messages and values (26). This social content communication methodology was theoretically based on Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, Persuasion Theory, Diffusion Theory and Bentley’s Dramatic Theory, amongst other theories. It holds two central components: a multi disciplinary theoretical framework and a developed production system, which mirrors commercial soap operas. These two aspects are key to incorporating educational issues in popular media.

Though this research study examines a Botswana initiative specifically, one of the most successful and well-known examples of an E-E campaign sparking public debate and dialogue, and behavior change in its audience was Soul City in 1999. The Soul City case study will be used as an example of how the E-E process has proven successful in the past. The South African television series broadcast characters engaging in a new collective behavior to illustrate to its audience how neighbors could intervene in a domestic violence situation, as domestic abuse proves itself as a substantial problem in South Africa that most citizens chose not to discuss. By not talking about the negative implications of abuse, it is almost the same as deeming it culturally appropriate and expected. However, the Soul City television series developed a storyline in which its
characters gathered around an abuser’s residence and banged pots and pans to stop the violence (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). Research showcased how this entertainment program sparked subsequent real-life action in its audience. Numerous media reports also showed instances where the audience of Soul City intervened in domestic abuse situations in their own personal communities.

Theoretical Underpinnings of E-E

As previously mentioned, Miguel Sabido developed a social content communication methodology using telenovelas. “The methodology draws from five theories of communication and behavior change: a circular adaptation of Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model, Bentley’s Dramatic Theory (melodrama), Jung’s Theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and the Collective Unconscious, the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura, and MacLean's Concept of the Triune Brain, supplemented by Sabido's own Theory of the Tone” (Barker, 2007). This combined theory became the basis of all E-E initiatives. His research found that if properly implemented, mass media could disseminate information messages to spark positive social change (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).

Other communication theories that contribute to E-E research include elaboration likelihood model, audience involvement, dramatic theories, social constructivism, uses and gratifications, agenda-setting, knowledge-gap, cultivation analysis, diffusion of innovations and Habermas’ theory of communicative action (Sood, 2002; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Though each of these theories can be explored in great detail
on their own, this research aims to provide a more conceptual understanding of the six paradigms of communication theory, which posits theories based on the role audience members’ play, ranging from passive consumption to active involvement (Sood, Witte, & Menard ‘s, 2003). These six paradigms of communication theory include Social Psychological Theory, Psychological Models, Drama Theory, Audience-Centered Theory, Contextual Theory and Hybrid Models. A detailed explanation of each paradigm, as well as a deeper examination of a specific theory for each is provided below.

E-E Communication Theories

Hybrid Models include those in which elements from each paradigm are incorporated. These are perhaps the most holistic theoretical approaches to E-E strategies. This combination of elements may prove difficult to achieve, as the differences between the theories, particularly in the way they regard the role of the audience, is so uncommon. Through this approach elements from various theories are combined to achieve individual behavior change.

Social Psychological Theories address individuals’ psychological beliefs and perceptions about their environment. An example of a social psychological theory is Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. This theory views people as self-developing, proactive, self-regulating and self-reflecting, not just reactive in nature (Bandura, 2004), and is the foundation of entertainment-education research. Based on this understanding, people are producers of social systems, rather than merely products. They are able to comprehend and regulate their environment and make meanings regarding what they see.
(Bryant & Oliver, 2009). Through these experiences, people process symbols and “transform transient experiences into cognitive models that serve as guides for judgment and action” (95). How influential experiences prove depend on personal determinants, behavioral determinants and environmental determinants.

Symbolic role modeling is imperative to understanding the effects of mass communication. Social Learning Theory uses positive and negative role models to spark behavior change. People are more likely to model behavior if they identify with the character they are viewing, and if it results in valued outcomes (Bryant & Oliver, 2000). By viewing corrective adjustments of others during behavior production, people may learn through modeling. They may not necessarily need to experience those same behaviors in order to make a change (Bandura, 2004). Instead, they see that someone that is similar them had success when behaving in a certain manner, and those lessons then become a part of their own cognitive process. This model demonstrates how mass media outlets such as a soap drama can become the foundation of behavior change.

Psychological models are cognitive processing models where individuals are exposed to an E-E program. An example of a psychological communication model is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). This model recognizes that media does hold the power to sway audiences in identical manners. The extent to which media is able to persuade depends on whether the messages are effective in changing attitudes and whether these attitudes influence behaviors (Bryant & Oliver, 2000).

Slater and Rouner (2002) examined how E-E messages hold effects that can be derived from the processing of persuasive content in narrative messaging, as described by
ELM. People are persuaded through central or peripheral routes of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). The central route to persuasion is when a person draws upon prior experience and knowledge against the messages that they are receiving. Once feelings regarding the messages determined, the final step involves integrating the new thoughts into their cognitive structure (Bryant & Oliver, 2009).

The peripheral route of persuasion is when a person’s ability to process a message is low, or when they are being a more passive audience (Bryant & Oliver, 2009). People persuaded through peripheral route’s are usually only done so for short periods of time. “Attitude change via peripheral route are based on more passive acceptance or rejection of simple cues and have a less well-articulated foundation” (135). This process is generally referred to in propaganda research.

Drama Theories look at the role people play or the scripts that they follow in their daily lives. The assumption of this theory is that audiences have specific emotional reactions to different storylines, and these reactions influence the way they exchange ideas and opinions on real-life issues. An example of a Drama Theory would be Bentley’s Dramatic Theory. This is also the theory that Miguel Sabido combined with Social Learning Theory in his methodology. Bentley’s Theory breaks theater genre into five categories: tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, face and melodrama (Bentley, 1967). The structure of each of these categories provides the framework for creating character archetypes in soap dramas. This includes providing specific and easily recognizable tones, anecdotes and characters (Singhal, Cody, Rogers & Sabido, 2004). These patterns are similar to the ones you would see in soaps all across the world.
Smith, Downs & Witte (2007) explored how drama theory is being implemented in Ethiopia Radio Dramas. Their research found that by focusing on drama theory rather than other communication theories, producers focused more on entertainment, rather than the education. This led to more emotional involvement with characters and consequently, more behavior adoption. Clearly, more needs to be understood regarding the balance between entertainment and education in E-E research.

Contextual Theories examine humanistic and critical perspectives that look at power and dominance structures. This is consistent with elements of the second strand of development communication, concerned with broader social structures and gender inequalities, rather than knowledge gaps. One of the earliest examples of a contextual theory would be the Agenda-setting Theory. Agenda-setting is the ability for a media source to influence its audience to think about a particular issue. Media do not tell “viewers what to think” but they are persuasive in “guiding viewers what to think about” (Holbrook, 2005, 278; Cohen, 1963). Agenda-setting is considered a contextual theory, as media agenda, public agenda and corporate agenda are dominant structures often advanced through the agenda-setting process (Carroll & McCombs, 2003). This selection process is what makes agenda-setting so potentially persuasive. “The transfer of salience from the press to the public is the core mechanism operating in the agenda-setting process” (Kiousis, 2003, 439). Studies have shown that the public’s concern over particular issues fluctuates greatly according to the amount of attention given to it from news outlets.
An example of agenda-setting was evident during the “summer of the shark” (Time Magazine, 2001). On July 6, 2001, a shark bit the arm off of an 8-year-old-boy on a Florida beach. This sparked an international media frenzy, and shark attacks became front-page news everywhere. The process of a media outlet choosing to report on shark attacks over other incoming news stories is the process of agenda-setting. Media were not relaying untruthful information or directly warning the public that sharks were more dangerous than before, but that was the message its audience received. Marine biologist George Burgess explains this phenomenon by saying, “Prior to 2001, the public was becoming more aware of the need for shark conservation, but the ‘summer of the shark’ changed all that...Public perception took several steps backwards to the ‘Jaws’ mentality” (CNN, 2003).

Audiences were exposed to an overwhelming amount of shark attack stories. Therefore, they prioritized shark attacks as an important issue. However, the number of shark attacks that occurred that summer was actually below the average (Marks, 2002). Media did not provide its audience with a viewpoint through which to examine the incoming messages with. Simply by giving more attention to an issue, the public’s concern rose.

Audiences process information through low levels of attention. “Individuals’ perceptions are guided in part by cognitive structures, called schema, that help individuals construct meaning out of the otherwise overwhelming number of external stimuli to which they are exposed” (Gibson & Zillmann, 2000, 356). Schemata of
interpretation that works through media texts to structure social meaning is called framing (Reese, 2001, 14).

Framing is arguably an extension of agenda-setting. While agenda-setting is the processing of deciding what issues are worthy of coverage, it is framing that develops these images of reality in “a predictable and patterned way” (Scheufele, 1999, 105). When studying the progression of a storyline, it makes the most sense to utilize the framing theory.

Message content is extremely important when utilizing the framing theory. Viewers interpret messages based on how storylines are played out. A storyline that simply includes safe HIV prevention in their storylines does not necessarily promote these tactics. But it does when a storyline consistently portrays positive outcomes when characters engage in these preventative behaviors and negative outcomes when characters engage in high-risk behaviors.

“A frame is the central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning. Thus, framing explores message content more directly than agenda setting, which focuses exclusively on message volume” (Simon & Jent, 256). As such, framing theory is an appropriate method of analysis when causal relations are being formed “from sensory information” (Scheufele, 2000, 300). Media effect theories have consistently determined that the coverage of an issue can influence opinion. “As important as this research is, it still leaves us with the impression that the content of media coverage has no impact on opinion. Research on issue framing represents a potentially important recent return to the
study of effects of communication content on opinion” (Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997, 222).

In the mid 1980s the issue of AIDS began hitting mainstream media igniting the beginnings of AIDS communication. The press held great power in helping members of the public socially construct the meaning of the AIDS epidemic by consistently tying the epidemic to homosexuality and drug use (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). This led to a greater amount of stigma for those individuals who were infected.

The Kaiser Family Foundation (2006) completed a 25-year meta-analysis of HIV/AIDS media coverage in the United States. Results demonstrate how during the 1980’s HIV/AIDS was framed as infecting primarily gay men. During the 1990’s public health campaigns began covering stories such as the story of Ryan White, a 13-year old banned from school, and Magic Johnson’s HIV-positive announcement. Popular celebrities, Bono and Angelina Jolie, also raised awareness, money and political interest involving HIV/AIDS during this time. These differences in frames have shifted towards an approach weighted with much less stigma.

Audience-Centered Theories examine how audiences interact and react to E-E programs. An early example of an audience-centered theory is Uses and Gratifications Theory. Uses and gratifications has been a predominant mass communication perspective over the last quarter-century. It represents one of the oldest continuous programs of research in the discipline of communication (Sherry, 2001). However, the role of the audience has changed drastically in Audience-Centered Theories over the years. This perspective stresses the impact of individual differences on media uses and effects by
assuming that unique social and psychological circumstances help shape user needs (Haridakis, 2006).

Uses and gratifications has long been turned to as an explanation for why people are attracted to certain types of media, especially those filled with sex and drama. Uses and gratifications research explain this phenomenon through the Mood Management theory, where viewers pick and choose media content based on the pursuit of enhancing their emotional state (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002). If a person’s emotional state were one filled with routine and boredom, then they would choose media according to what would make them more excited. Viewers use media to gain gratifications in areas of their life where they feel a void. Indulging in this type of media is likely a coping mechanism easily explained though the uses and gratifications paradigm.

Uses and gratifications research suggests that viewers engage in media through a process named ‘niche-picking’ “Niche-picking refers to the tendency of individuals to choose environments that are most comfortable to them” (Sherry, 2001, 278). Audiences are motivated to seek media outlets that gratify their needs for information, entertainment, social interaction and escapism (Henke, 1985). This media selection is significantly goal directive and purposive. People typically choose to participate in particular media in response to their personal expectations or desires, often leading them to dramatic programs centered on tragic characters. Bryant and Zillmann (1994) explain “seeing misfortunes befall others and seeing them suffer from it thus may make viewers cognizant and appreciative of how good they have it. And such positive feelings accrue to seeing tragedy strike, in reality or in fiction, tragedy becomes appealing” (453).
Motivations influence user media selection, use, exposure, and, ultimately, effects (Haridakis, 2006).

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a critical precursor to Audience Reception Research. Though it has evolved greatly from its origins as a predictive tool of audience behavior, its significance cannot be overstated. This theory presents the audience as a goal-directive and active user. It shifts power away from the media text and regards the audience as unique active individuals who interpret texts according to their own life experiences and needs. These are the basic foundations of Participatory audience research that encourages audience dialogue, examines culture identity and looks at local and unique decision-making processes (Petraglia, 2007). However, while Uses and Gratifications Theory was revolutionary in its reference to an active audience, it is scholars interested in mass media effects who have most often utilized it. Current Contextual Theories are those that take a social constructivist approach, where meaning is made through the interaction of audience, content and media and points to the sociocultural context, including the Theory of Hegemony (Sood, Witte & Menard, 2003). (Sood, 2006). explored the role of audience involvement in E-E programs by examining the Indian soap drama, *Tinka Tinka Sukh*. Results suggest that audience involvement is multidimensional and serves as a media for prompting behavior change. The more involvement and active role audiences can play in the media reception process, the larger potential for behavior change.

Many communication theories provide the foundation for the E-E strategy; however, most stem from Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. It is important to note that
E-E is not a theory of communication, but rather it is a communication strategy that is informed by several theories in order to bring about behavioral and social change (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Now that we understand the theoretical underpinning of entertainment-education, it is important to understand more about the modern complexities of actually designing and implementing an E-E strategy to advance public health.

Entertainment-Education and Public Health

Conceptualizations of E-E argue that it contributes to social change in different ways. First, it influences members’ awareness, attitudes and behavior toward a socially desirable end; it influences the audience’s external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at a system level (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004); it triggers and facilitates public debate and discussion about difficult issues and helps mobilize social groups toward individual, community and policy action (Tufte, 2005; Usdin et. al., 2003).

It is easy to see the necessity of E-E when looking at communication strategies from a public health framework, specifically the fight against HIV/AIDS. British soaps have long been regarded as representing realistic depictions of working class individuals and their problems. This dates to the world’s longest-running radio soap opera, The Archers (Singhal, Cody, Rogers et al., 2004, 246). This drama demonstrated a formula of drama, humor and education that was 40% education and 60% entertainment, focusing on social and health issues such as alcohol abuse. This paved the way for future British
soaps, such as *EastEnders*, which produced self-defined “slice of life” stories that focused on issues of homosexuality, rape, unemployment, racial prejudice, single-parent families, teenage pregnancy, prostitution, arranged marriages, attempted suicide, drug dissolution, sexism, urban deprivation, problems with pregnancies, breast feeding, domestic abuse, safety hazards, and mental health (248).

For communication professionals, combating HIV/AIDS with E-E campaigns presents four distinct challenges: transmission challenges, behavioral challenges, response challenges and targeting challenges (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). Transmission challenges are due to the nature of HIV/AIDS as an invisible, yet infectious disease. Behavioral challenges deals with human behaviors that involve interaction between unequal parties, as in a patriarchal society. Response challenges exist because efficacious response to the disease involves adoption of behaviors that depend on the compliance of more than one party. If a husband is being secretly unfaithful to his wife with someone who is HIV positive, than she may still be at risk without engaging in any risky behaviors herself. Targeting challenges deal with populations that are often hard to reach by means of conventional media channels. Some of the most infected regions are rural and exclusive in nature, especially in countries such as Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, where many urban dwellers and migrant laborers return to their village of origin when they fall ill (FAO, 2011).

Mass media have historically tended to only target audiences with individual messages, such as “use a condom”. However, Coulson (2002) identified five action areas that public health campaigns should begin to focus on in the future. They include: The
development and implementation of healthy public policy, the creation of support environments, community action and mobilization, the development of personal skills and the reorientation of health services.

This research argues that mass media campaigns should turn their focus more on media advocacy and changing policy and facilitating public dialogue, rather than individual behavior change. This debate between focusing on public dialogue facilitation vs. individual behavior change holds two very different outcomes. The first focuses on changing public policy, and larger structural changes. The second focuses on individual behavior changes common in many traditional mass media messages, such as “use a condom”. This debate of dialogue has been identified as critical, particularly through UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations program on HIV/AIDS aimed to inspire the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support (UNAIDS, 1999).

The UNAIDS Communication Framework (UNAIDS, 1999) posits that HIV/AIDS communication strategies should focus on five domains: government policy, socio-economic status of individuals, culture, gender relations and spirituality. The lack of attention to the more structural issues of HIV/AIDS helps demonstrate why it is mostly a disease of poor countries due to the unbalanced distribution of and access to health and social resources.

Singhal and Rogers (2003) explain how 95 percent of all AIDS prevention money is spent in developed nations, while 95 percent of HIV-infected people live in developing countries. Their research illustrates how money spent on disease prevention saves more
lives than money spent on treatment. Because most developing countries have a limited budget, it is important that public health campaigns consider how media representations and audience interpretations are able to aid in prevention efforts. This dichotomy between individual behavior change and broader societal structure reform outcomes is one of the most complex challenges for E-E aimed at advancing public health, especially given that the foundation of E-E theory lives in individual behavior change theories. 

Competing outcomes is not the only complex component of designing an E-E strategy. Challenges exist at the production and monitoring and evaluation stages as well.

This research only begins to demonstrate the complexities of initiating an E-E strategy. However, despite these complications, research suggests that the efforts are worth the results. Because of the powerful nature of storytelling, E-E has evolved into one of the most commonly utilized components of public health campaigns in developing countries.

Production Challenges of E-E

There are many aspects to consider when producing an E-E program. Not only must you be concerned with the audience following and being entertained by the storyline as in other entertainment programs, but you also must make the messages as persuasive as possible. Refera (2004) identified five elements that producers should consider when writing the script of an E-E program. First, they should identify a moral frame work; second, they should design an intervention; third, they must provide positive, negative and transitional characters; then they must evaluate the work that they
have done, and finally provide summative dialogue at the end of each episode, such as citing local elements that attract audiences.

Strategies prove only as influential as the media context of which they are broadcast. The situated context of an intervention impacts what effects they have (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Efforts of E-E interventions may be lessened by entertainment-degradation programs such as Jerry Springer. People do not consume media one program at a time. Instead, they internalize media messages from almost all aspects of life. These are interpreted in totality with one another.

Many E-E campaigns take advantage of celebrity persons. Celebrities play an important role by providing positive role models for healthy behavior. Research shows that campaigns that employ positive celebrity role models as spokesman for specific issues produces more positive changes in awareness, values and behavior change than those who use non-celebrities spokesman (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).

Regardless of how much efforts producers put into creating content, message reception is an incredibly important component to the E-E strategy. Producers can never be certain how audiences will decode a message. One of the most popular examples of audience-centered resistance was the Archie Bunker Effect. Vidmar and Rokeach (1974) explain how the main character of All in the Family, Archie Bunker, was produced as a negative role model that perpetuated sentiments of bigotry, racism and prejudice. Rather than seeing this character as a negative role model, audience members identified with him and emulated his behavior (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).
A 25-year meta-analysis shows that the most successful E-E campaigns are those in which cultural values hold a moral foundation in national documents. Not only should programs be modified to fit cultural settings, but individuals within cultural groups may be at different stages of readiness as well (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2002). These individual differences should be taken into consideration first and foremost.

Clearly culture is an important component in how media messages should be produced. Cultures are not static and should be viewed as a strength to HIV/AIDS prevention, not as a hindrance (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). Most campaigns are designed based on a theory or models of similar locations, rather than specific cultural contexts (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon, 2000). Rather than searching for a universal approach to E-E, it proves more important to individualize each campaign based on cultural context. While western scholars may feel as though an individual approach to HIV/AIDS messages is appropriate, other cultures, such as Africa, Asia and Latin America, are more influenced by collective sentiments (Airhihenbuwa, Obregon, 2000). It is important to take note whether audience see the self as a production of the individual or as a production of family. A successful program moves health behavior issues out of individual action realms and into the realm of social norms and policies.

There are many challenges to even the most successful E-E campaigns. *Soul Buddyz*, one of South Africa’s *Soul City* programs, provides one example of such challenges. *Soul Buddyz* is a media program designed exclusively for educating the youth. However, the country held virtually no prior experience in South Africa of producing children’s radio drama. Moreover, the show had to be broadcast in multiple
languages with English subtitles. Producers were able to overcome these barriers by allowing children to develop the logo and slogan, participate in the script process, and write rap songs for the series (Singhal, & Howard, 2003). This is just one example of how E-E campaigns can overcome challenges by allowing the community to participate in the production process.

Audiences certainly influence the production process, and most often, the campaigns prove more successful in doing so (Tufte, 2000). In January 2002, a participatory HIV/AIDS campaign was conducted in Accra, Ghana. This low cost pilot project engaged youth in locally based peer-led efforts to control HIV/AIDS in their community. The intervention reached nine hundred youth and distributed condoms and anonymous counseling and testing. Peer educators were also used to reinforce prevention messages (Singhal, & Howard, 2003). Though this campaign involved more than just a mass disseminated media broadcast, it would not have proven successful without the community-level reinforcement.

The Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Communication Programs identified nine reasons why E-E campaigns are successful and seven unique challenges that they must overcome in order to be successful. The nine ‘P’s’ of success are cited because E-E proves pervasive, popular, passionate, personal, participatory, practical, profitable and proven effective. The seven challenges of E-E campaigns include: 1. too much education and not enough entertainment, 2. Too much entertainment and not enough education, 3. Poor quality entertainment, 4. No credible urgency, 5. Routine recommendations, 6. No
immediate personal relevance, and 7. Controversies based on culture and tradition (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).

Through focus groups and in-depth interviews, a better understanding will be gained of how audiences of Makgabaneng respond to each of these points. These points will spark conversations regarding how fans of the program make sense of the storylines and characters developed in the production stages of E-E. This audience reception research proves critical in understanding how Botswana audiences can be influenced through character behavior. In the context of public health interventions that draw specifically on E-E, one of the critical elements to determine how effective they are is to evaluate what type of impact they have through monitoring and evaluation. Because the reception process is so complex, it is important that monitoring and evaluation considers ways to incorporate it. This audience reception approach seeks to provide new answers to the intricateness of this process.

Monitoring and Evaluation E-E Projects

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School for Public Health Center for Communication Programs (2007) defined monitoring and evaluation as the process of, “collecting key data related to program objectives and operations and analyzing these data to guide policy, programs and practices” (8). Research demonstrates how E-E interventions are strengthened through evaluation activities such as the analysis of audience letters, monitoring of clinic data, and content analysis of E-E messages (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Holistic and summative evaluation research
measures are imperative to understanding audience behavior, and this is an area where much work needs to be improved in the area. Research needs to not only looks at what effects these programs have, but also how and why these effects exist.

Evaluations of HIV/AIDS programs are often top down and participants are seen as objects of the study, not participants. These quantitative objectives serve donor agendas, but do not do much for the people’s agendas. Longitudinal people –centered, qualitative methods are more important to HIV/AIDS research (Singhal & Rogers, 2003) because “Neighborhood culture is a social, cultural, economic and political organization of time and space that transcends classical models of comprehension and analysis in all aspects of life” (65).

Cultural shareability of a media program is the extent to which the program appeals to dissimilar audience groups. If E-E messages can be shared across cultures, it could save a lot of money and efforts. However, most E-E interventions have been limited to a single nation (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). UNICEF sponsored Sara animation films, comic books and life skills materials to serve as a role model for gender issues in Eastern and Southern Africa. This is an example of culturally shareable E-E products.

Research shows that it proves problematic to reach comprehensive conclusions about the effectiveness of entertainment education. Instead, researchers should focus on what strategies work better than others (Waisbord, 2003). E-E projects stimulate people predisposed to behavior change and provide the push for those inclined by persuasion. These ready-to-act populations must be reached in order to determine what proved most influential in this process. In order to know how audiences are relating to a storyline,
careful monitoring and evaluations efforts must be made. Fans of these programs must be
given a chance to talk about the cultural shareability of programs and whether they feel as
though what is going on in the lives of characters is similar to their own lived reality.
Overall, the quality of E-E evaluations are highly variable and often inadequate, making
it difficult to conclude lessons that can be generalized regarding what works from the
literature (King, 1999). Long-term individual follow-up would be more feasible and
useful.

Singhal and Rogers (2003) emphasized the importance of monitoring and
evaluation to HIV/AIDS communication programs in their book, *Combating AIDS:*
*Communication Strategies in Action.* These evaluations are usually completed through
activities such as analyzing audience letters, monitoring clinic data, conducting content
analyses on media texts, and carefully monitoring audience feedback (298). This is a
clear call for a more CFS approach to evaluation, as the feedback is coming from the
audience. This data provides producers mid-course suggestions regarding how the
intervention is influencing audience behaviors, and eventually what impact the
intervention has on key audiences. Clearly, most monitoring and evaluation work focuses
on how messages impact audience knowledge, attitude and behavior. However, media
studies research suggests that this process is much more complex in nature.

McKee (2003) explains how audiences read media texts in multiple ways. Content
analyses are able to provide information regarding the frequency of pre-defined
messages, and clinic data is able to determine the frequency of HIV tests in a given
month, but none of these methodologies allow an understanding of the intricate
relationship audiences hold with media. Audiences constantly construct their reality and self-identity through media text negotiations (Fiske, 1987). Each person is influenced by the text differently from one another depending on their consumption habits, motivations and life experiences. Parks (2005) argues that evaluations must move away from people as the objects of change, and focus on more participatory methods, such as community dialogue, culture identity and local decision-making processes. This can be done through more holistic evaluation research that also includes efforts aimed at understanding how audiences negotiate meanings (Petraglia, 2007).

Tufte (2002) argues that evaluations must get as close as possible to identifying the actual dialogue about E-E content in order to assess how the narrative, the E-E text, is appropriated by its audience. “There has been very little contact between this body of reception analyses and E-E investigation” (6). These types of evaluations can be done by developing more integral studies through methodological bridging with the focus on how media texts interact with, and become part of, social and cultural practices.

Very little audience reception research based on monitoring and evaluating efforts exist. Even fewer attempts have been made to conduct audience reception studies through monitoring and evaluation efforts to advance public health. It is important that this study proves itself as an extension of the small body of literature that does exist. Two notable examples include the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication (Chikombero, 2009), and Tufte’s (2008) research Fighting AIDS with Edutainment: Building on the Soul City Experience in South Africa. Soul City has proven itself as being committed to monitoring and evaluation efforts in order to better understand health and
development communication through media for social change interventions over the past 15 years (Scheeper, Goldstein, Usdin, & et al., 2002). Tufte’s work further demonstrates the importance of involving audiences in all stages of communication strategies for public health through extensive monitoring and evaluation efforts.

This study is highly informed by three different research projects specifically: A research study that examines how audiences identify with a popular drama, a research study that examines the sense-making process through a public health drama, and finally an intervention evaluation of public health E-E campaigns. Each of these studies examine the monitoring and evaluation efforts of EE programs. These studies are outlined below:

In Living with the Rubbish Queen, Tufte (2000) was interested in researching the Brazilian telenovela, Rubbish Queen (Rainha do Sucata) because of their heavy importance in that society. His research demonstrates their potential in sparking mass emotional involvement, stimulating national unity and also political or civic action. Telenovelas are able to merge fiction and reality into a metaphysical discourse, prove themselves as cultural expressions that have an active role in the lives of their viewers, and reflect issues of common concern and are cultural products guided by commercial incentives (Tufte, 2000). Soaps are an ideologically constructed national discourses of culture and cultural identity, promoted by the dominant class and are heavily supported by the media industry.

Tufte (2005) also found the statistical monitoring and evaluation of E-E initiatives problematic during this time. He argues that you can just look at quantitative methodologies such as production, communication and consumptions, but you must also
take into account the interaction between modern symbolic cultural artifacts and everyday life. One must examine the complexities of the relation and interaction between producer and viewer/listener. This can be done through genre analysis.

Genre analysis is able to get at the cultural trajectories and communication strategies of the genre in focus. Reception studies are generally media-centric in their analysis of the text/receiver relationship, while studies in media ethnography are more interested in the social interaction of particular groups of people. Many reception analyses are based on interviews with recipients, which may be regarded as just another text analysis. Emphasizing various dimensions of intertextuality and distinguishing different layers through primary, secondary and tertiary texts, a more holistic understanding of their relationship may be formed (Fiske, 1987; Tufte, 2000; Tufte, 2005). Fiske (1987) explains how these three layers are critical in understanding a media text. “No text is simply a pattern of signifiers: a text is a bearer of meanings, and relating signifiers to meanings is not just a matter of supplying them with appropriate signifieds” (84). Instead, individuals must both identify and limit the space for negotiations within the text.

Media ethnography is a more useful evaluative methodology as it transcends the text-receiver relationship to explore social and cultural transformations. Tufte (2002) also argues that mediation helps to understand the role of soap operas in the everyday lives of people. “Mediation is the process in which sense is made in the communication process” (2). This can be completed through holistic audience ethnographies. Tufte states that researchers should focus on three components: the daily life of the family, social
temporality and cultural competence. This demonstrates that E-E evaluations must reach beyond audience letters, clinic data and content analyses (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). Instead, the focus should turn towards how audiences are constructing their reality and self-identity through media text negotiations (Fiske, 1987).

Petraglia (2007) examined how public health interventions use narratives to spark behavior change through E-E through a public health intervention. “Although narrative interventions are often grounded in social-cognitive theory and in commonsense assumptions about the power of storytelling, they are generally undertaken without much regard for the philosophical and cognitive bases for narrative” (493). In this article, Petraglia examines the challenges of creating non-Western behavior change discourse, the current emphasis on production rather than reception, differences between messaging and providing alternative worldviews and the best ways to evaluate a narrative intervention.

Public health interventions are often designed to seek behavioral effects. These objectives are easy to construct and measure. However, narrative interventions must be evaluated by examining the variation in an intervention’s impact on cognition towards individual behavior and broader populations (Petraglia, 2007).

There are many reasons why narrative interventions prove difficult to evaluate. Individual’s response to narratives must work with structural challenges in order for behavior change to happen. Further more, public health interventions are often designed to blend in to the current cultural landscape. Often, this only promotes subtle changes in
perceptions regarding the particular behavior change. Through this study, a better understanding is gained of how public health audiences make sense of their behavior.

Finally, this study incorporates elements of Tufté’s (2004) assessment of the evaluation process of the South African *Soul City* E-E campaign through a public health drama evaluation. *Soul City* is noted for its heavy emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and has inspired many other similar interventions worldwide. In the 1990’s, *Soul City* began combining health promotion and audience participation in all stages of communication strategies, sparking ‘second generation’ E-E interventions.

Currently, *Soul City* has moved beyond diffusion vs. participation duality (Tufté, 2004), towards a more CSC approach. Before, evaluation focus was on the correct and culture-sensitive messages broadcast through mass media. Today, more modern evaluations have called for a greater focus on problem identification, interpersonal dialogue and empowerment. Through the use of a problem identification process, audiences are able to identify solutions that go beyond individual behavior change objectives. This new evaluation approach leads to solutions that have to do with structural problems, gender inequalities and socio-economic conditions. Overall, Tufté (2004) talks of the need to move beyond reason and towards emotion to involve people in changing societies.

This is a clear combination of spreading health messages through mass media and looking at broader social inequalities as the underlying problems of development challenges (Waisbord, 2001). It also utilizes the CSC approach to monitoring and evaluation where individuals define who they are, what they want and how they can get it.
(Gray-Felder & Deane, 1998) at every stage of an E-E intervention. This analysis demonstrates the importance of audience-centered evaluations on E-E public health dramas. Unfortunately, such a study has not been conducted on the edutainment MARCH model and Botswana’s radio soap drama, *Makgabaneng*. 
CHAPTER 5: THE MARCH MODEL

Most E-E initiatives define success of an HIV/AIDS prevention program on an individual’s willingness and ability to behave in certain ways “to avoid risk, to seek counseling and HIV testing, to take appropriate preventive measures, and to adhere to recommended treatment regimens” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). These HIV/AIDS communication theories and models are primarily based on social psychology centered on individualism (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon, 2000). De Fossard (1996) identified five steps towards behavioral change. They include knowledge, approval, intention to act, practice, and advocacy. The latter component of advocacy is highly emphasized, as people need to engage with the message and take a participatory role in the social movement. Participation cements their decision to act a particular way and change their own personal behavior.

However, an important body of literature has argued that contextual differences must be considered, as, “differences in health behaviors are often a function of culture” (Airhihenbuwa, 2000, 5; Dutta, 2004). Therefore, it is imperative that steps are taken to ensure that social and cultural context are incorporated into HIV/AIDS communication interventions. Social change programs must influence their audience’s willingness to engage, by understanding and speaking to influential cultural norms.

The United States government and the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa launched the Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic (LIFE) initiative in 2001 across 14 African countries and India (Galavotti, Pappas-DeLuca, & Lansky,
A partner in this initiative was the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral scientists from the CDC’s Division of Reproductive Health developed the MARCH strategy, which is being implemented in four countries, Botswana, Ethiopia, Zambia and Guyana (CDC, 2009).

There are four key elements of the MARCH strategy. They include: progression of change over time, the use of entertainment education as a vehicle of modeling, use of modeling in program content and the creation of character models similar to the target audience (Pappas-DeLuca, Kraft, Gavalotti, et al., 2008). These interventions are not quick changes, as programs are designed as long-term models of behavior change lasting for at least several months. Behavior change is built on two principles, modeling and reinforcement. Modeling shows people how to change and reinforcement supports them in these efforts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). The strategy also utilizes two main components; educational entertainment broadcast media and interpersonal community mobilization. Reinforcement activities may include listening and discussion groups, as well as community activities such as meetings or road shows.

Some cultural narratives perpetuate the cycle of early marriage, unprotected sexual behaviors, multiple unplanned pregnancies, HIV infection and early death. The MARCH model aims to intervene by providing alternative narratives to its audience (Galavotti, Pappas-DeLuca, & Lansky, 2001). However, it should be noted that the MARCH model itself does not change across cultures. The model can be applied to any E-E intervention in any context. Consistent with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory,
behavior change will not take place simply by including a desired messaging in these narratives. Audiences must identify with the storylines of which they are engaged.

In line with early approaches of the Sabido methodology for EE, this is established through positive, negative, and transitional character development strategy. Narratives include a positive role model who consistently makes responsible health decisions and a negative character that consistently engages in risky behavior. Social psychological models that center on individualism like MARCH aim to change these risky behaviors through transitional characterization.

Transitional characters are included who may start making risky decisions, but evolve over the series into an empowered, knowledgeable, and positive character. These dynamic transitional characters most likely serve as the most identifiable role models for audience members, as they are neither consistently positive nor consistently negative. Then, through the reinforcement state, audiences are encouraged and given the necessary skills to achieve behavior change. Ideally these reinforcements support the messages verbatim that the modeling characters are facing. Audiences are able to internalize these challenges, apply them to their own lives and come up with solutions through interpersonal interactions.

If a young girl is persuaded to engage in risky sexual behaviors by an older more powerful man, the MARCH model aims to provide storylines illustrating negative consequences of these individual actions. However, more contextual models would highlight larger structural factors that may contribute to this behavior, such as gender inequalities, inadequate education systems, or poor health resources. These structural
factors would change with every culture. Scholars have argued whether either of these strategies is better than the other, or if elements of both are the best approach (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon, 2000; Dutta, 2004; Tufte, 2005; Waisbord, 2001).

MARCH is not the only behavioral change strategy for mass media outlets interested in disseminating health messages. Each strategy has its own purpose and set of direction. For example, MARCH is a change model. A change model puts forth a series of concepts to suggest how individual behavior change happens. The Johns Hopkins Model for Public Health Messages (P-Process) is a planning model for behavior change. It is designed to suggest steps that must be followed in order to design successful health communication strategies. It should be noted that no strategy is perfect, and all have much to learn from each other. They do not hold mutually exclusive relationships with one another. The P-Process may be used in conjunction with a change model, and vice versa. Three of the most well-known behavior change strategies include: The Johns Hopkins Model for Public Health Messages (P-Process), The Soul City Social and Behavior Change Model and the South African Department of Health’s Beyond Awareness strategy. Each strategy is outlined in further detail below. MARCH may benefit by incorporating some elements of these models into their own strategy. Therefore, it is important for us to understand what these different models regard as the most important elements of a social and behavior change strategy.

The Johns Hopkins Model for Public Health Messages, otherwise known as the ‘P’ Process, offers suggestions for designing and evaluating edutainment health messages. It highlights analysis, strategic design, development pretesting production,
management implementation modeling, impact evaluation, and planning for continuity (Piotrow & Kincaid, 2001). This model states that 10% of an organization’s total budget should be spent on evaluation. There are no such budgetary monitoring and evaluation guidelines with the MARCH model.

Many theoretical models include a strong participatory community-based approach. Involvement of community in supporting outreach and peer education activities is a critical piece of social and behavioral change. MARCH certainly recognizes this component through its reinforcement implementation. Another popular behavior change strategy is Soul City’s Social and Behavioral Change Model. Soul City is a multi-media health promotion and social change project that reaches more than 16 million South African citizens through drama and entertainment. The Soul City Social and Behavioral Change Model stresses the community process as the most imperative piece of the strategy. It includes the dynamic integration of community participation, and audiences actually playing a role in the production of messages (Singhal, Usdin, Esca, Goldstein, et al., 2002). The MARCH strategy is not quite as participatory as the Soul City’s Social and Behavioral Change Model, as it generally uses reinforcement in the later stages of development rather than in production (see Table 1).
Table 1.

*Most Participatory Elements of E-E Models.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soul City</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through audience and community integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARCH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through reinforcement listener discussion groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beyond Awareness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>through audience brand recognition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A third behavioral change theoretical model emphasizes the importance of branding. *Beyond Awareness* actively promoted the red ribbon in communication activities to make the AIDS epidemic more visible and to promote consistent ‘branding’ of AIDS initiatives. This campaign ran from November 1998 through to October 2000 in Cape Town, South Africa. This model emphasizes the importance of using health experts, making messages appropriate for its medium, positive messages work better then
negative, victim blaming should be avoided, messages must be appropriate for target audience, and that simple short messages work best (Parker, 2000). Making a recognizable community brand is critical to the success of an intervention and it is imperative that strategies evaluate the effectiveness of their brand after distribution. The MARCH model also does not address the idea of recognizable branding in its strategy. This is an area that may improve the sustainability of such campaigns. It is important to examine how well audiences of entertainment-education interventions recognize and describe the brand outside the immediate media setting.

It is clear that there is still much to learn regarding behavior change through mass media messages. It is important to note that literature is now beginning to understand that the most critical piece of social change has nothing to do with using an appropriate strategy or model. Each of these processes serves its purpose in specific contexts. Moreover, the culture and traditions of the intended campaign audiences is the most crucial component of a successful message. It is impossible for a campaign that proved successful in South Africa to be mirrored in India and work in the same capacity. Each and every culture requires its own adaptation of these recommendations. For this reason, it makes sense that outside organizations do not come into an area to produce, disseminate and evaluate a social change initiative. Therefore, researchers should be less concerned with the social shareability of a program and more concerned with the cultural proximity. It is best to give community members the tools and resources necessary so that they may create culturally appropriate mass media messages. This study examines how Botswana’s HIV/AIDS radio soap drama, *Makgabaneng*, utilizes the MARCH model and
responds to these challenges. By understanding how these theoretical recommendations are implemented in a particular E-E intervention, more can be done to explore how audience members are making sense of their own lives through the drama.

Makgabaneng

*Makgabaneng* is an entertainment-education radio serial drama in Botswana. The name means “Rocky Road”, as its motto is that “Life is a journey on a rocky path. The hope is, with every fall, there is a Rise.” It first aired August 20, 2001, in an effort to address critical HIV/AIDS awareness messages among 10-49 year-old citizens across Botswana (The Republic of Botswana Popular Report, 2005). This inclusive audience was considered during in the decision to turn to radio rather than television, as not all families have access to television technology. The *Makgabaneng* drama airs the same 15-minute episode twice weekly, on two different National Broadcast stations, and is the only Botswana produced serial drama of its kind, as this radio serial drama is written, acted, and produced by local talent. In 2002, trained officers began to host Listener Discussion Groups (LDG’s) linked to the drama. LDG’s serve as one of the greatest reinforcement activities aimed to encourage safer HIV-related behaviors. Today, many other reinforcement efforts and special projects have emerged and are thriving in the organization. Due to high positive reaction, *Makgabaneng* became an official NGO in 2006. However, it is important to note that while *Makgabaneng* considers itself an organization that operates separately from the constraints of the Botswana government, the political economy of its ties to outside donors cannot be ignored. The *Makgabaneng*
project is supported by community stakeholders, such as the Botswana Ministry of Communication, Science, and Technology; the Ministry of Health; the BOTUSA Project; the CDC; and others. Each of these donors provides unique contributions and restraints to decisions made at all stages of the program, including message content, target audience and evaluation tools.

Research suggests that *Makgabaneng* is successful in reaching and sustaining listenership among demographics, aged 15-24. Research indicates that listeners of *Makgabaneng* hold higher levels of HIV knowledge and less stigmatizing attitudes towards those affected by HIV. Listeners also report increased intentions to get tested for HIV, and greater preventative behaviors such as continued discussion with partners about HIV testing, and HIV testing during pregnancy (The Republic of Botswana Popular Report, 2005).

*Makgabaneng* has proven itself as much more than a radio drama; it is an interactive, holistic health initiative. In the head office, there are 17 organizational members and five departments: Administration; Writing; Production; Reinforcement; and Monitoring and Evaluation. Every entertaining radio drama has a creative team who writes, acts, and produces the radio drama, but *Makgabaneng* also utilizes other professionals to implement and carry out the organization’s efforts to promote actual behavior change of its audience. In efforts to align themselves with the MARCH model, additional steps have been taken to reinforce the message. A separate department has been created to monitor and evaluate the reinforcement initiatives. The Reinforcement Department engages in many activities such as organizing health fairs and disseminating
promotional materials, writing a teen magazine, overseeing field partners who host rallies at schools, oversee and transcribe guides for field partners who create Listening Discussion Groups, and write and perform radio talk shows once a week. A Special Projects Coordinator also contracts other works such as additional radio dramas and campaign materials with similar messages for other stakeholders.

*Makgabaneng* aims to address critical HIV/AIDS awareness messages and behavior change issues among 10-49 year olds Botswana. Based on the MARCH strategy (Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV/AIDS), this drama aims to help change risky behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS through modeling and reinforcement. In 2000, behavioral scientists developed the MARCH strategy. The modeling aspect of the strategy suggests that audiences learn how to handle various situations through character modeling. This is consistent with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, which states, “learning can occur through observing media role-models and this vicarious learning can, under certain conditions, be more effective then direct experiential learning” (Singhal et al, 2002). An important component of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory is that modeling does not occur simply by including desired messaging in the storyline. Identification hinges on which characters are engaging in certain activities. Audiences are more likely to model behaviors played out by protagonists than they are to model behaviors played out by antagonists. Identification with characters is crucial in the modeling process.

*Makgabaneng* has addressed these elements through their positive, negative, and transitional character development strategy. This strategy stems from Miguel Sabido’s methodology of incorporating Bandura’s Social Learning Theory in the design of
positive, negative and transitional role models (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). Each produced storyline includes a positive role model who consistently makes responsible health decisions and a negative character that consistently engages in risky and irresponsible behavior. Most importantly, transitional characters are included who may start making risky decisions, but evolve over the series into an empowered, knowledgeable, and positive character. These dynamic transitional characters most likely serve as the most identifiable role models for audience members, as they are neither consistently positive nor consistently negative. A description of key characters within the *Makgabneng* are illustrated in Table 2 below:
Table 2.

*Key Makgabaneng Characters.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gorata</td>
<td>Young positive female character dealing with the pressures of transitioning through school and young relationships. Godfrey’s love interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey</td>
<td>Young positive male character dealing with the pressures of transitioning through school and young relationships. Gorata’s love interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boramane</td>
<td>Young negative adult male character who is always looking for a good time. This character is dealing with the pressures of fidelity, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, making money and HIV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opelo</td>
<td>Young transitional female adult character dealing with the pressures of fidelity, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, making money and HIV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>Adult positive female character who struggling to balance the pressures of raising her children and deal with her unfaithful husband, Oteng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oteng</td>
<td>Adult negative male character who is unfaithful to his wife, Cecilia, and is constantly trying to hide his affairs from family members and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mma Meshack</td>
<td>Elder positive female character that is constantly caring for her husband, Rra Meshack, who is HIV+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rra Meshack</td>
<td>Elder transitional male character that is HIV+ and wants to heal through traditional medicines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This modeling process encourages audiences to acquire the necessary skills and attitudes to achieve behavioral change, but this knowledge is not enough to turn passive listeners into an active audience. Communication for behavioral change is no longer looked at as a uni-directional process. Through community reinforcement, *Makgabaneng* is able to engage with listeners to stimulate applicable, individualized, relevant health conversation.
The bottom-up reinforcement aspect of the strategy works with community-level interpersonal activities that also support the messages incorporated within the serial drama. This process initiates dialogue concerning issues that the serial drama characters are facing. Audiences are able to internalize these challenges, apply them to their own lives, and come up with solutions through interpersonal interactions. It is intended that through these discussions, new ideas and preventative strategies will emerge.

Makgabaneng’s own research demonstrates the importance of door-to-door, community-mobilization intervention in Botswana that uses peer educators to deliver HIV prevention and treatment education. In 2003, the organization interviewed 807 reproductive-aged citizens in seven of Botswana’s 22 health districts. Results from this study show that these types of community initiatives improve knowledge about how HIV transmissions can be prevented, increase understanding of mother-to-child transmission, reduce stigma, and encourage HIV testing (Meyerson, Robbins, Koppenhaver & Fleming, 2003). Total Community Mobilization (TCM) was positively associated with knowledge of abstinence (p < .05) and of condom use (p < .01). TCM was significantly associated with non-stigmatizing responses (p < .05) and TCM participants proved twice as likely as nonparticipants to have been tested for HIV (p < 0.01). This study demonstrates how critical the reinforcement aspect of the MARCH model truly is.

Few scholars have examined the impact of Makgabaneng on its audience. In 2004, Pappas-DeLuca, Kraft, Galavotti, et al. (2008), conducted a cross-sectional study to understand how successful the program was in encouraging listeners to know their HIV status. Researchers conducted face-to-face interviews in 1,730 households. They asked
respondents about the frequency, duration, discussion and identification with *Makgabaneng*. Their findings suggest that the popularity of the show, along with intermediate outcomes related to HIV testing, show that the drama is a, “promising medium to facilitate behavior change in Botswana” (503). However, this study held many limitations, including the assessment being conducted before the behavior change modeling process occurred on the program. During this time, characters in the *Makgabaneng* storyline had not yet completed their positive transition by getting tested for HIV, an imperative piece of the MARCH strategy.

Cole (2005) explored the development of *Makgabaneng* through interviews, surveys, personal observations and promotional materials to demonstrate the positive impact it has in promoting preventative education in Botswana. During this project, members of the *Makgabaneng* staff consistently stated that the trajectory of the serial drama would continue until the war on HIV/AIDS is over (p. 11). However, much has changed since this time, as funding for the edutainment series ends in 2011. For this reason, it proves even more important that more is understood regarding the impact of *Makgabaneng*.

Much has changed in the organization since these studies have been conducted. During my time with the organization in the summer of 2009, *Makgabaneng* had highlighted 18 formative themes that they felt were most imperative in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These themes include improving communication, examining the role of religion and tradition in prevention, risk education, domestic violence, empowerment of women, care for orphans and other vulnerable children, education of
health care workers, voluntary counseling and testing, support for people living with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers, family planning, links between STIs, HIV, and tuberculosis, involvement of youth, responsible sexual behavior, condom skills, role of men, preventing mother-to-child transmission, marriage and monogamy, and antiretroviral therapy (Peirce, personal experience, July, 2009).

Since it would prove difficult to consistently include all 18 themes in their storylines, Makgabaneng is focusing on five of these themes based on the recommendations of their funders, PEPFAR. The five themes that the organization has chosen to focus on include abstinence, alcohol reduction, partner reduction and fidelity, prevention with HIV positives, and intergenerational sex. These five themes are targeted towards all members of the 10-49 year old audience. With their current contract (2006-2011) approaching an end, it is unclear what future initiatives may include or how successful they have been in promoting these issues over the past five years. Therefore, more holistic and current reception research of E-E campaigns is necessary.

Currently, Makgabaneng holds a small monitoring and evaluation department. During my time with the organization, there were only two individuals working in this area. Though audience letters and focus group discussion data were kept on file, I got the impression that most critical evaluations of interest to them was done through statistical surveys. This data was used to demonstrate to donors that they were meeting the objectives put forth on them. Retroactive Listening and Discussion Groups were conducted with fans of the program to understand how audiences were interpreting the
storyline, but there certainly was not enough time or individuals to sort through that qualitative data.

It is important that steps are taken to ensure that social and cultural context are incorporated into HIV/AIDS messages. However it is difficult to monitor this need when outside organizations such as PEPFAR define predetermined objectives. More must be understood regarding how audiences of Makgabaneng interpret these storylines, not just how well they are adhering to PEPFAR recommendations. Audiences read media texts in multiple ways (McKee, 2003), so it is important to gain an understanding of the intricate relationship audiences’ hold with media. As indicated earlier, Parks (2005) argues that evaluations must move away from people as the objects of change, and focus on more participatory methods, such as community dialogue, local decision-making processes and cultural-identity.

We now understand how individuals are able to construct their own reality through E-E dramas (Tufte, 2001). Additionally, we also understand how research calls for more participatory evaluations in public health programs (Parks, 2005). Each of these components discusses the importance of character identification and the inclusion of specific cultural narrative elements in public health interventions (Petragilia, 2007). Before a meaningful audience reception evaluation may be conducted based on these recommendations, a deeper understanding of the culture of Botswana must be gained.
CHAPTER 6: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF BOTSWANA

Botswana became an independent country on September 30, 1966 (Peters, 1994). Since that time, many of the country’s oldest traditions have been challenged by modern Western influences. This has created a difficult dichotomy between citizens within the country, those who prove more traditional, and those who consider themselves modern. In order to understand the values, ideologies and social structures within the country further, one must examine several contributing factors. This analysis aims to explore the country’s political structure, media context, economic conditions, sociocultural traditions, and public health challenges, to illustrate challenges of efforts aimed at igniting behavioral change in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Botswana.

Political

More than 80 percent of Botswana is referred to as the Kalahari Desert due to its flat dry landscape. The citizens of Botswana are stretched over twenty tribes and speak over twenty different languages (Main, 2007). Today, the most prominent languages in Botswana are Setswana and English; and the most prominent religions are Christian, Muslim and ancestral. At independence in 1966, Botswana “was one of the poorest countries in the world; it was also one of the most traditional and conservative” (9). In the years since, the country is now viewed as a model of democracy and planned development.
Botswana is a politically stable middle-income nation of 1.7 million people in southern Africa (Creek, Alwano, Molosiwa, Roels et al., 2006). The conservative outlook is still vastly popular, however the new younger generation is moving towards a more liberal and accepting mindset (Main, 2007; Zaffiro, 1993). Due to the country’s stability and increasing wealth, many foreigners are beginning to move in. These foreigners are seen as threats by Botswana natives due to the limited number of jobs in the region. This has sparked the beginnings of xenophobia in some Botswana citizens.

Politically, the Botswana government is a parliamentary democracy and consists of 57 elected members, plus four specially appointed by the President. This includes the president himself and the speaker, making a total of 63 members (Main, 2007). Elections are held every five years. Botswana government is also a member of the United Nations. Trust is a huge problem in Botswana as well, as often the government is thought of as not being honest. This has led to many misconceptions regarding the treatment and prevention of HIV and AIDS (Maundeni, 2009).

Language use is also beginning to shift in Botswana. Arua & Magocha (2002) examined language use in students at the University of Botswana and found that the majority of respondents were fluent in both Setswana and English. However, they most widely spoke Setswana when speaking with each other, even though parents preferred them to speak English. The reason that parents prefer their children to speak in English is because it generally holds a higher profile than Setswana. McDonald & Kasule (2005) also examined language use in Botswana and found that younger student generations are much more emphatic and confident than older generations, especially when using the
English language. This age-divide between citizens is disparate in almost all arenas of the country. Based on this knowledge, this dissertation aims to examine differences between age groups in Botswana, specifically between young adults and the older generation in both rural and urban areas.

Media Context

Botswana is renowned as being an African country that practices the freedom of press. State television, radio, state newspaper, independent newspapers and radio stations all exist, and are primarily written in English (Main, 2007; Zaffiro, 1993). The government produces a daily newspaper, *Daily News*, and operates two radio stations, RB 1 and RB 2. BBC World is transmitted in the morning for three hours and soaps are broadcast in the evening. Most of these broadcasts are foreign programs. However, there has been a recent surge to incorporate locally broadcast media programs. It should be noted that the government completely dominates the country’s economy, so it is difficult to say how true free press really reigns.

Additional Botswana research reports high levels of literacy in citizens, as 83 percent of respondents are able to read English and/or Setswana (BOPA, 2009). The country’s school attendance rate is the highest in Africa, at 90% at the primary school level, 50% at the junior secondary level, 20% at the senior secondary level and 11.4% at the tertiary level (Botswana Press Agency, 2010). Education is certainly valued and available to the citizens of Botswana. This also suggests that any HIV/AIDS education that is incorporated into school curriculum is likely to reach most school age children.
Organizations are attempting to reach those who are out of school through other media, including radio.

Radio in Botswana is almost a universal media, with 96% access (Pappas-DeLuca, Kraft, Galavotti, et al., 2008). These high numbers generally suggest that individuals who do not own the media have made a choice not to do so, rather than being subject to a digital divide. Research of the radio drama *Makgabaneng* suggests that it reaches 80% of Botswana’s population twice weekly (African Media Development Initiative, 2010). However, little is known regarding the media context of *Makgabaneng*’s biggest fans.

Economic

There is no arguing the devastating impact HIV and AIDS has held on the people of Botswana, including its public health sector, households, schools, workplaces and economy (Avert, 2009). This country was one of the most proactive areas around the world in their response to the HIV and AIDS virus. The government put forth great efforts in medication, treatment, education and preventative campaigns to fight against this disease. Unfortunately, one cannot ignore the toll that these programs have taken on the national budget. This has left governmental officials with no other options than to make substantial cuts for the sake of the country’s future.

Botswana currently spends 8.6% of its national budget on the fight against HIV and AIDS (Martin, 2009). These funds have generally been put towards providing free anti-retroviral drugs for pregnant women who are HIV positive. Free testing, counseling,
and extensive education programs are also available through these government agencies. Unfortunately, these programs come with a high price tag. While Botswana was once financially equipped to handle this burden, it is quickly losing economic status. Beresford (2001) explains how Botswana’s gross domestic product will be lowered between 24-38% by 2021 due to HIV/AIDS.

Robson Dimbungu, chief program planning officer of the National AIDS Coordinating Agency explained, "The budget we have now is not going to sustain us beyond 2016. If we do not do something about our revenues, we are going to find ourselves in a tough situation." (AIDSMAP, 2009). Over the past decade, citizens of Botswana have lost 13% of their total disposable income per person. “AIDS is likely to exacerbate the severe shortage of qualified men and women in most sectors of the economy, creating major bottle-necks in business and production” (The Body, 2000).

Because the government can no longer afford to finance the same preventative and treatment programs that they have in the past, it is necessary for them to begin making decisions about what to include and exclude from their new budget. Lindow & Truglia (2005) explains how the HIV/AIDS pandemic has led to high poverty and unemployment. In response to these economic struggles, a new government commission, the Business and Economic Advisory Council (BEAC), was established. This organization has determined that the government is no longer able to provide primary economic support, and the private sector must step in. Based on this knowledge, this dissertation aims to examine the sustainability of public health campaigns such as Makgabaneng in its conclusion section.
In 2003, President Festus Mogae publicly blamed citizens with HIV and AIDS for draining the national budget by almost two billion dollars (BBC News, 2003). Because Botswana was once considered an incredibly wealthy country, this statement did not sit well with the average Botswana citizens. Insensitivities such as these have led to an even more stigmatized and blame-centered rhetoric towards those citizens who are infected with HIV and Aids. People are less likely to be honest and open with their HIV status if they are being blamed for the entire destruction of a nation. It seems as though the people who need treatments the most, are the same people who are being left out of new proposed government budgets.

Additionally, the Botswana government has grown unsatisfied by the limited progress made by so many HIV/AIDS campaigns and are starting to question the necessity of their existence (BBC News, 2003). This has led to an even greater frustration with the amount of money that is being put towards HIV and AIDS awareness, instead of to other areas. Citizens who are sick are beginning to be pushed aside, so as to invest in the healthiest population. Because the sick are just becoming weaker, and less likely to be open regarding their illness, this dangerous cycle is perpetuated.

The Republic of Botswana Popular Report (2008) found that the main economic activity in communities is crop farming and livestock. Each of these activities is highly dependent on unpredictable rainfall. Drought contributes to poverty and poverty plays an indirect role in making individuals vulnerable to HIV infection. The Tribal Grazing Land Policy resulted in contemporary livestock communal range. This played a significant
role in allocating resources, creating or destroying individual wealth, and promoting interests at the cost of others (Peters, 1994).

Botswana has about a 17.5% unemployment rate, and both individuals and families are feeling the economic impact of HIV/AIDS (EISA, 2010). This includes loss of income, increased expenditure on medical care and funeral costs, and depleted savings, as assets such as land and cattle are sold to cover costs.

Much of the HIV/AIDS budget relies on outside donations. However, Percival (2009) explains how this number has dropped in recent years because of Botswana’s status as a middle-income country. “Botswana has moved from being one of the least developed countries in the world to being a middle income country and is well ahead in that category, so it’s normal that some donor countries pull out” (1). This is a troubling trend, as HIV infection rates remain high, despite the country’s economic growth. Many outside donors are also not comfortable contributing their money to governmental organizations because they do not feel as though they are trustworthy. This is why it is so imperative that the NGO’s across Botswana are equipped to make a big difference with the little money that they receive. National government can only do so much to help their infected citizens, and most of their efforts are now on testing measures, rather than preventative education.

Sociocultural

33.4 million plus people in the world are living with HIV; 2.1 million are children under the age of 15. (UNAIDS, 2009). Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
occurs when an HIV-positive individual has such lowered immune levels that he/she falls prey to a variety of opportunistic infections. One basic reason why AIDS is mostly a disease of the poor is because of the unbalance distribution of health resources. Rather than looking at the virus as an individual problem (ie: person not using condom), it is important to look at cultural factors that may contribute to these discrepancies (ie: gender inequalities that may contribute to a person being afraid to demand sexual protection).

Culture is defined as learned customs, beliefs, values, knowledge, artifacts and symbols that are constantly communicated among a set of people who share a common way of life (Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008). Thus, culture signifies a society's entire learned way of living. Through the creation and expression of day-to-day culture, people are constantly communicating with one another to understand their own social world. It is imperative that one examines unique cultural characteristics of a region in order to understand the complex social structures of power citizens must work under.

Each and every community holds their own set of values, language norms, traditions and cultures which may make it difficult to product social change. Some of the most basic attributes of Botswana culture are a result of its collectivist culture. Recognition and respect are incredibly important (Main, 2007). Therefore, to ignore a greeting in Botswana is considered rude and offensive. Children are taught to respect and submit to authority. Botswana is a relaxed country, where punctuality and timeliness do not hold strong value. However, people do take great pride in organizations or groups that they belong to, including their employment (Main, 2007).
Though these cultural norms may seem insignificant to HIV/AIDS research, they are incredibly important in gaining trust of Botswana citizens. Trust and positive identification with health communication messages is imperative to behavior change progress. Effective health communication is imperative to health care management (Say, Murtagh & Thomson, 2006; Collins, Clark, Petersen & Kressin, 2002). Research shows that health communication is able to increase audience knowledge and awareness of a health issue; influence attitudes that may shape social norms, prompt action, demonstrate healthy life skills, reinforce knowledge, illustrate benefits of behavior change, advocate a position on public health issue, increase support for health services, refute myths, and strengthen organizational relationships (National Cancer Institute, 2001).

Public health research states that lack of substance and vagueness of health communication may be linked to feelings of mistrust towards the source of messages (Collins, Clark, Petersen & Kressin, 2002). If audiences do not understand what and why a message is being communicated with them, they are less likely to trust the motivations behind it.

Say, Murtagh & Thomson (2006) investigated factors that influenced patients’ willingness to become involved in the health treatment process. Results of this study conclude that identification is vital to positive perceptions of health advice. This makes audiences feel as though they are a part of the decision-making process, which ignites empowerment and a sense of control over their illness. Considering this literature, it is evident that healthcare communication is influenced by patient perceptions cultural
identification. Therefore, it is imperative that specific cultural traditions and rituals are understood in order to spark behavior change.

Kahuadi (2009) outlined nine Botswana-specific cultural challenges in the behavioral change process. First, change is not self-initiated. When people lack ownership of an idea, they tend to resist it. The key to attitude changes is who is in charge of initiating or imposing the idea. Second, it proves difficult to create social change when routine is disrupted. Change threatens patterns and forces people to think, re-evaluate and unlearn past behavior. Cultural-specific routines prove almost impossible to change. Third, it is difficult to change when the purpose of the change is unclear. Communities resist change when they hear about it from second-hand sources. Therefore, decisions should be made at the lowest level possible. Fourth, change creates fear of the unknown. Many communities are more comfortable living with old problems than they are with implementing new solutions. Fifth, change creates fear of failure. Many communities resist change because failure of solution would be worse than unknowing. Sixth, if the rewards for change do not match the effort change requires, change will not occur. Communities must perceive advantages of change outweighing the disadvantages of continuing with the way things are. Seventh, people are too satisfied with the way things are. Some people do not have it very hard, and therefore asking them to change behavior really does not seem necessary. Eighth, change will not happen when people engage in negative thinking. Hope is one of the most essential components of social change. Thankfully, the culture of Botswana is one filled with great hope and pride for the
country. Finally, the lack of good role models in the society makes social change difficult (Kahuadi, 2009).

Traditions and rituals must be examined when one is interested in social change. Nhleksana (2007) examined songs and the importance of folklore in Botswana. Almost every occasion in which people come together has particular songs or poem for the event. This includes work, wedding and funerals. Songs mark a period of importance in ones life, and so if organizations were to incorporate this variable in social change messages, they may make a bigger impact. Not only is it important to pay attention to what a culture says, it is also important to take note of what is silenced.

Chillag, Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, et al. (2006) examined how citizens in Botswana rarely talk about sex. They found that the topic of sex sparked sentiment of shame is almost never done in public. Individual characteristics such as age, gender and personality were likely to affect their candour. Akindele & Trennepohl (2008) also examined silence in the classroom. They found that the vast majority of students who are accepted for admission to the University of Botswana came from a secondary school background where the pedagogy never attempted to develop independent thought, group activity or criticisms of authority. This study called for the University to strive to give each student an attitude of lifelong and independent learning, as Botswana culture encourages children and students to keep quiet and never query any point of view or opinion of authorities. This consistently leads to a culture of silence, inactivity and lack of participation in social activities.
Strong traditions cannot be ignored in any culture, however this may prove even stronger in Botswana. Geiger (2002) found that Botswana has an increasing number of children whose primary caregivers are ageing grandparents and great-grandparents. This tendency is strongly linked to the high incidence of HIV and AIDS related deaths among the young and middle-aged adult generation. This older grandparent generation is predominantly illiterate, with a very rural life experience and well-defined cultural norms, making non-verbal communication and narrative structures incredibly important.

A recent study found that stigmatizing attitudes have greatly lessoned after universal access to antiretroviral treatment was introduced (Avert, 2010). This suggests a decrease in stigmatizing attitudes towards those who are HIV positive. One way to understand how to increase these types of positive practices across the country is to examine the populations in which these practices already exist.

Creek, Alwano, Molosiwa, Roels et al. (2006) examined participants who voluntarily tested for HIV. They found that most clients were unmarried, reported having only one sexual partner, and reported using condoms during the last three months. Male clients were more likely to have no education or university education, to have had more sexual partners, and less likely to report never using condoms. Female clients were more likely to be unemployed and to state the reason for seeking an HIV test as being concerned about partner behavior, partner illness or an unborn child. Clearly, disparate gender differences exist within the Botswana culture.

Gender inequalities are one of the most important and challenging cultural characteristics of Botswana. Wingood and DeClemente (2000) developed a Structure of
Cathexis that highlights different characteristics of gender inequality. This structure outlines the expectations that society has about women in regard to their sexuality. Consequently, these perceptions shape women’s perceptions of themselves and limit their experiences of reality. It also describes how women’s sexuality is attached to other social concerns, such as those related to impurity and immorality. It dictates how and when women and men should express their sexuality, most often citing the silence of women. Finally, it outlines stereotypical beliefs such as believing that women should have sex only for procreation. In this model, women are monogamous non-sexual beings and should not touch their own bodies. Kgafela (2007) examined Botswana culture and found this model closely mirrors the gendered power structures in Botswana.

Gendered power structures prove a huge challenge for social and behavior change initiatives. Class structures are beginning to prove just as problematic, as the gap between rich and poor is growing even wider in Botswana. The region has expensive cars, big houses, excellent roads, modern buildings, as well as dwellings built of natural materials that include zero sanitation, electricity or water. These desperate power structures certainly hold negative consequences for attitudes and community-based initiatives. Most importantly, each of these cultural characteristics non-directly impacts the health of the people of Botswana. This holds especially true for the women, as young men aged 15-24 hold a 5.7 percent HIV prevalence rate, and young women aged 15-24 hold a 15.3 HIV prevalence rate in Botswana (PEPFAR, 2011).

While the MARCH Model excels in designating the importance of a community level reinforcement, it does not necessarily explore the many specific cultural issues in
their studies. The MARCH Model is the same whether it is implemented in Botswana or in Brazil. Instead, the model chooses to focus on some of the more discrete aspects HIV prevention such as multiple concurrent partnerships and alcohol reduction. However, it is important to discuss the linkage between sociocultural contexts and public health and HIV/AIDS.

Public Health and HIV/AIDS

The national HIV prevalence in Botswana is estimated to be 25% percent of the population aged 15 and over (Avert, 2010). This is the second highest number of 15-49 year olds living with HIV after Swaziland. UNAIDS (2008) estimate that of the 91,780 of the 320,0000 individuals who are HIV positive are eligible for antiretroviral treatment, 61% are female and 9% are children. The country has an estimated 93,000 orphans as a result of HIV/AIDS.

Although marriage and condom use are generally associated with a lower risk of having HIV, age and educational level have been shown to be the most significant predictor of HIV status (Creek, Alwano, Molosiwa, Roels et al., 2006). These data suggest that Botswana’s HIV prevention efforts should focus on factors that are modifiable, including improving the overall educational level of the population, making marriage a more attractive option, encouraging 100% condom use, and increasing the number of people who know their HIV status, as well as the status of their sexual partners.
While Botswana has taken great steps to monitor, evaluate and fight against HIV and AIDS, there is much more work to be done. During a HIV/AIDS education lecture at the University of Botswana, Lunga & Maplazi (2009) identified many behavioral and developmental problems that Botswana is beginning to see in adolescents across Botswana. For example, if an adolescent is experiencing emotional, social, psychological or physical development problems, difficulties such as insecurity, poor self-esteem, intensity of emotions, inability to make lasting relationships and identity confusion may occur. Without the proper support for these issues, larger behavioral developmental issues may occur. These larger behavior problems include violence and aggression, shutting off adults, constant challenges to authority, inappropriate attention seeking, running away (both literally and emotionally), and engaging in excessive drinking and drugs.

Dr. Vitalis Chipfakacha, a Southern African Development Community (SADC) medical doctor (2009) spoke about the fight against HIV and AIDS in Botswana specifically. In this lecture, it was noted that mass killers are nothing new to Africa. Malaria is preventable and curable, yet it still remains a huge problem in the country. How can the people of Botswana be expected to tackle HIV and AIDS if something like malaria cannot be solved? Each African country is complex; however a re-evaluation of social and individual cultural factors may highlight some changes that can take place to improve the current health situation.

Chipfakacha (2009) pointed to media influence specifically as an area in need of improvement. Botswana children are being socialized through media. As they move from
school to home, television teaches and glamorizes multiple partners and the practices of ‘small houses’. Small house is the idea of a person (usually male) having a secondary sexual partner at the same time as their primary relationship. These are often called “cockroach relationships,” as the secondary woman usually only come at certain hours of the night. Other cultural specific problems that the region faces include the recent surge in young passion killings. Passion killings usually involve a boy killing a girl after romantic rejection.

HIV and AIDS present a unique challenge to other illnesses, as patients are generally unclear how and when the virus begins. The prevalence of old and new cases is unknown. Cofactors to spreading include increased levels of other illness, poverty, mobility, gender inequality, discrimination, inadequate health resources, cultural notions, lack of recreation, biological reasons and violence (Chipfakacha, 2009).

Dr. Zibani Maundeni, of the University of Botswana’s Department of Political and Administrative Studies (2009) spoke of the sugar daddy syndrome in Botswana. This is the idea of young women dating older men for material or financial gain. Often, the older man exchanges cell phones, cars or cash for sexual favors. This certainly illustrates an unequal power structure in a consumer society. Therefore, it makes sense to draw upon these values when creating behavior change messages.

Adolescent socialization in Botswana is primarily achieved through peers and media (Maundeni, 2009). Traditional family based socialization agencies, such as initiation ceremonies, are not always practiced in modern Botswana. Due to an absence of community, knowledge about HIV and AIDS is often nonexistent or misunderstood.
Recently, the country has begun to focus its attention on messages encouraging female empowerment. Females are able to visit clinics, gain education to help improve individual empowerment. Empowerment also happens through aunts, teachers and teachers. These same social structures are not in place for young males. Males often believe that they are not vulnerable to HIV and AIDS because they are depositors, not receivers during sexual intercourse. Other misconceptions also exist, such as having sex with a virgin will get rid of the virus, and that condoms cause a rash or infection. Families are generally silent on sexual issues and teach abstinence only messages (Maundeni, 2009).

Dr. Joseph Pitso of the University of Botswana (2009) cited lack of male circumcision and multiple concurrent partnerships are two of the biggest challenges that males face in Botswana. However, some citizens end up believing that if they are circumcised, then they are safe from HIV and AIDS. It is clear how sociocultural factors underpin quantitative statistical message approaches. Though gender inequalities place females at a disadvantageous position, it is important that males are able to experience adequate support and educational resources.

HIV/AIDS is influenced by societal norms, gender societal status, faith belief, and spiritual values. Pitso (2009) explains how the government must move away from individual-level theories and models of preventative behaviors to more multilevel and contextual explanations and interventions. Previous research blames individuals and disregards contexts that contribute to the problem. Mistaken assumptions in previous research include: 1. All individuals are capable of controlling elements and structures of
their context. 2. All individuals are on an even playing field. 3. All individuals take preventative health decisions rationally. 4. All individuals take decisions of own free will.

In comparison to the United States, Botswana holds a higher mean age of sexual debut, higher use of condoms, higher counseling and testing rates, fewer sexual partners in a lifetime and an HIV rate that is almost 25 times higher (Pitso, 2009). Patterns of sexual relationships are incredibly important to HIV transmission; this can be achieved by examining a person’s sexual network (how people are linked together by people they are having sex with). While a person in the United States tends to date one person at a time, in Botswana culture, it is okay for men to date many, even if they are involved in serious relationships. This increases a person’s sexual network. This has led towards health messages that focus on addressing Multiple Concurrent Partnerships (MCP), intergenerational sexual relationships (any sexual relationships with an age span of seven years or more), and transaction relationships. Reasons for MCP include dissatisfaction with current partner, economic needs, gender inequality, gender based violence, unrealistic notions of masculinity and marriage expectations. In conclusion, interventions must address these sociocultural factors and create a flexible culture-based holistic strategy. Emphasis needs to be placed on patterns of multiple partners, rather than on abstinence (Pitso, 2009).

Dr. P.G. Ntseane, Department of social work at the University of Botswana, (2009) spoke of the importance of indigenous epistemology as a traditional way of doing things, rather than reality based scientific knowledge. Indigenous epistemology is based instead on cultural knowledge. In Botswana, context source of knowledge is never
identified, but knowledge is respected without question. Botswana indigenous knowledge values productivity and leadership skills. These leaders must make decisions based on collective consensus, as Botswana does not have a history of having chiefs. Collectivist societies are not afraid to die because they get to join those before them. That is why fear tactics do not work in these societies. By focusing on leadership, traditional medicine, collaboration, reproduction the fight against HIV and AIDS is possible.

Some of the challenges of creating social change in Botswana include unequal power relationships in knowledge construction, modern verse traditional leadership, diversity of indigenous knowledge, and science not including HIV and AIDS as a social problem (Ntseane, 2009). It is clear how cultural dimensions are harmful to sexual behavior. People engage in sexual activity for procreation. However, in Botswana there is a traditional importance for women to produce children. Therefore, abstinence based messages are not effective. People engage in sexual activity for pleasure. In Botswana, people engage in sexual activity for family property. Money is often paid to a boy if he impregnates a woman. You marry an entire family, not just an individual. People engage in sexual activity as a source of exchange. Ntseane (2009) explains how Botswana culture has inheritance sex with a niece by an uncle. People engage in sexual activity for cleansing and healing. There are many misconceptions regarding the healing of illness and sexually transmitted infections by having sex with a young virgin girl. People engage in sexual activity for control and power. In Botswana, gender identity, especially for males, revolves around multiple partners.
Based on these cultural practices, Ntseane (2009) recommends that women need additional empowerment, and something must be created for male empowerment and HIV/AIDS prevention. Males need to take more responsibility in the role of prevention. Moreover, organizations need to work with traditional doctors because they are very important and accessible at a low cost for citizens.


HIV/AIDS education campaigns may be difficult to evaluate because they tend to involve a variety of participants and settings, use social influence and diffusion for their effects, and may contain any of a number of specific implementation activities (Hope, 2003). In addition, the characteristics and activities of a program can change over time, making it a ‘moving target’ for evaluators.
Most research studies are solely interested in looking at individual behavior change, not contextual structural components. It is important that steps are taken to ensure that social and cultural context are incorporated into HIV/AIDS messages. When outside organizations such as PEPFAR define predetermined objectives, not much is understood regarding how audiences are interpreting the campaign. Culture is often seen as a hindrance to these evaluation techniques (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon, 2000). Based on this knowledge, the purpose of this study is to understand how the audience of *Makgabaneng* is negotiating the text with their own cultural experiences to produce meaning about their personal identity and their environment.
CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH QUESTIONS, REFLEXIVITY, AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, with an emphasis on audience reception of Makgabaneng. Through triangulation methodologies, a better understanding is gained of how citizens in Botswana are making sense of the text, in combination with their own cultural experiences, to produce meaning regarding themselves and their environment. The methodologies selected for this study have been loosely based on Tufte’s holistic examination of *The Rubbish Queen*.

Tufte (2000) explores how a culture identifies with and constructs meaning from a Brazilian telenovela, *Rubbish Queen (Rainha do Sucata)* through an audience reception study. This drama was screened on Rede Globo from April 2 to October 26, 1990 (Tufte, 2000). Tufte interviews seven agents on the production side of the drama, asks women to retell the basic story of the telenovela to understand how they are interpreting the storyline and applying it to their own lives, completed various visits to the studio, collected secondary media texts, and examined 12-recorded chapters of the soap drama. Tufte also used participant observation and a quantitative data survey with 105 respondents. Through this multi-method triangulation study, a better understanding was made of how audiences made sense of the *Rubbish Queen*.

This audience reception study includes a mixed methods survey (asking for both likert-scale survey questions and more qualitative fill-in-the-blank answers), in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and field visitations. This triangulation study will answer the following seven Research Questions:
Research Questions

RQ1: What generalized consumption patterns exist among fans of *Makgabaneng*?

RQ2: How are audiences likely to interpret the most salient themes and in *Makgabaneng*?

RQ2a. How are audiences of *Makgabaneng* interpreting the five recommended PEPFAR themes (fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with HIV positives and abstinence)?

RQ2b. How closely do the five recommended PEPFAR themes align with the issues of most concern to the *Makgabaneng* audience in Botswana’s fight against HIV/AIDS?

RQ3. How do audiences of *Makgabaneng* identify with the radio drama?

RQ3a: What roles does tradition and modernity differences play in the audience reception process?

RQ3b: What roles do gender differences play in the audience reception process?

RQ4. How do audiences of *Makgabaneng* construct their own lived reality through the radio drama?

Methodology and Reflexivity

This project began as an internship through the Ohio University study abroad program. During the summer of 2009, I was fortunate enough to have been assigned field
placement with *Makgabaneng*. The internship lasted for four weeks, and during that time, I was able to work and interact with all five of the NGO departments: administration, writing, production, reinforcement and monitoring and evaluation. This experience provided insights into the culture and everyday challenges of putting together an edutainment drama.

During my time as an intern with *Makgabaneng*, I was able to participate in many different phases of the drama’s creative process. I participated in the storyboarding phase. Here, employees drafted and debated initial new ideas for upcoming scripts; I was able to write a portion of the soap script myself (the story of teen Gorata being pressured by her boyfriend Godfrey); and finally I was able to attend meetings with informed community leaders to decide what changes needed to be made to the script in order to make them the most culturally and medically accurate.

I was also able to witness *Makgabaneng’s* production process, including the actors performing the scripts and sound effects for final recording. In one touching instance, the actress who was playing the part of Cecilia, a positive character who is both a wife and a mother in the drama, actually tears up, as she listened to her ‘husband’ cheat on her for the first time in the story. Instances such as these clearly point to the dedication and passion staff held towards the *Makgabaneng* story.

Once I returned from Gaborone, I had approximately 11 months to study and design an adequate audience reception study. Through triangulation methodology, the second phase of this project was completed through field visits, participant observation, in-home visitations, personal interviews, focus group discussions and a survey with fans.
of the program. Each of these methodologies is necessary to provide unique insights into how fans of *Makgabaneng* were constructing their own reality through the drama. An outlined of how these multiple methodologies were used with one another is outlined in Figure 2 below.

![Use of Multiple Methodologies in this Study](image)

*Figure 2. Use of Multiple Methodologies in this Study*

Prior to data collection, the researcher did a careful reading of the *Makgabaneng* script. As Tufte (2000) explains, the researcher must examine various dimensions of intertextuality, and distinguish different layers through primary, secondary and tertiary texts. Through this type of “genre analysis”, a more holistic understanding of their relationship may be formed. McKee (2003) explains how audience interpretations are produced and negotiated through intertextuality. No media live in isolation from others and so it proves futile to study them accordingly. It is necessary for scholars to research the genre of a text and the expectations audiences may have before ever engaging media. The researcher read episodes 865-896 of *Makgabaneng*. These scripts were the most recent broadcasts near the time of data collection. Therefore, it can be assumed that
events going on in these scripts will serve as the most recent frame of reference for fans of *Makgabaneng*. The researcher took great care in ensuring that this reading extended beyond the author’s themes and interpretations of one text, but also includes genre, cultural context and the media setting where these negotiations take place. This was done through incorporating many elements of Tufte’s (2000) methodology, which looks at various dimensions of intertextuality, and distinguish different layers through primary, secondary and tertiary texts.

Episodes were read once as entertainment before administering the survey to provide a generalized initial understanding of what content in the drama is like. A second reading was done after administering the survey and before conducting interviews to identify reoccurring themes within the radio drama, as highlighted by the researcher. Finally, episodes were read a third time to link these themes in connection to one another after the interview discussions1.

This reading helped the author identify the most salient messages found within the drama itself, allowing the researcher to best understand the storylines of which audiences speak to, as well as compare the issues of most concern to fans to the five recommended PEPFAR thematic suggestions.

It should be noted that this reading was completed on the final English phase of the script writing process. It is not until the final stage when scripts are transcribed into

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1 A full detailed textual analysis, including the most salient messages and interpretations of the author, can be found in a separate document entitled, *Understanding How Audiences Interpret the Edutainment Drama Makgabaneng*. (Peirce, 2010). This separation of these findings was necessary for staying on-point with this audience reception study, as it will posit the interpretations of fans above the researchers.
Setswana. Therefore, specific and direct dialogue exchanges between characters were not a part of my text reading. This provides its own limitations, but I am confident that in addition to the other methodologies and informant consultants, it was similar enough to the final script to draw meaningful conclusions from.

The first and second readings provided the researcher with her understanding and interpretation of the *Makgabaneng* storyline. However, each subsequent reading allowed for a more culturally centered analysis of how fans of the program interpret the drama. The final third reading allowed for multiple and secondary interpretations, and aided in understanding the complex cultural difference between the researcher and the target audience of *Makgabaneng* more fully. Each of these rounds of text was read on separate days from one another as to prevent fatigue with the project. Furthermore, scripts were examined throughout the entire data collection process for additional insights and were discussed with native Botswana citizens for secondary interpretations and clarifications.

One must examine the complexities of the relation and interaction between producer and viewer/listener by examining the genre of a media text (Tufte, 2000). As previously mentioned, genre analysis is able to get at the cultural trajectories and communication strategies of the genre in focus. Reception studies are generally media-centric in their analysis of the text/receiver relationship, while studies in media ethnography are more interested in the social interaction of particular groups of people. Many reception analyses are based on interviews with recipients, which may be regarded as just another text analysis. Media ethnography is a more useful evaluative methodology as it transcends the text-receiver relationship to explore social and cultural
transformations. This study utilizes several methodologies to bring findings closer towards a media ethnography, rather than separate studies involving many different methodologies.

Survey Analysis

The next step of this audience reception study is a survey analysis. Survey research is an appropriate methodology to use when a researcher is interested in descriptive, explanatory and exploratory data (Babbie, 2007). It is usually used in situations to describe a population that is too large to observe directly to measure attitudes and orientations. Surveys involve the use of a questionnaire, an instrument used to elicit information for analysis. Though these questionnaires come in many forms, this study is concerned with a self-administered survey with close-ended questions.

Self-administered questionnaire allows a single researcher to gather data from a large sample of respondents (Bernard, 2000). All respondents receive the same set of questions so there is no worry about interview bias. They are also a particularly useful method to utilize when asking sensitive questions, as they are not as personal as a face-to-face interview. Response effects are also absent in self-administered questions.

Many studies examining health campaigns have utilized survey research as their main methodology. Vaughan, Regis & Catherine (2000) surveyed 1,238 citizens living in St. Lucia. Their results found that 35% percent of them had listened to a radio soap drama, Apwe Plezi. Listeners of the program demonstrated higher education levels regarding contraception options and held stronger views on the importance of fidelity.
Orme, Salmon & Mages (2006) disseminated postcard surveys to 121 young people aged 13-16 years old to determine how successful the E-E campaign *Project Jump* proved in achieving access to the range of young people it was developed to target. Their research found that overall, this type of program was beneficial in dealing with problems relating to school exclusion, poor educational achievement, risk of criminal activity and family violence to living in deprived communities. Also, the majority of respondents believed that their involvement with the project was a positive and exciting one.

Gordan (1953) examined 151 questionnaires that were sent out in Baltimore, MD by the Baltimore City Health Department to determine the likelihood of television stations carrying a public health education program. Results of these questionnaires showed great promise in the development of such programs, however, little have been developed since this time. This demonstrates one of the main drawbacks of survey methodology. Though this study clearly shows a generalized interest in this type of program, it does not reach some of the individual complexities that are needed to initiate such action.

Therefore, the aim of this portion of the study was to gain an exploratory sense of the HIV/AIDS knowledge base in 224 Botswana citizens regarding prevention and treatment, stigma levels and how individuals are identifying with soap narratives. The sampling for the survey proved quite difficult, as the researcher was limited in time and transportation. Participants were mostly recruited from urban areas in Botswana, though great care was taken include areas where more rural residents may travel to. This includes
the bus station, local markets and shopping malls. The researchers also traveled to a nearby rural village to visit tertiary institutions, high schools and local neighbors.

Sampling recruitment mostly completed through key informants from the University of Botswana. Convenience sampling was used, as only find self-defined fans of the radio drama were asked to participate in the survey. One of the key informants is a respected leader in Botswana. She grew up in a rural village and currently resides in the urban capital of Gaborone, and therefore has connections to both regions. She also holds a doctoral research degree and understands the complexities of survey research. Additionally, she has worked closely with Ohio University and Makgabaneng and is personally invested in this project. The second informant is a recent graduate of the University of Botswana. He resides in a nearby rural village to Gaborone and speaks the local languages. He accompanied the researcher at all times. Both informants were used for all methodologies included in this project.

Survey participants were asked to read a consent form approved by Ohio University's Institutional Review Board and the Botswana Ministry of Health before completing the survey. Surveys were collected and stored with no identifiable participant information. As previously mentioned, this methodology certainly holds its limitations, the most challenging being the sampling process. However, it is important to note that it is designed to get a sense of how audiences of Makgabaneng are making sense of the program, not to make generalized statistical assumptions of the entire Botswana population. Moreover, it was designed to improve and clarify the interview guide for the next stage of the audience reception study, rather than stand on its own as an evaluation.
Survey Instrument Design

The survey aimed to examine the following variables of the *Makgabaneng* audience: demographics, media access, HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes towards *Makgabaneng*, character identification, storyline preference, sense of empowerment, HIV/AIDS stigma, attitudes and behaviors regarding fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with positives, stigma, abstinence and birth control.

As no single survey currently exists measuring all of these variables, a new instrument was created. Demographic and media access questions were based off of Tufte’s (2000) questionnaire in *Living with the Rubbish Queen*. Based on the researchers personal experiences in Botswana, the variables of Internet access and mobile phone (as well as the combination of internet access on mobile devices) were also added, as these alternative media may provide insights into how to incorporate more participatory opportunities for audiences to interact with *Makgabaneng*.

Attitudes towards *Makgabaneng* were measured by choosing questions that would help distinguish casual fans and hardcore fans. Besides asking simply time individuals spend with the program, respondents are also asked if they participate in the *Makgabaneng Extra* after show, where listeners are asked to call in and discuss a particular issue. The questionnaire then addresses whether or not respondents have ever changed behavior based on something they heard on *Makgabaneng*.

One of the most important elements of the MARCH model is the audience identifying with elements of the edutainment drama. Therefore, this survey examines
which storylines and characters respondents most identify with. It also asks respondents how well the storylines represent their own life. Respondents were also asked to determine which of these soap characters are most like them and their friends.

HIV/AIDS knowledge and stigma were examined based loosely on a questionnaire designed by USAID as a Behavioral Surveillance Survey for Zambia (FHI, 2000). This Likert-scale survey asks respondents questions such as “a healthy person could be infected with HIV” and “condoms can be used more than once”. Based on these questions, a better understanding is gained of how much knowledge participants have regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, as well as stigma levels towards those infected. Five random questions were taken from the USAID Behavioral Surveillance Survey for Zambia for each construct (HIV/AIDS knowledge, HIV/AIDS prevention, HIV/AIDS stigma levels).

Empowerment was measured by utilizing Levenson’s (1974) Locus of Control (LOC) scale. Participants indicated their agreement with 5 statements (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) determining how much control they believe others have over their own life. Examples of these questions include: “to a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happening,” “When I get what I want, it’s usually because I worked hard for it.” As previously noted, much effort is being put forth to empower the citizens, particularly women, of Botswana. This scale will help determine how much control individual’s feel they have over their own lives.

Finally, this survey aimed to better understand knowledge and attitude levels regarding PEPFAR’s five themes: fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex,
prevention with positives and abstinence. Existing scales for each variable (ie: abstinence education evaluation scale) were utilized. Five questions for each construct were included; three measured attitudes and the remaining two measured reported behavior. Based on the holistic literature review, it was suggested that abstinence-only messages may not prove successful in Botswana. Therefore, an additional variable was added to the scale to determine respondents’ opinion regarding birth control use. This was done to gain a better understanding of how well audiences agree with messages in Makgabaneng.

The Setswana-speaking informant accompanied the researcher at all times incase issues of translation arose. Participants were recruited many different ways, including door-to-door, local bars, bus stations, popular malls, markets, churches, schools, government workers and custodial staff. This informant also translated the survey instrument from English into Setswana using language equivalents. The validity of this procedure was tested through back translation, where the instrument is translated from English to Setswana, and then from Setswana to English again to see if, “the comparison of the two versions of items in the source language until ambiguities or discrepancies in meaning are clarified or removed” (Filep, 2009).

Focus Group Discussions

Fiske’ (1987) believes that mass storytelling is a cultural agent that provokes and circulates meanings. Characters on television are not just representations of people but are encodings of ideological values. These narratives help maintain dominant ideologies. Researchers can understand this influence by examining three foci of text: the formal
qualities of programs and their flow; the intertextual relations within itself, with other media and with conversation; and the study of socially situated readers and the process of reading. Focus groups allow us to understand the conversation surrounding the program, as well as the process of the reading itself.

Focus group interviews have become a favored methodology in recent years, especially as scholars have come to understand the benefits of combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Bernard, 2000). Focus groups compliment surveys, rather than replace them, as they can help interpret results from an initial survey. While a survey can tell researchers what respondents think, focus groups are able to find out why people feel as they do and how they arrive at these feelings.

Focus groups are typically made up of 8 to 15 homogeneous people who are brought together in a room to participate in a guided discussion on a designated topic (Babbi, 2007). However, due to the large amount of information the researcher hopes to gain from each respondent, as well as the importance of active interaction of all members, it was determined that these focus groups will include 8-10 members. Statistically, participants of focus groups are not chosen through random probability sampling methods. Instead, they are chosen purposefully to capture real-life data in a social environment on issues that benefit from a group dynamic.

Krueger and Casey (2000) believe that the intent of a focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants—to know what they really think and feel on a topic. This is best done when participants feel as though they are like in some way. That is why it makes sense to divide focus groups between age groups for this project. “Focus groups
work particularly well to determine the perceptions, feelings and thinking of people about issues, products, services, or opportunities” (12). Therefore, it makes sense to turn to focus group research to gain a better understanding of how audiences are influenced by *Makgabaneng*.

There are many examples of research that have utilized focus group to advance public health understanding, from formative research to monitoring and evaluation, and from promotion of healthy behaviors to patient satisfaction with healthcare services. Goldman & Glantz (1998) conducted focus groups to understand how influential advertising strategies were in preventing people from smoking. Focus group participants indicated that preventing industry manipulation and secondhand smoke are the most effective strategies for reducing cigarette consumption, and more aggressive advertising strategies appear to be more effective at reducing tobacco consumption. Jun, Peterson & Zsidisin (1998) conducted focus groups to determine 11 attributes that define the quality of care and patient satisfaction. This information was then used to create a scale for future researchers. Wong, Huhman, Heltzler, Asbury & et al. (2004) utilized the focus group methodology to test messages aimed to increase physical activity among youth with their targeted tween age group.

Four focus group interviews were conducted that lasted approximately 60-90 minutes in length each. Questions were loosely structured based on Tufte’s (2000) interview guide in *Rubbish Queen*, as well as other themes that became apparent after the survey data collection.
Participants were recruited from both urban and rural areas in Botswana, though each group proved unique in nature. Gender was not accounted for in the focus group discussions, but members of both sexes were included in all groups. The youngest focus group of participants’ aged 16-19 was done in a rural school setting. Permission was granted to the researcher from the headmaster at the school and the students participated during their designated counseling class time. The 20-24 year focus group was conducted at the University of Botswana. This focus group discussion was the most fruitful, lasting almost 120 minutes. Random students walking through campus would overhear their discussion on HIV/AIDS issues and join in, as this age group proves incredibly passionate and informed. Participants from the 25-34, age group were recruited from a rural university classroom. All members of this focus group were from the same intro-level seminar, and were very familiar with each other. However, consistent with literature, this age group proved the most disinterested in the Makgabaneng drama. The oldest age group of 35-49 years old was recruited through the custodial staff at the University of Botswana. It was mostly made up of females who were very big fans of the drama. However, the informant had to translate a great deal in this discussion, causing long gaps in the conversation.

Sampling recruitment was mostly done through the key informant in Gaborone, Botswana who used convenience sampling to find self-defined fans of the radio drama. Focus Group participants were asked to read and sign a consent form approved by Ohio University’s Institutional Review Board and the Botswana Ministry of Health. Focus
Group interviews were recorded with no identifiable participant features, and will be stored for five years in the researcher’s home under password protection.

Through these focus group discussions, a range of ideas or feelings that respondents have felt regarding Makgabaneng materialized. A difference in perspectives between males and females was also noted, providing additional detailed perspectives of issues brought to light by the quantitative survey data. An outline of the focus group sample is outlined in Figure 3 below.

![Focus Group Discussions](image)

*Figure 3. Focus Group Discussion Sample.*

Interviews

The breadths of arguments made in this analysis are made based on 42 interviews with fans of Makgabaneng. Speech performances “are the primary means by which social life is enacted, organized and understood” (Lindlof, 1995, 163). Therefore, it makes sense to turn to verbal communication when interested in the audience sense-making practice. personal interviews is a useful methodology for researchers interested in understanding what people mean when they act, to hear multiple perspectives on an event or issue and
to test emerging ideas about communicative action. It is important to note how well the survey and qualitative interview complement each other in a study.

With this methodology, the researcher “defines a purpose for such conversations to occur and selects certain social actors to advance the conversational purpose” (Lindlof, 1995, 165). The purpose of these interviews was to help understand the respondents’ perspective regarding their interaction and interpretation of Makgabaneng. “The interviewer’s goal is to draw out the cultural logics that people employ in their everyday experiences of communicating” (167). However, it is rare for respondents to explicitly make this connection between their own perspectives and the culture in which they live. Therefore, the most critical piece of the interview is the ability for the researcher to conduct a close reading of the interview text to draw conclusions from.

Interviews with participants lasted an average of 15-30 minutes each.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and individuals were self defined fans of the drama. Sampling recruitment was mostly done through the key informant in Gaborone, Botswana who used convenience sampling to find self-defined fans of the radio drama.

Great care was taken in the sampling process to make sure participants were recruited across all of the four age group categories: 16-19, 20-24, 25-34, and 35-49, as well as balanced between male and females. Respondents were asked their age, number of family members, place of origin and number of years in the area. They were asked various questions regarding their media use and experience with Makgabaneng. Examples of questions include: types of programs listened to on the radio; the story of preferred radio drama; how true-to-life Makgabaneng proves; what they like best in
Makgabaneng; what they like least in Makgabaneng; whether they talk to loved ones about the drama; and whether the stories provide inspiration. Five interviews were also completed with non-fans of Makgabaneng to understand why individuals may not be tuning in to the drama. An outline of the in-depth interview sample is outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Interview Sample

Field Visitations

One of the biggest limitations of this study is the researcher not being a part of the Botswana culture. It was very important that a general understanding was gained of some of the most prominent sites in the country. The researcher was able to visit churches, schools, bars, bus stations, nature trails, malls, museums, and orphanages. More importantly, conversations with popular and expert public leaders were done during these visitations.

Five interviews were done with designated public leaders in total. One was completed with the University of Botswana Student president, the second was completed with a former Botswana Government Social Worker, a third was with a popular pastor
with one of the biggest church congregations in Botswana, a fourth was completed with a
counseling professor who has won various awards for her efforts towards female
empowerment and the fifth was with the creator of the Makgabaneng Facebook fan club.

During the initial study abroad program, I attended cultural specific HIV/AIDS
seminars, Setswana language lectures, and met various NGO employees in Botswana.
This provided great insights into how collaborative and expansive the fight against
HIV/AIDS proves in the country. I was able to keep consistent field notes during these
visitations.

Participant Observation

During the entire audience reception process I was able to keep a journal to record
my experiences and emotions as an outsider into the culture. A Participant observer
“attends to the conversations and other forms of speech that occur naturally in a scene”
(Lindlof, 1995, 163). This methodology is greatly influenced on how well participants
accept the researcher into their verbal routines.

While in the field, I consistently carried a pen and notebook with me to take field
notes. Field notes are defined as “gnomic, shorthand reconstructions of events,
observations and conversations that took place in the field” (Lindlof, 1995, 201). I tried
to take field notes as often as possible, as they became an important record of the
chronology and events of data collection. At first, my field notes recorded almost
everything about my time in Gaborone: the food, buildings, people and internal feelings.
However, the more time I spent there, the more comfortable I became. Consequently, my
field notes transitioned into a record-keeping journal that was mostly filled with project-centric details specifically.

In-home Visitations

The environment in which media are consumed is incredibly important in the audience reception process. Based on this knowledge, I felt it was important to see the media environment inside several homes in Botswana. This decision was based mostly after my study’s mirror of Tufte’s (2000) *Living With the Rubbish Queen* research, where Tufte was able to gain a sense of the social and physical spaces men and women move around in, as well as the space in which they consume media texts. Unfortunately, I was only able to gain access into urban settings in the city of Botswana and the University of Botswana.

It proved very difficult for me to remain an observer of in-home visitations and not become a participant of what was going on around me. I believe that this was mainly in part to the homes in which I had gained access. Most were the homes of individuals I had known on a personal level through my internship or through my internship or time with the university. Therefore, my role resembled that of a guest instead of a quiet bystander.

All homes that I entered had an entertainment media center in the living rooms. Televisions and radios were the two forms of entertainment media that I saw, television being the medium of choice at most times. Mostly western programs were playing (e.g. *Desperate Housewives*), unless the local news or sporting event was being broadcast. All
households that I visited were single television households. Therefore, the living room media central was used as a meeting place for families to gather around and watch television together. This sparked much conversation about the programs’ content.

Through this holistic audience reception study, several methodologies were utilized (field visits, participant observation, in-home visitations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and a survey with fans of the program). Each of these methodologies is necessary to provide unique insights into how fans of Makgabaneng are constructing their own reality through the drama. Details on how each of these methodologies aided in the final data analysis is outlined in Figure 5 below.
Figure 5. Final Analysis of Multiple Methodologies
CHAPTER 8: RESULTS

General Media Consumption Patterns

“Media can be a very good weapon if it’s sung and said over time. We just have to keep teaching, keep praying and keep providing information.” (Public Leader)

In order to best understand how audiences of Makgabaneng construct their own lives through the radio soap drama, it is important to understand the media setting in which reception takes place. Based on this knowledge, this study aimed to answer its first research question, RQ1: What generalized consumption patterns exist among fans of Makgabaneng? Through triangulation methodology, the researcher sought to answer research questions through field visits, participant observation, in-home visitations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and a survey with fans of the program.

The average age of the survey respondent was 24.9 years old and identified themselves as a regular listener of Makgabaneng for an average of 5.02 years. 37.9% of respondents were male, and 62.1% of respondents were female. 92.3% of respondents have radio in their homes; 91.1% respondents have television in their homes; 16.7% of respondents have computer with Internet in their homes; and 93.2% of respondents have personal mobile phones. Based on this knowledge, it is clear that television is gaining popularity in Botswana, as well as mobile communication. However, a large technology gap still exists when it comes to regular home access to the World Wide Web.
Technology use must be considered when creating entertainment-education for social change. Home media access survey results are illustrated in Figure 6 below.

![Home Media Access](image)

*Figure 6. Home Media Access.*

Based on in-home visitations where the researcher was able to observe families engaging with media, many patterns began to emerge. Television access was available in all homes that the researcher visited. However, it is important to note that these visits were done in the country’s urban capital of Gaborone, and so it is not an accurate representation of what homes in rural areas may experience. Many homes in Northern, more rural regions of the country may not have television access in their homes. Most families engaged with media together in the evenings after a day of work. Most of the program content proved very Western in nature. Additionally, South African television
stations, such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), also proved popular. These stations often broadcast sport events, news and cooking shows.

Botswana’s privately owned television station, Gaborone Broadcasting Corporation Television (GBC-TV) was utilized mostly for information regarding local news and politics. Most often, television stations are the center of the living room, with furniture is positioned around, with the screen serving as the focal point.

Radio was most utilized by urban dwellers when they were sitting in vehicles, such as cars and conveys. However, the researcher did witness several families who sat down together and listened to Makgabaneng through appointment listening at the same time each week. This suggests that fans of the program would not be tuning in unless they were already engaged with the story and were interested in what was going to happen to the characters next. It did not appear as though passive radio listeners coincidentally tuning in would make up the majority of the drama’s audience. This is consistent with Makgabaneng research, which states that over 60% of the intended audiences are regular listeners (Adam, 2010).

In-depth interviews mirrored these trends of media use. One male respondent explains how he usually only engages with radio to listen to sports and news.

“Most of the time I listen to sports, almost all sports shows. Then again, I try as much as possible to listen to political affairs and news. There is one that airs on South African Radio. I don’t always listen to it because I’m not always available,
but as much as possible I also listen to *Makgabaneng*” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

This sentiment proved a theme among participants, as Botswana media landscape is becoming more and more saturated with newer technologies. For most entertainment seeking audiences, television, movies or Internet is turned to before radio. Radio is primarily seen as an outlet for music, politics and sports. This is demonstrated by additional participants as well. Another respondent also explains the effort made to tune into the radio when *Makgabaneng* is broadcast. “I listen to the news mostly, and I like listening to the talk shows in the morning on RB1, and I also like listening to *Makgabaneng*, the story, and I just listen randomly to any other shows, but those are the specific ones I make sure I listen to all the time” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

This shows the conscious effort of new media users to turn to the radio for appointment listening of *Makgabaneng*. This is a very active role on the end of audience members and demonstrates how loyal fans of the program prove. However, many other respondents explained why they are not attracted to anything broadcast on more traditional radio stations.

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2 The gender, age and region of residency were only identified throughout the results section whenever the sentiment is a general theme that emerged among a particular demographic. If this demographic information is excluded, it means that either it was a saturated sentiment that reached beyond demographics, or that it is unique to a single individual participant and does not speak for patterns found in data analysis as a whole.
“When you look at young people they don’t listen to RB1. They mostly listen to RB2 or FM. If Makgabaneng could be brought into television maybe they’d sit down and hear these messages” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Not only is the media choice of radio becoming outdated, but the radio stations on which the drama is broadcast is considered to cater towards an older audience. Beyond just general interest, the geographical landscape of Botswana may be a challenge to audience reception as well. Additionally, reception of radio signals may also contribute to a person’s choice of media use.

“I listen to every radio station. Because of the inconsistency of the signals, you are bound to change to another station” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

These sentiments may be the result of the wide variety of media choices in Botswana. As more and more programs are introduced, the more difficult it may prove to attract audiences towards an entertainment-education program, rather than simply entertainment. Speaking of Makgabaneng, one respondent explains,

“My younger sisters, I know they like it. I know my mom does listen to it. I think in the rural, they listen. I think here in the urban, maybe there are so many options that you can take, there’s so much entertainment. Most of the time we listen to different stations” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Based on these interviews, it became clear that there was a difference in media use between rural and urban areas. Themes found through interview discussions suggest that Makgabaneng is broadcast on a radio station that tends to air content aimed at an
older audience. Moreover, the drama is competing with programs broadcast on newer technologies. During the focus group with individuals’ aged 20-24, one respondent explains that people who listen to radio are,

“Only the ones who live in the rural areas. They are the ones that love it, not because they love it, but simply because they don’t have what we have. We can watch movies and surf the net, but they don’t have it” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

As more and more individuals gain access to more and more information, it may become harder to retain their loyalty towards a radio soap drama. There is clearly a generation difference that is adding to these distinctions between fans as well. Another participant in the 20-24 year-old focus group explains,

“My brother was born and raised in Gabs [the urban center city of Botswana]. Just the other day my mom was like, tune into RB1 [the radio station where Makgabaneng is broadcast] and listen to the news” and he was like, “What?!”. You can’t even talk about RB1. Just for kids who have been born and raised in Gabs, you can’t tell them about Makgabaneng. It will be boring them” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

If this resistance towards RB1 is widespread, it would not matter what the production quality of Makgabaneng is like. Individuals would simply not tune in until it switches stations. In reference to the radio station RB1, another focus group participant described it as,
“Old people stuff. Everything’s so serious and slow” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Overall, results of this study indicate that most individuals are aware of *Makgabaneng* and have heard the program at some point in their lives. Most individuals that I talked with identified themselves as fans at some point in their lives. It seems as though individuals with more access to other technologies, such as television or computers, the less likely to listen to the drama regularly. However, I did find individuals who would turn on their radio for the sole purpose of listening to *Makgabaneng* each week. It also seemed apparent that the most avid listeners of the drama were younger teen age groups and older adult age groups. Middle-aged strong fans were difficult to find, though most did express that they were fans when they were younger. Perhaps for the sustainability of *Makgabaneng*, producers may consider broadcasting on additional stations that prove more attractive to this age group, as well as younger, more urban generations who are growing up with more advanced technologies.

Respondents were also asked to answer questions regarding the popularity of the radio drama. Results of this demonstrate that 68.2% of respondents very strongly or strongly prefer *Makgabaneng* to other programs on the radio. 79.7% of respondents very strongly or strongly believe they would feel sad if *Makgabaneng* was cancelled. However, 56% of respondents very strongly or strongly disagree that they have ever called in to the *Makgabaneng Extra* program. *Makgabaneng Extra* is a talk radio discussion that takes place after an episode of *Makgabaneng* airs once a week. A new
theme is introduced to the program each week for discussion according to what is going on in the episodes and in the country.

For example, during my time with *Makgabaneng*, one of the *Makgabaneng Extra* programs centered on the issue of orphans and vulnerable children. An expert talked on the radio about the issues, as well as some popular characters from the show. Audiences were asked to call in and give their views regarding the topic at hand.

This is a much more participatory way for audiences to interact with *Makgabaneng*, rather than traditional radio listenership, where the drama is the sender and audience members act as the receiver. As previously noted, Pant, Singhal & Bhasin’s (2002) research demonstrates how participatory approaches to media designs are better able to include and reach the voices of the targeted and hard to reach listeners. However, results from this survey indicate that the more participatory *Makgabaneng Extra* program is not as popular with fans of the show as the radio drama itself. More converged technology efforts like these should be considered in the future, including the integration of an online website. Though not all fans of *Makgabaneng* may have access to an online website, this new interaction tool could help sustain those listeners who do have access to newer technologies and may be turned off by traditional radio broadcasts.

Music and Production of *Makgabaneng*

Obviously, there are many things to consider when producing an E-E program. Research demonstrates how, not only must you be concerned with the audience following and being entertained by the storyline as in other entertainment programs, but you also
must make the messages as persuasive as possible (Refera, 2004). Based on this knowledge, it is important that more is understood regarding how fans of Makgabaneng react to its music and production. If individuals do not enjoy the music and production of a drama, it will prove difficult to meet the goals of the behavior change intervention.

Overall, fans of Makgabaneng express satisfaction with the way that it is produced. One respondent said,

“I think the show is good. It plays a role in my life and the lives of many people who listen to it. I just like the program. I think there’s a lot of creativity in it. I mean when you listen to the show, it is not just a radio program, but there is an element of reality in it. When a person is crying, you feel it. This person is hurting this other person. When a person is kissing another person, the sound makes you know this person is really doing it. That element of reality that is good” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Clearly, some of the more difficult elements of producing an entertainment-education drama, such as quality, branding and audience recognition, Makgabaneng is doing rather well. Participants expressed general sentiments of being satisfied with production elements within the drama itself. The radio drama uses all in-house sound effects during the production process. The studio has an actual doorframe to open and close when characters are to be entering or exiting a building. Additionally, fans of Makgabaneng expressed satisfaction with the music that is used in the drama. They talked of how the program is using music based on what is popular in culture, not outdated styles.
“The music is good. It’s what’s in the club” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Music is also used in a way that corresponds with what is going on in the lives of the characters. This is important, as it helps add emotion and timeliness to the program, as indicated by one participant:

“The background music is current, the music is what is popular most of the time. I think that is what’s good about the story. When you listen to it, you feel it’s current. It’s not something that was recorded back then. It’s actually on par with what’s happening. It will be Independence Day and then you will hear in the story that it’s Independence Day” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Additionally, another fan explains,

“It goes along with the program. When there is a scenario, such kind of music is played and you feel it is going along with the act” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

It is important to note when participants use phrases such as “you feel what is going along with the act”. This shows the potential of a deep emotional connection with what is going on within the drama. One male University student fan even used the opening theme song of *Makgabaneng* to learn how to play the guitar. He explains,

“I like it. It’s unique. There’s nothing else of its kind like it. The reason why I like it is because I used to learn to play guitar, and if you learn to set the guitar right, it will produce a sound just like it” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

The idea of a fan of *Makgabaneng* sitting at home practicing the opening theme song on their guitar over and over showcases additional branding possibilities when it
comes to how fans can interact with media text. Not only do fans of *Makgabaneng* express satisfaction with the way sound effects and music within the drama are produced, but they also believe that the stories within the drama are well written and filled with suspense. One fan talks about how the drama,

“Always leaves you in suspense, saying, “What is going to happen next?”” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Another fan said,

“I can’t afford to miss it. My friend’s listen to the drama because I make them. I change the station and force them to listen” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Through these discussions it became obvious that the storylines were capturing the attention of audience members. They were invested enough with characters to really care about what was going to happen next in their lives. I became curious whether fans of *Makgabaneng* talk with each other about events going on in the storyline of the drama.

“We talk about the soapy part of the drama, this person did this with this person” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Not only do they talk with one another, but also they often listen to the program with a group of people close with them.

“My friends are the people I work with and every Saturday. We don’t want to miss it because we want to hear about what happens to this character in the drama” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).
Though other technologies may prove popular in the homes, this study indicates that fans of *Makgabaneng* are still willing to gather around the radio when the radio drama is broadcast. This shows how *Makgabaneng* becomes much more than a private at-home listening experience. Instead, it turns into a public event and a topic of conversation among the public sphere.

“When I’m at home, it’s actually something we can all talk about. The radio is on, all of us listen to it in the same house, listening to *Makgabaneng*” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

*Makgabaneng*’s Target Audience

Now that a better understanding is gained of how fans of *Makgabaneng* express satisfaction in the way the drama is produced, it is important to have more knowledge regarding whom they believe the drama is targetted towards. As previously noted, *Makgabaneng* aims to promote safe sexual and reproductive health behaviors among 10-49 year olds in Botswana. Due to minority laws in Botswana, it is difficult to measure the influence of *Makgabaneng* on the younger audience under the age of 15. Research conducted on the program has also not addressed whether or not fans of the program believe that the show is targeting this wide range of age groups.

It was clear from the in-depth interviews that fans of all ages were listeners of the program. One respondent explains why this may be the case by saying,

“I think one reason why *Makgabaneng* has a huge following between different age groups is because it’s entertaining. You feel that you have this balance
between being educated as much as being entertained. At the same time, it hooks you by entertaining you with the characters played by DT (Ditiro), but at the same time you have Gorata, who brings out the educational issues around it. So the balance is really well maintained” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Another respondent retold the story of *Makgabaneng* by stating,

“*Makgabaneng* is a story made for the youth and people in general. It’s mainly to send out the message of how to prevent issues such as HIV and AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse, abuses like physical abuse, and that sort of thing. I like it because it takes all the ages, so any age can listen to it and get the advice they can get” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Another fan agrees that the program does a nice job targeting different age groups because,

“All the different stories target the different age groups. With Boramane you’re targeting old, and you have Gorata for the young and vibrant, so it’s okay.”

However, this particular respondent believes that the station that the show is broadcasting through is outdated, as not many youth listen to the radio station, RB1. “They could try and change the station as well because its on RB1, and it’s a station for a mature audience so most people don’t even give the station a chance. If maybe they could change it to FM people may be interested” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

These sentiments all express how *Makgabaneng* does an adequate job trying to incorporate different age groups into their storylines. It can be difficult to maintain such a
vast audience age group range as all 10-49 year olds across a country. This is not to say that the efforts put forth by *Makgabaneng* were without criticism. A female adult Botswana government social worker explains how,

“The youth is different. They listen to the stories and the stories have meaning for them because they have time to listen to stories and make sense out of the meaning of the stories. But the youth today, the story has to be very dramatic to really be stimulating to them. I don’t know how effective storytelling would be to the youth today. The older generation is more attracted to it” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Other fans disagree regarding the notion that the show does such a great job targeted different age groups. Some believed that the program targeted older and younger generations, but left out issues that are affecting young adult age groups. This absence should be noted, as it helps explain how *Makgabaneng* can better appeal to members of a larger audience. One 25 year old male explains,

“Mostly it’s for the old people and the teens, but I think they should address the likes of me”.

This fan obviously feels as though the issues of most concern and central to his life have been left out of the storyline. The respondent goes on to talk about one character in *Makgabaneng* who he really identified with because they were going through similar life stages of leaving home to go on to the university setting.

“He left home, and the last we heard is he’s over seas. He left and now he’s gone” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).
Unfortunately, once that character grew out of the life issues that face those out of their teens, the character was written out of the drama. If *Makgabaneng* is going to include this age group in their target audience, they cannot just write off characters that are not teenagers or older adults.

These sentiments were mirrored in the focus group discussions with the 20-24 year olds. They believe that it is the older and younger generations who prove the biggest fans of *Makgabaneng*. The 25-34 year old focus group discussion participants agreed, citing that teenagers are the ones who are learning the most from it. A counseling professor at the University of Botswana talks about the importance of capturing the attention of this young adult age group.

“Even the students at the University, some of them, they still get HIV, still have unprotected sex. You ask them, “Why did you do this?” The youth they easily get bored. When something is new, it’s interesting, but if it drags on and on they turn off”. The assumption here is that this age group has grown up with newer media, and radio drama may not be as engaging for them. One 25 year-old public leader explains how “They hear something and they think “Oh that’s HIV”. They’re young and they don’t know until they’re older. Phones and money, that’s what is important” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Clearly there are many HIV/AIDS and life issues that people in this young adult group face, especially in the highly peer-pressured environment of a university. It would be interesting if *Makgabaneng* developed a character for this target age group who goes away to college and experiences freedoms for the first time.
When asked who the target audience for *Makgabaneng* is aimed towards, the majority of respondents indicated that they believed it was a drama for the youth. One 17-year-old respondent believes,

“It’s attractive to my age mates because mostly it talks about us as teenagers and how we should experience things as people, and how it is going to help us to not fall in those pits” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This confirms that *Makgabaneng* is reaching the youngest of its target audience.

Another teenage respondent explains,

“The target group is the youth and the message is how young people can protect themselves from getting HIV and AIDS” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Not only is the assumption among fans that *Makgabaneng* is designed for the youth specifically, but respondents also believe that it is the youth who proves most interested in the drama.

“It’s mainly to encourage young people and to abstain from doing things that would compromise their future. According to what’s being portrayed in *Makgabaneng*; it’s the young people who would most be of interest. I hope that if they listen to it then they could change for the better. One character, an older man, was enticing a younger girl with money and cell phones. Maybe if an older man were to listen it could somehow influence him. It happens. A lot of young girls especially get enticed to have what other girls have in their schooling” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).
These sentiments also demonstrate the importance of incorporating characters in the program that are ‘like’ members of its audience. This includes both the issues they are facing, as well as their age and social standing. Not only did respondents believe that *Makgabaneng* proved more appealing to some age groups over others, but they also expressed differences in its attraction towards genders differently.

“I think it appeals more to women. They are the victims. You know its not common to see an older woman dating a young man, but its common to see ladies my age or younger are dating older men just so they can get money, and they can buy them expensive phones and all those things” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Another respondent explains,

“I think it appeals more to women. In our society men are ignorant, they have this belief that they know it all, so they’re not eager to acquire information and knowledge. So they’re quick to dismiss things and not take the time to learn. So I think women relate. Women typically just like dramas and stories” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Gender differences among characters were a salient theme among participants. Many individuals, both male and female, talked of how women in the program are generally portrayed as likable and positive role models while men in the program are devious and engaged in high-risk situations. Audiences felt as though this discrepancy could lead towards females being more attracted than males to the program. When asked
why men may not be as attracted to *Makgabaneng* as women, many believed that this distinction illustrates a difference in gender roles of Botswana society.

“It’s mostly women, not men. Men don’t have time to listen to radio” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

One female University of Botswana professor believed it was due to the stories of the drama itself.

“It’s more attractive to women, because women are obviously concerned about day to day living, and they love small things like dramas and plays, but men are less interested, but sometime they think that such issues are for young people” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Based on this understanding, it is important to question individuals about how the drama may repackage itself to incorporate stories of concern to all audiences. When asked what subjects men in the community prove most interested in, the general consensus of male respondents pointed towards sports.

“I think they’re more interested in football. You know, like you go and travel around the country, people are really passionate about football. What are they doing to be associated with football, all over the world? Football has a big effect on audience. So the question is, what are they [*Makgabaneng*] doing to capture that kind of audience”? (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

The idea of incorporating public sphere issues, such as politics and sports, into the storyline was a common suggestion among respondents. Another male fan also suggested including sports into the *Makgabaneng* storyline to attract the male audience.
“A lot of guys, mostly people in Botswana, follow football like crazy. So it could be that either they just don’t listen to radio at that time because of news or soccer. I don’t know, I mean, I probably wouldn’t be listening to it except I’m the only guy in my family besides my six month old brother. Most of my family, four women, listen to it, and that’s how I get to listen to it. I don’t think I would have been listening to it. It could come immediately after a sports show. You want to bring it at a time when a lot of guys could listen to it” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Obviously the media landscape of Botswana has changed greatly since Makgabaneng’s first broadcast in 2001. During this time, there were 155 radios, 25 television sets and 37 personal computers for every 1,000 people. In 2008, it was estimated that 80% of the population now had access to radio, 64% had access to television, and it had about 120,000 internet users (Balancing Act, 2008). It is expected that access to technology will continue to grow. Through newer technologies, such as internet and mobile communication, it may become easier for Makgabaneng to begin a more targeted effort to reach various individuals and interest groups. That way, they could not only just reach those who listen to radio, but they could also introduce new segments of the program to newer technologies, such as television or online broadcasting.

Based on this knowledge, more is understood regarding whom it is that fans of Makgabaneg believe the drama is targeted towards. Due to the drama’s target aim of promoting safe sexual and reproductive health behaviors among 10-49 year olds in Botswana, it is clear that more efforts may need to be made to best capture its young
adult audience. Moreover, males in culture do not seem to feel as though the drama is targeting them as much as it is the females. This is an alarming distinction given some patriarchal gender differences in Botswana society.

Additional Criticisms of *Makgabaneng*

Clearly, not everyone in Botswana was a fan of the program. Throughout the fieldwork process, many people expressed areas of frustration regarding *Makgabaneng*. While the main focus of this study was to understand ways in which fans of the program identify with the drama, it is also imperative that we understand what elements of the program make others tune out *Makgabaneng*’s message.

As previously noted, one of the most consistent reasons given as to why individuals did not listen to *Makgabaneng* was that they are not a fan of radio dramas in general. When asked if they were fans of the program, a group of teenagers at the mall laughed and stated,

“No radio listeners here. It’s a new generation.”

The only reason why this ‘new generation’ would listen to the radio would be for sports, politics and music. This is an interesting finding, as it may suggest that it does not matter what efforts *Makgabeneng* puts forth towards improving the content of their program. If it broadcasts through media no one is listening to, the message will prove moot.

One of the most interesting patterns that emerged in the focus group discussion between university-aged students was that television media was not necessarily what the
younger generation proved most attracted towards. In fact, most university students did not have their own television sets in their homes. Instead, television viewing was done in communal areas, and was mostly used to broadcast sporting events, news, politics or discussions. Instead, participants have personal computers and watch movies mostly.

While this is obvious reflection of one specific target group, rather than a generalization of how individuals live throughout the country, it is a noteworthy finding given the difficulty HIV/AIDS campaigns have had in reaching them. One participant explains,

“There are so many different things we can do with our time. So many different things we can watch and listen to when it’s playing on the radio. And you find that nowadays people don’t really value radios that much. If you have a radio at home its probably something you use on special occasions to play a CD or when you have it on yourself” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

While the majority of interviews completed were with fans of *Makgabaneng*, the researcher also felt it was important to understand elements of the story that nonfans of the program did not like. However, the most consistent reasons that nonfans did not tune into the program had nothing to do with the storyline at all. In fact, most expressed great interest in *Makgabaneng*’s subject material. Instead, they were just turned off by radio media. One nonfan explains,

“It would appeal to many more people if it was visualized and put as a television series, so that way, many people could watch it. In Botswana, a lot of people prefer watching television now to radio.”
This potential shift towards television would not be a pioneer of entertainment-education, as Botswana’s neighbors in South Africa have had great success with the televised edutainment soap, *Soul City*. There are many resources and studies out there who have already made the transition from radio to television. If they are getting similar stories and content through a South African television soap drama, why might they get a lower quality story through radio? Perhaps this is something *Makgabaneng* should consider, as the call for televised stories was a major theme within these discussions.

Even fans of the show believe that the message of *Makgabaneng* would prove stronger if televised visually onscreen.

“It should be televised because the visual effect becomes much more pronounced. When you see it, it is something you can relate to, and its something you can remember and carry throughout the course of your lifetime” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Because social stigma is something that *Makgabaneng* is working towards fighting, it makes sense as to why normalizing HIV through visual images may impact audiences more strongly than radio. The drama could include a beautiful HIV positive character who looks healthy and takes care of herself as a part of the MARCH modeling process. Participants in the 20-24 year old focus group discussion agree, saying that,

“To make a huge impact on our youth it has to be so much huger than this” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).
Traditional vs. Modern Media

Across all age groups, participants believed that it is imperative people see HIV and AIDS, not just hear about it.

“They should make it for television because the visual impact makes it much more strong.”

A lot of frustration was expressed during focus group discussions that by not broadcasting HIV/AIDS stories on television, media is actually contributing to the stigma by not showing people what a person who is sick with AIDS looks like.

“Right now we are seeing the healthy people who are saying they have HIV for twenty years, and they are beautiful. By the time she’s sick, they close her behind the closed doors” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Many fans of Makgabaneng have also begun tuning into South African television programs, such as Generations, that aim to incorporate the same HIV/AIDS messages through a soap drama. It is possible that Makgabaneng may begin to lose fans with the availability of these media alternatives. One respondent explains,

“I’m familiar with the story [of Makgabaneng], I used to listen to it when it was starting out but I haven’t so much continued to listen to it. It would appeal to me much more than if it was aired on television. There’s another program that airs at the same time that I prefer to listen to. I’d like it more if it were visualized on television” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Though the popularity of South African edutainment is impressive, it is critical to remember the importance of incorporating culture into these stories. The culture
presented on *Makgabaneng* is designed specifically for the people of Botswana. Messages designed for a South African audience may not prove as strong or as engaging.

It is unclear whether the medium of the content is driving interest, or whether the stories of *Makgabaneng* would receive the same reception, no matter which medium it broadcast through. However, it is noteworthy how attracted fans were to the South African entertainment-education television soap, as well as how much effort many individuals put into turning off their television and appointment-listening to *Makgabaneng* on the radio. To me, this points to much potential in *Makgabaneng* transforming itself for a more modern audience.

These results suggest that *Makgabaneng* may want to broadcast the program through an alternative radio stations, or incorporate newer media into the stories. It is clear that modern generations in Botswana are not utilizing radio the same way as more traditional generations. They prove much more interested in visual stories that can be played out on a media screen. Now that a better understanding is gained of general media consumption patterns in Botswana, it is important to understand how fans of the program specifically engage with the program.

As Botswana transitions between traditional and modern media, the expectation among fans is that *Makgabaneng* should change as well. One respondent said,

“*I would have expected by the fifth or the sixth year it would have moved to television. I personally feel it would make much more impact if it was moved to television. *Makgabaneng* is quite impressive if you are in to it. I wouldn’t so much say it becomes boring, but possibly the message of HIV has been drummed...*"
all the time, but its moved and has addressed different aspects over the years. At
least to me, it hasn’t gotten to the point where it has become boring, but the issue
of HIV and AIDS itself has been the major headlines of everything ever since I
can remember. People get tired of hearing about HIV all the time” (Personal
Communication, May 25, 2010).

If participants grew up listening to *Makgabaneng*, they may not feel as though the
drama has matured at all with them. That may be why so many participants felt as though
it was targeting younger age groups. It is important that storylines grow with their
audience. This sentiment of an emerging HIV/AIDS fatigue among the people of
Botswana was consistent throughout the interviews and survey results.

HIV/AIDS Fatigue

It is important to remember that Botswana was one of the most proactive
countries in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The government supported medication,
treatment, education and preventative campaigns. As previously noted, Botswana
currently spends six percent of its national budget on the fight against HIV/AIDS (fin24,
2006). These funds have been put towards every media outlet to make sure that education
about prevention and treatment of the virus is widespread. Unfortunately, this abundance
of information may have resulted in a desensitization of its citizens.

76.9% of surveyed respondents very strongly or strongly believe that media talks
about HIV/AIDS issues too much. This fatigue was most apparent in the focus group
discussion of participants’ aged 20-24. One participant explains,
“We’re educated. Information has been passed around from every angle, schools everywhere. Everywhere you go you get information about HIV and AIDS. The problem is that the information is not practical, and unless the information is put into practice it will always be theory” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Another respondent adds how this excess of information has weakened the impact of campaigns such as Makgabaneng.

“We are not even scared. From day one, from the time we are five years old, everyone is saying HIV and AIDS. Its just a song”.

In regards to Makgabaneng specifically, the same frustrations remained.

“Its too much information--Too much information that we already have and already know” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

If individuals are simply tired of stories centered around HIV/AIDS, Makgabaneng may need to incorporate other issues of concern to the public into their storylines so that audiences do not become too overwhelmed by the message. We know that the purpose of Entertainment-education (E-E) is to purposely design and implement a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). However, we also know that behavior change does not come through the diffusion of information alone. Singhal & Vasanti (2005) explained how the most influential narratives are those in which audiences are able to form strong identification with characters and the stories being told. It is imperative that these stories are kept fresh and interesting in order to prevent an entertainment-education fatigue among audiences.
Survey results of this study demonstrate a high level of knowledge regarding prevention and treatment of the virus. 92.1% of participants strongly agree or agree that a healthy looking person could be infected with HIV/AIDS; 78.1% of participants strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through sexual intercourse with unknown person; 76.6% of participants strongly agree or agree that condoms can prevent HIV/AIDS transmission; 87.1% of participants strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through infected mother to her unborn baby; 80.9% of participants strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through sharing shaving equipment; 64.2% of participants strongly disagree or disagree that HIV can be transmitted through kissing; 88% of participants strongly disagree or disagree that condoms can be used more than once; and 87.2% of participants strongly disagree or disagree that HIV can be transmitted through shaking hands. In regards to whether or not Makgabaneng is teaching listeners any HIV/AIDS education, one respondent states she’s, “not sure it’s teaching them anything they didn’t already know. It does show why though” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010). HIV transmission knowledge is illustrated in Figure 7 below.
This is an important pattern among interview discussions, as no one disputed the importance of programs like *Makgabaneng*. Instead, they felt that the messages should be changed to educating people about *how* HIV is transmitted, to more practical information about treatment. One participant talks about a gap in HIV/AIDS messages.

“There’s not enough information about the ARV treatment, because today they take it and tomorrow they leave it” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

It would be effective if campaigns could begin to focus on the importance of living positively and not missing medication treatments. It is clear that there is an understanding of how HIV/AIDS can be transmitted from person to person. However, the particulars of how to treat the virus are important for everyone to understand, even those who are not infected. This will lead to a greater understanding, and hopefully, a greater acceptance of everyone.
The University of Botswana student president also explains the importance of incorporating messages centered on empowerment into the storyline, rather than education.

“When you get to our age, I’d like to think you’re well informed because it’s also been introduced into our syllabus. So in terms of knowledge, we are aware. I do not know if being informed and being empowered are the same thing, but in terms of us being knowledgeable, we are very much informed. The information is there. I believe that in life, people need to have a drive and focus in life. That’s the best thing we can provide. If we’re going to be educating, what about the time when they are at home with no education? But for someone who is empowered and knows their drive in life, they’re able to stand up for themselves whether or not education is around” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Individuals who did not listen to Makgabaneng did not do so because of the message itself. Many regarded the show as a program about HIV and AIDS and nothing more. Because of the large number of campaigns in Botswana focused on this message, the content has become quite monotonous.

“We are hearing more about AIDS now, so now I think we just think it’s about AIDS, we know. We know how it’s going to end up or what this story is all about. Maybe that’s the reason we don’t listen. We only listen to one sentence and know what its all about” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Participants in the 20-24-year-old focus group agreed with these sentiments.
“Unfortunately, the problem with our country is it has this news and information overload, where were just crossed with too much information at the same time and all you do is take it in, take it in, take it in, but you never really practice it. When you talk about cases of pregnancy and alcohol abuse, its not that these kids don’t know its wrong. Its just that the presentation and the way they initiate it is just information” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010)

Based on this understanding, it is important that Makgabaneng does its best to keep storylines fresh and unpredictable. This will keep audiences engaged and eager to see what will happen next. A University Botswana student leader cited this predictability as the number one reason why people in his age group may not be tuning in.  "It’s losing the touch of time. It’s like you’re watching all the problems and how they are related. It becomes really obvious where this is going to go and how it’s going to end. In the past, it used to be relevant. But now I feel its just becoming to ordinary to watch it. Maybe they need to try to make it more applicable to real life situations. In most cases, in most scenarios, they are not really scenarios where I, as a person, can relate” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

During focus group discussion among the 20-24 year-old-age group, many expressed similar concerns. While the stories and issues that characters face may be an accurate reflection of what is going on in reality, the solutions offered are not practical. One participant explains,

“The stories they’re trying to make people relate to, like the relationships, sometimes you find they’re not an accurate thing that is happening on the ground.
I feel that what is happening in lives of people, real life situations, there are more conflicts than there appears to be. There’s not a clear-cut school girl who comes from school and there’s a BMW driving by and the man blows the whistle, and then the girl turns and says “I don’t want to talk to you. I’m going to tell my daddy”. It’s not as easy and as simple and as straightforward as that” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It is imperative that the drama offers solutions that are actually applicable to the lives of its audience. We all know that it is difficult to say no to social pressures, and entertainment-education is an opportunity to provide scripts or narratives for clever ways of doing so without losing social standing. To suggest that it is as simple of saying no and walking away without repercussions is unrealistic. Pressures are felt daily, especially in school settings. Based on interviews, this is certainly an area where Makgabaneng can improve the content of its messages.

Summary of Results

Clearly, respondents identified several disconnects between the radio drama and aspects of their own lives. By listening to these concerns, it became clear that it was not necessarily that the events and pressures being portrayed in Makgabaneng were inaccurate (the issue of young girls being harassed by older men after school is a huge societal problem). Instead, respondents felt that the solutions they offered were too simplistic. There is too much pressure for a simple “no” to relieve someone of the situation.
A female counseling professor at the University of Botswana also talks of this problem.

“It’s a problem that has been going on for years. One of the things is that the students are very intelligent. Intelligent enough to know that if you have sex can bring a lot of negative results, but that’s the question that everyone’s asking themselves. How come people know and they don’t put what they know in practice? That’s a general life problem. Doctors are saying you’re not supposed to smoke and drink, and yet people do it. And so students are just normal behaviors. They know but they don’t think it can happen to them, so they don’t mesh with behavior. Students are challenged by grownups. As much as they want to know and acquire independence, they also miss their parents” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

No media production is able to please everyone. It is unrealistic to expect Makgabaneng to be different. This is consistent with media studies literature on the audience sense-making process, or the making of sense that people do in their everyday experience (Dervin, 1992). This process is individualistic and structural, as individuals are the carriers of communicative action and embody outside structures. Therefore, it is expected that audiences would not homogeneously interpret or regard the drama in identical manners. Because of the limited number of Botswana produced programs, it is important to note the great potential Makgabaneng holds in positively influencing the lives of its fans. However, results from these discussions demonstrate how this requires fresh, original and engaging storylines. Based on these results, more is understood
regarding generalized consumption patterns exist among fans of *Makgabaneng*. These results demonstrate the promise and the challenges *Makgabaneng* faces in promoting safe sexual and reproductive health behaviors among 10-49 year olds in Botswana.
“Makgabaneng is a very educative media project, and they are also doing a very
good job in this country. The way they do it is easy to follow; its easy to listen, its
easy to fall in love with. But you know, people listen to drama and it just depends
on them. Do they take what is being presented and think they can also benefit? Or
do they just listen to it like any soap opera where people keep following
something because it entertains them?” (Public Leader).

Now that a better understanding is gained of the generalized consumption patterns
among fans of Makgabaneng, it is time to turn attention towards the audience
interpretation process. This study is interested in analyzing the most dominant
interpretations of Makgabaneng’s storyline. Therefore, the second research question asks:
RQ2: How are audiences likely to interpret the most salient themes and in
Makgabaneng?

What is the Makgabaneng Story?

During in-depth interviews, fans of Makgabaneng were asked to retell the story of
the drama and explain what they believe the drama is about. One participant said,
“It teaches issues about drugs, alcohol abuse, and the issues of HIV and many of
the public issues, and issues of peer pressure. It teaches especially young adults
about HIV issues. It also teaches about how they can behave generally” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

Another stated,

“The story of Makgabaneng talks about HIV and AIDS how children can improve their lives and how they should live their lives without having sex and not dating older men. That kind of stuff” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Each of these participants centered their explanation of the Makgabaneng story around HIV/AIDS, not individual characters or specific storylines within the drama. One fan described the story of the program by saying,

“I think it talks about AIDS, teaching people about HIV, general information about AIDS and how we can prevent from contacting AIDS” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

It is very clear after participants described the story of Makgabaneng as a drama centered on educating audiences about HIV/AIDS issues, and that its purpose is not just for entertainment. Each storyline and character is in some way or another, affected or infected by the illness. While some may argue that this is true to life of this culture—clearly, no one in Botswana has been immune to its devastating impact—HIV/AIDS is the absolute center of these characters’ lives. This raises questions concerning the balance of entertainment and education within the drama itself.

Some fans retold the story by talking of their favorite characters and storylines.

“Makgabaneng I believe is purely talking about HIV and AIDS. There’s this guy they call Boramane. It seems the guy is doing what is common among some of the
families. The character that he’s playing, he’s going out with a maid or something like that last time I checked. And of course, there is someone who has HIV or something” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

The story of Boramane was a popular reference to illustrate what the entire story of *Makgabaneng* is about. It became obvious that this is a favorite storyline among most listeners. Another participant described the drama by saying,

“Boramane’s wife, Mma Meshack; she was trying to advise her husband about using a condom, and he didn’t believe in using a condom. It relates to her because it shows things that can happen in real life. He took his cattle and gave it away to some traditional doctors for consulting him. He did that without telling his wife. A lot of people these days live with HIV, and what I have learned is that people should use a condom and be faithful to just one partner and not be promiscuous. It teaches you to use a condom because one of the two people in the relationship could be infected and the other could not be” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

It is clear that this particular storyline was very influential in the *Makgabaneng* story. This story has all of the elements of the MARCH model process. It has both a negative, positive and transitional characters learning how to combat HIV/AIDS. An HIV positive fan of the program explains how she learned from this storyline specifically.

“I think the show is mostly about HIV and AIDS. I like mostly [the stories] about marriage struggles. Like Boramane, the storyline when he was sick. If I listen to the program, it teaches me something” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).
A second fan explains how this story,
“teaches young people about HIV and AIDS and how you can protect yourself. I have a friend who has HIV and it teaches me, and I teach him. I’ve learned that when you have HIV you should go to the clinic to get medicine and eat fruits. I can tell my friend that and he should listen to Makgabaneng” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

This story was a favorite, especially among the older 35-49 year-old focus group participants. It is important to understand what elements of this storyline make it so influential among fans. One respondent said,

“I like Boramane because the way he acts gives a lot of people a sense of what they should do and not do in the future. A person should not be promiscuous. They should not have a lot of lovers; they should use a condom and should not be engaged in relationships with much older men” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

While the stories and lives of characters proved very engaging and interesting, it may be telling to embed additional storylines that center on more common dramatic themes within the program to make it more true to the ‘soap’ genre. While the educational success of this change remains uncertain as is, Makgabaneng is clearly a drama about HIV/AIDS. In a country that has proven so proactive in the fight against this illness, it is possible that citizens are beginning to feel a fatigue regarding the bombardment of media messages and may tune the program out without giving it a chance.
Throughout these in-depth interview discussions, it became clear that the story of *Makgabaneng* is very similar to the everyday life of fans. The creator of the *Makgabaneng* Facebook group said,

“It teaches people about everything that’s happening in society…We look at issues such as HIV and AIDS, such as pregnancy you get issues such as family issues. Every problem that happens in families, you’ll find them in *Makgabaneng*. There’s a family that fights. All kinds of families you’ll find in *Makgabaneng*” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This is a positive finding, as it shows how audiences are able to relate to elements without the story. Another fan explained the story of *Makgabaneng* by stating,

“It's basically an educational show talking about different aspects about what is effecting Botswana nowadays, and the way they approached it is by having different characters portray that specific situation” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

The issues that characters face in the story seem to mirror the issues fans of the program face in real life settings.

“It covers different aspects of social life and cultural issues. I think mostly the main theme is HIV and AIDS and how it can be, all the issues surrounding it really. They try to bring out the message of HIV and AIDS prevention issues, the stigma surrounding it and all the other issues surrounding HIV and AIDS” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).
These personal narratives are essential to the audience identification process with the drama. Now that we understand how fans of Makgabaneng describe the drama and the stories themselves, it is time to turn attention towards which storylines and messages prove more salient than others.

Infidelity in Makgabaneng

Amongst the HIV/AIDS messages within Makgabaneng, none proved as prominent as storylines regarding the importance of fidelity and warnings against multiple concurrent partnerships. This was a stronger storyline than any other recommended PEPFAR theme. One respondent explains,

“If they follow it, they can learn a lot. You will learn not to cheat” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Another respondent retells the drama by saying,

“The main story in Makgabaneng is we should not be promiscuous. We should not keep a lot of partners at the same time. Instead we should just be faithful to one partner” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Other PEPFAR themes, such as prevention with positives, alcohol reduction, abstinence and intergenerational relationships were not as salient within the story itself.

This is an interesting choice, as the majority of listeners of the soap program are females, and it appears as through infidelity is most problematic among men. As one fan explains, the Makgabaneng story centers around,
“Three central themes: drug abuse, HIV and AIDS, and the irresponsibility of most men in their families” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

It is unclear whether these messages are targeting a more male audience. It is possible however, that storylines could be interpreted by woman as a demonstration of the dangers involved in allowing partners to engage in multiple concurrent partnerships. Therefore, even while they may be practicing monogamy in a relationship, they may still request using a condom to prevent the spread of infection.

This does call to question the amount of control a woman has over her sexual life. As discussed earlier, gender inequalities are one of the most important and challenging cultural characteristics of Botswana, suggesting that women in Botswana society perceive their sexuality in accordance to the power structures in their society and the social concerns of others, particularly that of their male partners (Wingwood & DeClemente, 2000). Therefore, it may not make much of a difference if women are educated about the importance of practicing safe sex, if they have little control over those types of sexual decisions. It is important to note that the empowerment of women was one of the 18 formative themes that Makgabaneng felt was most imperative in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the summer of 2009. Though some of the storylines focus on this initiative, it does hold less of a priority than the five recommended PEPFAR themes, abstinence, alcohol reduction, partner reduction and fidelity, prevention with HIV positives, and intergenerational sex.

While most of the characters that are unfaithful in Makgabaneng are male, survey results suggest that it is a problem between both genders. 51.5% of respondents strongly
agree or agree that most women cheat on their husbands, and 68.9% of respondents strongly agree or agree that most men cheat on their wives. These numbers suggest that women are also cheating in society, though it appears much more culturally acceptable for men. Female unfaithfulness has led to a rising phenomenon in Botswana called “love killings” (Panapress, 2011). This is when heartbroken estranged lovers murder young women. 29.7% of respondents strongly agree or agree that it is unrealistic to expect men to be faithful. Regardless, most participants did express that cheating is something that one should not do. 81.9% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that it is okay for a man to have sex with a woman who is not his steady partner 29.4% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that it is never okay to cheat on your partner, and 25.5% strongly disagree or disagree that they have never cheated on their partner. Fidelity perceptions of respondents are illustrated in Figure 8 below.
Soul City (2010) examined the reasons why men and women cheat in South Africa. Based on results of their research, they implemented a OneLove regional campaign which specifically focuses on increasing communication and sexual satisfaction between partners in an effort to decrease these statistics. Part of the challenge of this campaign has been that most readers who responded to conversations centered on cheating are women, and male audiences tend to remain silent (Soul City, 2010). It is important that more is done to talk about this issue as something that affects both genders.

Perhaps this illustrates the different roles that men and women serve within the society. Most often, it is the men who are engaging in the risky sexual behavior, and it is the women who are forced to figure out what is wrong within their relationship to make
the men stray. Also, female characters within the drama appear to have a strong social support network. They are able to go to friends or church members to talk about problems. The men within the drama all seem to be making decisions on their own.

If this is a true reflection of society, it suggests that more positive support communities for men may be an interesting addition to Botswana’s fight against HIV/AIDS. This proves especially true, considering that Botswana has roots as a patriarchal society. It may be counterproductive to have so many education and empowerment institutions in place for females, if the men in society are not getting the same support. While females may insist on using a condom or waiting to engage in sexual relations, it may make little difference if men hold all of the power within the relationship.

It is important to note that the themes and messages embedded within Makgabaneng are not stagnant and do change periodically. While fidelity and multiple concurrent partnerships may prove the most consistent within these ten episodes, it is possible that in a year’s time these themes may change. Research demonstrated the importance of keeping the stories and the lives of characters engaging and interesting. Including a large number of ‘infidelity’ storylines may just be producers’ way of keeping dramatic themes within the program to make it more true to the ‘soap’ genre.

Fans expressed a satisfaction with these storylines over others. The survey questionnaire asked participants what stories they most relate, and ‘sexual relationships’ and ‘marriage struggles’ were the most consistent answers. During personal interviews, one participant said,
“It’s a reflection of what is happening presently, like STI’s, theft, crime, extramarital partner relations, all those things. I prefer listening to cheating relationships, that way you learn something from them”.

Clearly, this participant enjoyed storylines that centered around personal relational issues, rather than broader societal challenges. When asked why he preferred the stories about cheating relationships, the respondent answered,

“They are interesting. They’re relaxing, and of course, you learn something from them. Sometimes things done without entertainment tend to bore people and they don’t pay much attention. If you want to send a message to people you have to have entertainment” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

This is a theme among the soap genre as a whole. Most stories within popular soap dramas around the world are at the personal, individual relational level, not broader contextual concerns. Another fan stated,

“The story which I like to encourage other people to take is that you should be faithful to your partner and if it’s a marriage situation, you should stay faithful to your spouse and not be promiscuous. I learn a lot of different things. For example when you face a problem in life you have to consult with other people and not just do what you think is right“ (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It is clear from these discussions that infidelity proves a problem in Botswana and should continue to be included in the Makgabaneng storyline, as it is a favorite subject among fans. The show may even consider increasing condom promotion in cases of infidelity.
Amongst the other messages embedded within *Makgabaneng*, the focus seemed to exist as a guide regarding lifestyle choices, stigma reduction and the importance of living positively. These are incredibly important demonstrations to include within the edutainment drama. However, more concrete and detailed education proved scarce among HIV/AIDS campaigns in the country. For example, while a particular storyline may demonstrate how uncomfortable it is for an unfaithful character to live with embarrassing STI’s, the storyline does not go one step further to illustrate specific condom skills lessons or detailed information how to find a health clinic. Clearly, it is very entertaining for audiences to listen to how much pain a negative character is in after having an STI. Including more specific public service health announcements may decrease the appeal of this storyline. Perhaps there is an opportunity for *Makgabaneng* to address these more concrete advisories at the end of each episode.

PEPFAR Themes

Though the most salient message within *Makgabaneng* centered on the importance of fidelity and warnings against multiple concurrent partnerships, it is important to understand how prominent the other PEPFAR themes proved. Therefore, RQ2a asks: *How are audiences of Makgabaneng interpreting the five recommended PEPFAR themes?* These themes include fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with HIV positives and abstinence.

In order to understand how well audiences were familiar with these issues, the survey questionnaire was designed to assess knowledge levels of each of these themes.
Results from that survey suggest a strong understanding and positive behavior intentions. As previously noted, 81.9% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that it is okay for a man to have sex with a woman who is not his steady partner. 29.4% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that it is never okay to cheat on your partner, and 25.5% strongly disagree or disagree that they have never cheated on their partner. Therefore, it can be determined that this population of fans, it is believed that partner reduction and faithfulness is important.

Alcohol reduction was assessed by asking questions regarding personal behaviors, as well as attitudes towards alcohol use. 30.9% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they have made risky decisions after drinking alcohol. This suggests that alcohol abuse remains a problem in Botswana, and is a contributing factor to the spread of HIV. Hyde’s (2006) research found that heavy alcohol consumption is strongly and consistently associated with sexual risk behaviors in both men and women in Botswana, suggesting a need to deal with alcohol abuse within HIV prevention programs in African countries.

Additionally, 35.5% of respondents strongly agree or agree that it is easier to meet people of the opposite sex after drinking alcohol, and 68.9% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they remember to use condoms, even after drinking alcohol. Perhaps Makgabaneng could embed storylines about less risky ways of meeting people from the opposite sex so that alcohol is not linked so strongly to relationships. This would also provide a reprieve from HIV/AIDS centered storylines within the drama.
Intergenerational sex was another favorite storyline that fans talked about when retelling the story of the drama. One fan described *Makgabaneng* by saying,

“It is about life issues in general. For example the issue that has been addressed recently, they were talking about as a young adult you shouldn’t go out with elders, especially sugar mommy’s or sugar daddy’s” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Intergenerational sex is a clear concern for participants, especially those who are just starting to leave school. Another fan described the story by saying it centers on,

“Finance issues, the likes of guys who are sugar daddies for the sake of money and trying to get power with modernity” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Clearly, this message is embedded within the story of *Makgabaneng*, and also serves as a huge societal problem in Botswana. Results from the survey demonstrate that 59.8% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they know girls who seek relationships with older men to receive gifts, and 63.6% of respondents strongly agree or agree that there is pressure on girls to go out with older men to receive gifts from them.

Prevention with HIV positives was assessed by asking general information regarding the spread of infection. Results demonstrate a high level of knowledge regarding how the disease is transmitted and spread from partner to partner. 78.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through sexual intercourse with unknown persons; 87.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through infected mother to her unborn baby; 80.9% of
respondents strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through sharing shaving equipment; 64.2% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that HIV can be transmitted through kissing; 91.6% of respondents strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through blood transfusion; 80.2% of respondents strongly agree or agree that HIV can be transmitted through breastfeeding; 39.9% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that HIV can be transmitted through saliva; and 87.2% strongly disagree or disagree that HIV can be transmitted through shaking hands.

Additionally, this theme was measured by assessing attitudes and reported behaviors of using condoms. 76.6% of respondents strongly agree or agree that condoms can prevent HIV/AIDS transmission; 88% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that condoms can be used more than once; 73.8% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they will use a condom every time I have sex in the next six months; 52.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they use condoms every time they have sex; 79.6% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that they are afraid their partner would reject them if they suggested using a condom; 84.4% of respondents strongly agree or agree that a boy who uses a condom is showing respect to his partner; 73.1% strongly agree or agree that they are confident that they could get condoms without feeling embarrassed; and 69.8% strongly disagree or disagree that condoms can ruin the sexual mood. These results demonstrate that there is a high level of knowledge regarding the spread and prevention of HIV. However, it does little to demonstrate that Makgabaneng is reaching those who are HIV the importance of a healthy diet and taking medication regularly.
While knowledge about the importance of birth control proved high, attitudes and reported behaviors regarding abstinence were much lower. 64.2% strongly agree or agree that the only acceptable form of prevention is abstinence, and 49.5% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that they waited to have sex until they were married. One fan explained, “I feel like all of the characters who are sexually active in the story, except for the characters who are going to practice secondary virginity, none of them in their twenties, none of them practice abstinence. I feel they should show that at any age, anyone can abstain. It’s not just for the young who are sexually inexperienced” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010). These results suggest that individuals realize the importance of abstinence, but do not always practice it in reality. This demonstrates the importance of teaching condom skills and encouraging partner reduction. Many campaigns are teaching the importance of wearing a condom, without ever actually speaking to the specifics of where to purchase and how to use.

When asked to retell the story of Makgabaneng, fans of the program did recognize all of these themes in their summary. One of its most loyal fans said, “The story has been on since 2001. I think it has moved around. They all center around HIV and AIDS. The first major point that they tried to hit was stigma with HIV and AIDS, and gradually over the years they moved from that to some other more sub themes surrounding HIV and AIDS. I think a lot have been covered, drugs then issues like menopause, I remember. Issues like promiscuity, myths related to HIV and AIDS, culture and how it affects issues of HIV and AIDS. I think most things have been covered” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).
Fans repeatedly suggested that perhaps it is time for *Makgabaneng* to shift their focus not away from HIV, but to incorporate additional storylines into the drama. Another respondent described the story by saying,

“*Makgabaneng* is about real life stories. Things that are happening, HIV and AIDS, alcohol abuse, abuse, anything they want to make people educated and how to solve any problem in life” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Now that we understand how well audiences of *Makgabaneng* understand the five recommended PEPFAR themes (fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with HIV positives and abstinence), it is important to turn attention towards how well these storylines match the issues of most concern to the people of Botswana. Remember that entertainment-education academic literature tells us the importance of these dramas being produced in a bottom-up fashion, where audiences define the issues of most concern, not PEPFAR. It is important to determine what the needs of the community and culture are. Therefore, RQ2b asks: *How closely do the five recommended PEPFAR themes align with the issues of most concern to the Makgabaneng audience in Botswana’s fight against HIV/AIDS?*

Additional Recommended Storylines

One of the most salient interpretations found within the story of *Makgabaneng* is how people are defined by sexual choices. Characters who were unwed and engaging in sexual relationships had negative consequences in every other aspect of their lives; incredible things happened in the lives of abstinent characters; and the biggest
misfortunes were reserved for those who were engaging in relationships outside the sanctity of marriages. These tactics certainly hold promise in encouraging audiences to consider how sexual decisions may impact life outside of the bedroom. However, it is important to understand how Botswana culture is engaged with a life ‘beyond’ themselves.

Particularly, Botswana culture has long traditions involving rituals asking higher beings to bless regions with prosperity. It is possible that these storylines could be interpreted, as good fortune will follow those who remain faithful or abstinent. As we all know, it is possible that bad things could happen to those who make the most responsible decisions and good things could happen to those who engage in the riskiest behaviors. It would be unfair if everyone plagued with misfortune were seen as acting irresponsibly.

Stigma Reduction

The idea that HIV and AIDS happens to people who are not living positive lives has led to a great deal of stigma surrounding the issue. The survey questionnaire assessed stigma levels among respondents. Results demonstrate that 92.1% of respondents strongly agree or agree that a healthy looking person could be infected with HIV/AIDS; 54.7% of respondents strongly agree or agree that most people will isolate someone if they know they are infected with HIV; 87.3% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they would care for someone who is infected with HIV; and 47% of respondents strongly agree or agree that most people my age will tease someone if they know they are infected with HIV. These results suggest that much more can be done to illustrate that Botswana is
changing into a less stigmatized nation. Stigma perceptions of respondents are illustrated in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Stigma Perceptions.

The theme of stigma reduction was apparent during interviews as well. During the 20-24-year-old focus group discussion it was advised that,

“Makgabaneng should also focus on discrimination. This thing, stigmatization, it’s about HIV and AIDS, but there are other diseases which effect the same way HIV and AIDS effects us” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Participants felt as though people living with HIV/AIDS should not feel as though they deserve the disease more than a person living with any other disease should feel they are at fault. Often times, stories in Makgabaneng use negative character to behavior to lead to the infection of HIV. This could present a message that those who have HIV
deserve it due to poor decision-making. It may be important for positive characters to live positively with HIV as well. Creator of the Facebook Makgabaneng fan club group believes that more should be done to encourage those living with HIV to live positively. Makgabaneng should,

“Teach people how to find jobs and socialize. Some people isolate themselves from people” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

These sentiments of stigma reduction and additional storylines about how to live positively were widespread in interviews. Perhaps the most touching interview was conducted with an openly HIV positive respondent. She believes that the program holds great promise in reaching those who are infected.

“There are a lot of people who are out there with the disease who are not found yet. Makgabaneng helps those people…I think it’s important for a positive person to play a positive character, and mostly teach them to take care of themselves to not get the disease. But if they’ve got it, to accept and teach others who haven’t gotten it yet, and to accept themselves and to live positively” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

These storylines would not just meet those who are infected HIV, but also those who are not infected who influence the lives of everyone. Fans of the show felt that stigma reduction could be achieved by acknowledging a link between poverty and HIV/AIDS. Participants from the youngest focus group discussion demonstrated that people in Botswana are given free medication, and therefore
they are getting infected on purpose and engaging in more risky behaviors because it is not costly.

“I think people in Botswana take for granted is that when you’re infected with HIV and AIDS, you are given free medication. You don’t have to struggle to buy it so I think somebody just do something and say, “Ill be given ARV for free… I think that’s the problem in Botswana. I think if the government would solve the medication that way people would learn. And I think poverty would be one of those things. If I want to be rich, I’d go and maybe be a prostitute and get the money at least to feed my family or something” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

These sentiments not only show a clear discrimination towards those living with HIV as deserving the virus, but also demonstrate the role poverty plays in society. By focusing on these broader social issues rather than individual behavior change, perhaps some of the stigma could be reduced.

A 25 year-old male public leader talked of these inequities.

“I think HIV is the biggest problem. It’s also poverty. I think if they could always make it clear. They need voiceovers for the people in the show connecting these things. Reasons for me sometimes I think when they think about it, they need to hear a radio voice who’s going to tell them… I think they should always emphasize how poverty and HIV is linked, and also that they’ve identified the problem and how people can help. They should encourage youth to do more” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).
These results suggest that fans of Makgabaneng believe more can be done to reduce stigma by illustrating a link between poverty and HIV/AIDS in Botswana society. This can be fulfilled by shifting the focus from individual behavior change goals to broader social structure issues such as poverty and stigma reduction.

Inclusion of Church

As previously noted, the most prominent religions in Botswana are Christian, Muslim and ancestral (Main, 2007). Religion plays a huge role in the lives of most citizens, and so it is no wonder why fans of Makgabaneng noticed its absence from the drama. A popular pastor in Gaborone, Botswana explains,

“It’s a glaring hole. It should be somewhere in there as a theme because church positively influences peoples lifestyles. Church gets people to transform, gets them to do better. We may not all think church does this, we may think that people at church at hypocrites, however church is about trying to augment behaviors positively. So if we are looking for solutions, church could be one of them” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

When telling the story of Makgabaneng, one fan said,

“It’s realistic, but I think there are some things that have to be added to make it very very realistic. So many things are included, like families and traditional healers, but I think they left out church. I think church has to be added on to the situation. They have to, something like a church, or a Christian or something
related to church to make it more realistic” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Church is a large part of the lives of participants. Another respondent said, “I’d really appreciate it if the church could be included in Makgabaneng. I’d like to play a church go-er, a Christian girl, who didn’t know anything about God and then saw her life change. I think the church somehow we have tried to talk to people about AIDs, about breaking the chain, about alcohol, but people are still doing it” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

The importance of church became very clear when participants were asked what has kept them from engaging in high-risk behaviors. Consistently, when asked why individuals have steered clear of high-risk behavior, church was mentioned as central to positive living. One teenager explained how,

“I’d rather choose to live my own life having Jesus as my savior and having my ways. I think most of them the things that they do they’re basically on the out world, but they don’t talk about God” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Another fan says, “I center my story around faith and Christian views. I hope the children listen and adopt what’s being preached in the story then it would help me. Adopting a faith lifestyle could empower their lives” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Perhaps one of the reasons why church is such an important factor in the fight against HIV/AIDS is due to its strong support community. Church communities are able to provide weekly counselors and peer support for active members.
“I want this part of social workers within the program, and pastors and within the youth they should go to church and they should talk to the pastor about social life, even within the community. I think that part would give it life, more identifiable for me” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Curious about what elements besides religion may lead to such positive behavior, I spoke with a well-known pastor at a local Gaborone church. A pastor explains this community more, by saying that church is

“definitely as a place to receive counsel. That’s another part of having a place of support, it’s a place you can receive counsel that you are sure is morally sound counsel. This is what you can receive now at church, whether it be those you go to church with or even if you want to talk to your pastor you can receive that counsel and I think open access counsel is not something that is readily available” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

The idea of a weekly mentor and counselor was repeated as a reason why church is such an important elements in the lives of participants. Curious by the absence of church in the Makgabaneng storyline, I interviewed a writer of the drama. She explained that Makgabaneng understood the cultural importance of religion and Botswana, as well as its role in promoting positive behavior. She explains,

“The church/religion is very vital in Botswana. When all else fails, people here turn to God, and the church is aligned with good behavior. Makgabaneng has not explored the church because of the many Christian fraternities here. We did not
want to sound biased to traditional African Christian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Charismatic or Pentecostal Churches”.

Haron & Jensen (2008) researched this connection between religion and public health in Botswana. Their results show that 80% of Batswana identify themselves as Christians, and cite that this religious identity influences their decisions regarding sexual behavior and HIV prevention. Results of this study suggest that religious identity is actually less important to the inclusion of religiosity as an indicator of behavior relevant to public health. Based on this research, it seems not imperative for Makgabaneng to identify characters as belonging to a specific religion (e.g. Christianity) or push specific religious scripture, but instead simply show that religion is an important part of their lives.

Given the connection between Makgabaneng’s funder, PEPFAR, and the United States, it is clear why church messages may have been removed from the program, as the United States is built upon the notion of a separation of church and state. However, it is important to look at why church messages prove so persuasive in inspiring behavior change, and what elements may be missing from Makgabaneng’s stories. A Botswana pastor tries to explain this difference by saying,

“The only difference I think is we always say what is the word of God’s name and what is that guiding us and empowering us to do better. At least the teachings at this place, we see Christianity of being something very practical. Every single thing says “How? How do I? How do I get out of this? What do I do?” …I think this is what I would say needs to be in place in Makgabaneng. If there is a
Christian theme, it says, “How do I get out of this?” It’s not just telling the story, it’s about how. It’s all about empowerment. You need to be empowered. What empowers you is how” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

These results demonstrate the importance of religion and spirituality to the people of Botswana. Its absence from the characters’ lives is noticed, and is not an accurate representation of the culture of Botswana. Moreover, church has been identified as one of the most consistent reasons why individuals say they do not engage in high-risk behaviors. Church is able to provide a support community where individuals can go for counseling. Additionally, the messages of church stories include practical solutions to its audience. These are all areas in which *Makgabaneng* may wish to address in its own story.

Additional Storylines

Clearly, *Makgabaneng* is not able to include every issue that faces the people of Botswana. It is important to note life stories that are going on in fans of the show that are not being represented in the life stories of *Makgabaneng*’s characters. The most consistent answer that fans gave when asked what issues they are currently facing was alcohol and drug abuse. PEPFAR’s five themes do address this problem, however there are many themes that emerged in conversation that are not.

One storyline that fans of the program felt were missing was the inclusion of a female character that is cheating on her spouse. Participants of the youngest focus group believed that,
“Women are not faithful. Men are worse” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Because women in Botswana suspect that their spouses are cheating, they often engage in relationships outside of the marriage as well. However, most fidelity campaigns often only target the male as the one being unfaithful. The oldest focus group participants believed that this was one of the newest problems emerging in Botswana.

“They should address it. They should develop a character who plays that scene, that story. A woman who is promiscuous and does the same thing in cheating like the man would do” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Not only does cheating happen between different age groups, but many fans believed that stories about adolescent cheating should also be included. This finding is consistent with previous sentiments regarding the unfair representation of men being the only gender to behave negatively.

“I think the thing with Makgabaneng is the cheating is happening and it seems to be happening in teenagers too, and I think they have to teach how to control the way that they act. They should teach teenagers how to not get in relationships and focus on education” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Another possible gap in the Makgabaneng storyline is that there are not enough solutions offered through the storyline. During the 20-24-year-old focus group discussion, one participant said,

“Since the main focus of this program is to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, my question is if it provides any solutions? Like, solutions if you find yourself in this
situation with HIV and AIDS do they give you any solutions to this is where you can turn to” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This does not just seem to be a problem with Makgabaneng, but with other HIV/AIDS campaigns as well. A Botswana government social worker said,

“Even government is to blame somehow. They are good at identifying problems. Every time you see the men in meetings, they are talking about problems. It’s high time they talk about solutions, the solutions to the problems” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

A third theme that emerged as a possible societal issue that Makgabaneng could address in their storyline has to do with the increase in divorce rates in Botswana. Many spouses with children from another marriage are beginning to merge together. Often times, spouses either abandon their children from their first marriage, or refuse to recognize their new stepchildren. One fan explains,

“Men who abandon their children, there are so many men around who abandon their own blood children and then claiming that the woman would never take it kindly that the man has a child elsewhere. If I marry you now, and I have kids elsewhere, and I want to still take care of those kids, the woman would normally say no, consider me. This is one story they should shed light or come up with a story” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

The problem of male role models and child custody was of particular interest to the oldest focus group, saying,
“Discrimination exists in the marriage setup where the women comes in with kids. It could even go to the extremes where the men can be involved in a sexual relationship with the kids that aren’t his that are from the women’s side”

(Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Makgabaneng could include a storyline where children from both sides of a merged family are brought together, accepted and treated the same.

Fans of the show also felt that more could be included about the transition between teenagers and adulthood. One respondent says,

“I think issues in my life are issues of career paths, because I listen to Gorata’s aunt and uncle saying “You need to do medicine”, and I was thinking, “Is this what Gorata wants?” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

These stories could center on empowerment messages, teaching middle generations that they have the capacity to choose their own career. A counseling professor from the University of Botswana explains,

“Students are facing relationship issues and career issues. For example, they are in the fun period where they want to spend a lot of time with their friends drinking and partying and their friends and what not, but they also realize that the university is a very demanding environment so they end up sometimes they end up in emotional turmoil because they have problems in school and their social life…. [Makgabaneng should] help the young girl believe in herself. Build in them the power to know that they care and are able and the power to know that they don’t have to depend or rely on their peers because here, one of the greatest
poison in the young people…training a young child to know that I am an individual I can make it I have to make independent decisions whatever I do it has to be entirely something that I can account for” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Getting a career is clearly one of the biggest issues facing the people of Botswana. Though *Makgabaneng* is designed to center around issues of HIV and AIDS, the more fans talked of their own lives, they more they talked about everyday concerns. These include elections, politics, theft, peer pressure, teen pregnancy and inheritance. As one pastor explains, the ability to positively react towards adversities in life is a priceless gift that can help with any of these issues.

“One of the challenges that effects most people in their life that effects their lifestyle choices is the way that they respond to challenges in the first place—people’s attitudes towards difficulties, and the place trials push them an overhaul of adjusting. A lot of these attitudes just build on the way people were raised up. They build up possibly with what people face. But if people could alter the way they could respond to adversity or trial we would have a lot less problems in society” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It seems as though the more characters in *Makgabaneng* that positively manage everyday life struggles in their fictional lives, the more fans of the program will relate and identify to their journey. These transitional characters prove incredibly powerful, especially as individuals talk about the dynamic journeys that characters have taken.
These findings are consistent with research done by the World Health Organization. WHO (2010) describe social determinants of health as conditions in which individuals are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system. They identify three factors that aid towards increasing these social determinants of health, including improving daily living, have more equal distribution of power, money and resources and measure, understand and assess the impact of action. It is interesting that fans of Makgabaneng cite their struggle to gain employment as an issue of most concern to them. By including practical advice on how to obtain employment in Botswana, perhaps more could be done to distribution money and resources more equally throughout Botswana.

Based on these findings, more is understood regarding the audience interpretation process of Makgabaneng. Though many recommendations were advanced, it is important to note that the process of audience sense-making is influenced by many variables. Three variables (individual, media and context) are central components to how audiences receive media content. Therefore, media content is only one third of this sense-making equation.

What is most important to note is that the criticisms put forth by this reception study are not necessarily criticisms of Makgabaneng, but instead a reflection of the restraints in which it was produced. Media reception combines with too many extraneous variables to account for all possible negotiations. It is necessary for Makgabaneng to be given the resources to carefully monitor how audiences are interpreting storylines of the drama throughout the broadcast so that changes can be made along the way. Also, less predefined objectives should be mandated onto producers of Makgabaneng like the five
recommended PEPFAR themes so that more participatory bottom-up objectives can be incorporated regarding issues of most concern to its everyday audience. Until Makgabaneng has this freedom, it must continue to on reaching the evaluation goals set forth by its funders, and focusing less on issues such as female empowerment and more equal distribution of power.

Summary of Results

We now know what themes and salient messages audiences are likely to interpret in Makgabaneng; how audiences of Makgabaneng are interpreting the five recommended PEPFAR themes (fidelity, alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with HIV positives and abstinence); and how closely these five recommended PEPFAR themes align with the issues of most concern to the Makgabaneng audience in Botswana’s fight against HIV/AIDS. Because this is only one part of the audience sense-making process, it is important turn attention towards how audiences are identifying with these interpretations.
CHAPTER 10: AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

“Media is definitely informing children what is fashionable, what is good, what is great to do, what I should be thinking, and what the leaders are thinking. Young minds are impressionable, and media will make that impression, and hopefully positive ones” (Public Leader Pastor).

Bryant and Vorderer (2006) describe identification as an imaginative process where mediated texts construct a world wherein characters operate. Viewers feel an attachment to these fictional worlds, and experience the events occurring within the text (184). “Thurs, identification has both affective (empathy) and cognitive (understanding goals and motives, perspective taking) components (185). Identification proves imperative to the entertainment-education process. People are more likely to model behavior if they identify with the character they are viewing, and if it results in valued outcomes (Bryant & Oliver, 2009). Based on this understanding, this study aims to answer the following research question RQ3: How are audiences of Makgabaneng identifying with the radio drama?

The World of Makgabaneng

Research demonstrates how important it is for culture to be included in edutainment storylines. The lives of Makgabaneng characters should closely resemble the everyday lives of the people in Botswana. 77.7% of surveyed respondents very strongly
or strongly believe that the stories on *Makgabaneng* seem realistic. However only 46.9% very strongly or strongly believe it is realistic to their own life story. This pattern was consistent in interview discussions as well.

One fan spoke of the show saying,

“Nothing is exasperated, nothing is stretched from reality. What happens in the story is what happens in real life” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Participants identify with the setting and the stories of *Makgabaneng*. They care about what is going to happen next in the drama. This attachment seemingly stems from the drama being a Botswana produced program.

“It’s talking about real things, things that are happening now. Most of the characters that are there are Botswana, so they’re acting what they know” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Moreover, the settings described in the radio drama are similar to the villages across Botswana. Though the story does not use real-life names of villages, they do try to incorporate as many elements as possible into the storyline so that audiences will identify across the country.

“It represents a typical village setting. But the name of the village doesn’t exist…but it’s typical” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Another fan said,

“It’s very realistic. Sometimes if you are to follow it, it just reflects your own real life. It’s just 100 percent the same” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).
The importance of identification with characters cannot be overstated, especially when speaking to the success of the MARCH strategy. Strong identification with the story was evident through these discussions, as many respondents referenced their own lives when talking of Makgabaneng storylines. For example, one respondent said,

“"In my small village, men are the ones infected with HIV and AIDS, because most of the times, they’re the ones unfaithful. Some of them who listen to the story can see how they can refrain from HIV and AIDS…The story is portraying everyday life. It inspires me to be a faithful man, even when I grow up” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Participants were able to make the connections between HIV/AIDS in their own lives and communities; to the way HIV/AIDS is presented in Makgabaneng. Another respondent said,

“"I think I am living with someone who is HIV positive, so I know some of the things that happen in Makgabaneng are the things that happen in real life, especially in my life” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Many individuals talked of how they were able to see elements of their friends and neighbors in the Makgabaneng characters. Though this is not a direct linkage between the story and individual action, it does show how Makgabaneng is successful in recreating everyday life.

“"There’s this character called Ditiro. He’s a typical city guy who was, for most of the time. During the last story, he grew up in a sense and has changed to come to be responsible and appreciate things that are socially accepted, so he in a way, I
could say I could see a lot of my friends in him” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Another fan agreed that what is going on in *Makgabaneng* is similar to what is going on in his community. He said,

“One day I was listening to the story and there was a situation where some kids were in a sexual relationship in a maize field, and that surprisingly I once heard that happen before with one of the other students. It’s real. It could happen” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

One of the reasons why this strong identification is possible is due to the large variety of characters involved in the storyline. There is not just three characters (positive, negative and transitional), but rather there are different genders, age groups and regions for each of these modeling patterns. The creator of the *Makgabaneng* Facebook fan club explains,

“*Makgabaneng*, it touches people lives. It’s realistic. You’ll find a family that fights; you’ll find a family that’s effected by poverty; you’ll find kids that don’t want to go to school; you’ll find a family that’s always trying to make their kids responsible adults; and you’ll also find people who are irresponsible…Everybody lives according to those characters. Everybody does. It depends on who you are and what you want” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

These discussions suggest that fans of *Makgabaneng* are identifying with the story. Overall, fans of the program seem to believe that what is going on in the storyline is realistic to what goes on in real-life Botswana. While it may not necessarily be
reflective of what is going on in their own lives, participants did believe it was reflective of what was happening to those around them. Now, it is important to understand what elements of these stories prove most relatable through character identification.

Characters of *Makgabaneng*

As previously discussed, the success of *Makgabaneng* is designed according to the MARCH strategy. MARCH strives to provide alternative narratives in which individuals hold control over their sexual and reproductive behavior (Galavotti, Pappas-DeLuca, & Lansky, 2001). Through this process, behavior change does not take place simply by including a desired messaging in these narratives. Instead, audiences must identify with the storylines with which they are engaged. Identification is established through positive, negative, and transitional character development strategy.

The *Makgabaneng* narrative must include a positive role model who consistently makes responsible health decisions and a negative character that consistently engages in risky and irresponsible behavior. Transitional characters are also included who may start making risky decisions, but evolve over the series into an empowered, knowledgeable, and positive character. These dynamic transitional characters most likely serve as the most identifiable role models for audience members, as they are neither consistently positive nor consistently negative. The idea is that audiences internalize these challenges, apply them to their own lives and come up with solutions through interpersonal interactions.
This process hinges on audiences wanting to model behaviors exhibited by the positive characters. It can become problematic if audiences find negative character behaviors endearing. Therefore, the survey questionnaire included questions regarding how fans of *Makgabaneng* felt about different characters. The survey asked respondents to list their favorite character, the character the most identify with, the character they least identify with, the character who serves as the best role model, the character who serves as the worst role model, which character their friends are most like, and which character their friends are least like. Without replaying the drama or providing a list of characters, respondents were asked to recall which character best serves each of these roles. Therefore, characters must have been impressionable enough to make a lasting impact for audience members to remember their name and the role that they played.

When asked of their favorite character, the two most popular survey responses answers were Boramane and Cecilia. One respondent described Boramane by saying,

“I like to listen to Boramane. He is irresponsible. My neighbors are like some of the guys in the drama, even when I was away in the city there are some guys at the University who are in to drugs” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

It is important to understand this sentiment further by examining the character of Boramane more closely. Currently, Boramane serves as a negative character in the *Makgabaneng* drama and is constantly fighting with issues of fidelity, intergenerational relationships and drugs. Cecilia is a much more positive character. One fan described her as saying,
“I like the way Cecilia behaves. The way she controls things. The way she advises. I believe she is a good friend because if it was another person who found out she was HIV positive she wouldn’t be her friend, but she advised her” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Cecilia very much fulfills a positive mother figure in the drama. Her character is very popular and is one of the central characters with a lot of broadcast time on the show. For many episodes, her central role in the program was to showcase how to be a positive mother who communicates openly with children. However, recently Cecilia’s husband Oteng has been unfaithful for her for quite and she has been in denial over his unfaithfulness.

It was not only the negative characters that fans enjoyed listening to. The two most popular characters that respondents identified with were Boramane and Gorata. Gorata is a much younger adolescent character in the story that is transitioning through schools. One fan described Gorata’s role in the story by saying,

“Gorata is in love with her boyfriend Godfrey. She has managed to stick to her plans and not engage in sexual activity before she has reached the stage for which she has chosen to do so” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Gorata is growing up in the story though, and consequently is beginning to face some strong pressures from peers. Both Gorata and Boramane’s stories center around issues of peer pressure.

When asked which characters served as the best role models, the most popular answers were Cecilia, Boramane and Gorata. It is easy to see why audiences would
identify Cecilia and Gorata as role models in society, as both characters have risen against peer pressure, but the inclusion of Boramane is problematic. One fan described Boramane as,

“A very stubborn old man who refuses to use condoms” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

One possible reason for this is because respondents answered questions without having the drama replayed or having a list of characters. Respondents had to rely solely on memory recall to identify characters. Therefore, it is possible that Boramane is just a popular character that plays a prominent role in the program and makes a lasting impression among audience members. Another possibility is that there is simply an appeal of negative characters in soap dramas. Salvato (2007) explored the fascination of the negative U.S. soap character Erica Kane in the daytime drama, All My Children.

Here, Erica is portrayed as a diva, who is both victim and villain, in her ability to transcend a new space beyond dominant culture and culturally assigned roles. Regardless of the reason for an attraction towards the negative character, Boramane, it does raise questions about how successful the character identification and the modeling process proved with his storyline. Finally, this could just mean that some audiences are most like the negative characters in the storyline. This could suggest that the positive characters are living “too positively” and are unrelatable for an everyday audience. Much needs to be done to ensure that all characters in the story are believable and hold some faults.

The two characters that served as the worst role models were identified as Boramane and Oteng. Oteng is Cecilia’s husband who played a positive character for
many years in the drama, but has recently transitioned into negative behaviors. One fan said,

“Cecelia’s in denial because he’s being unfaithful. As a person you can change, because at first Oteng was a husband and loving, but there were times where he was drinking and was cheating on his wife and he’s on faithful. Those are things that happen in real life (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

This transformation has been picked up on by audience members, as Oteng was not talked about as a loving caring husband and good role model.

When asked which characters were most like their friends, respondents answered Gorata and Ditiro. Ditiro is an interesting choice, as he is constantly going back between positive and negative behaviors. One fan describes him as,

“My favorite character is DT. He’s someone, of course, sometimes he is portrayed as an unfaithful partner, but when he’s wrong he says he’s wrong” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Both of these storylines also have to do with peer pressure, an issue obviously relatable to the Makgabaneng audience. Campbell (2007) offers insights into why Botswana youth prove particularly influential. Young people in Botswana are taught to obey adults and do what they say and do not believe that it is not their place to speak out and express opinions. This type of culture makes it difficult for youth to deal with pressures on them to have sex, including sexual abuse from adults who take advantage of their submissiveness (4).
The characters cited as least like the respondents’ friends were identified as Boramane, Opelo and Maru. One fan describes Opelo by saying,

“I relate to Opelo because she’s a typical teenager, and she’s facing the challenges of transforming her life…My favorite storylines would be personal growth. Opelo keeps progressing and then she goes back. Progression…progression… one minute she’s trying to transform her life, the next she’s going back to her old deeds again. Those are the kinds of people I relate to” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Though this character also deals with issues of peer pressure, Opelo proves much more impressionable than Gorata’s character. Perhaps negative behavior is less tolerated when it is done by female characters, rather than by males like Boramane.

Maru is another negative character that has battled with alcohol abuse for some time. One male explains why he does like the character.

“When you have people like your stepfathers or your stepmothers and your cousins and they try to reach out to you, and you want to be this type of spoiled brat or you don’t appreciate what they’re trying to give you, its not good. I want people who appreciate and are able to say, “These people are trying to help me”. I’ve seen such people. I’ve met them. Some of them I’ve even tried to reach out to them, but they didn’t appreciate me” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Now that more is understood regarding how fans of Makgabaneng are identifying with different characters, it is time to analyze what this may mean to the MARCH strategy process. As previously noted, this process hinges on audiences wanting to be like
and model the behaviors of positive characters. An important component of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory is that modeling does not occur simply by including desired messaging in the storyline (Singhal, et al., 2002). Identification hinges on which characters are engaging in certain activities. Though identification is not the same process as modeling, both prove crucial in the behavior change process.

Negative Character Identification

Boramane has been identified as a favorite character, and was a consistent answer when fans of Makgabaneng were asked about their favorite character, the character they most identify with, the best role model, the worst role model and which character their friends were least like. The most problematic of these categories is that it appears as though fans of Makgabaneng not only see themselves and identify with Boramane, but they also feel as though he is one of the best role models in the drama.

As previously noted, Boramane’s character is a negative role, and is filled with stories of infidelity and drugs. However, he is not the only negative male character that fans of Makgabaneng identified as being a favorite. One fan said,

“The bad characters are the ones that people will most enjoy. It’s not necessarily that they’ll go and do it, but it’s just for fun. The bad characters in the story, which actually reflects what could be happening in real life. In real life in Botswana a lot of things are happening behind doors. Like men who engage in a mate…in real life they do happen. People move around with multiple partners and they end up having HIV and AIDS” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).
This suggests that these characters are the most popular because they are portraying actions that are most relatable to the audience. Positive characters are not acting the way people act in society; negative characters have too little redeeming qualities to be realistic, but we all hold elements of each within us.

One of Boramane’s sidekicks in the program is Sparks. His name also emerged as one of the most popular characters to listen to, and also serves as a negative character in the drama. One respondent said,

“They love Sparks because he’s funny also, but his character really, it’s something that happens in society. I mean he sells drugs and we’d say he’s very abusive” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

The creator of the Makgabaneng Facebook fan club noticed the character’s popularity as well saying,

“Sparks, he’s funny. Very very funny. The only recent one that I remember is the drug one, where they brought drugs in to the country and then during the trial they applied for bail there were two guys, Sparks and Ditiro. They applied for bail and then the magistrate said he would not allow bail to be bought for those who will go out there to destroy their country and the lives of other people. Then he went on to grant bail to Ditiro for $5000, …and then Sparks unfortunately didn’t get bail (laughing)” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Ditiro’s negative character was also mentioned by a number of fans as a favorite. They enjoyed this storyline and were excited to retell Ditiro’s story.
“Ditiro is my favorite character but I wouldn’t say he’s the most exemplary. He’s my favorite in the sense that he’s very funny, and the things he does are very comedic. He’s a player. The way he likes girls a lot, but at the same time, he’s very protective of his sister. He doesn’t allow his sister to do some of the things he does, be irresponsible which he himself does. He’s my favorite in that sense, but I wouldn’t say he’s very exemplary. When it’s his part, you always want to listen. He’ll make you laugh more than half the time” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

It is clear from these discussions that the negative behavior of these male characters are not only entertaining and funny, but also are an accurate depiction of what is going on in society. One fan stated,

“Sparks is womanizer kind of, an ignorant person. He is quite entertaining. Actually there are people like that in real lives. There are people like Sparks, people who think they’re modern guys, the way he speaks and is in control of everything” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It is also clear from these discussions that negative male characters are very enjoyable and funny to watch. However, it should be noted that negative female characters did not receive the same positive response.

When describing the character of a negative female character, one respondent said,

“Opelo doesn’t behave like a girl. She dates older men goes out at night she does sorts of things that are not good for her health and even for her the people around
her. They want to know what is happening to their sister” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Clearly, this fan believes that Opelo’s disobedience is not in accordance to how women in Botswana should behave, and this negative behavior is not as entertaining as if she were a man. This represents a gendered double standard. A professor at the University of Botswana explains why this may be saying,

“At the home, honestly women do not have that much power. The men are still deciding what to use, how to use it and if he doesn’t want to use anything it simply leads to struggle. Women can accept it, because when a woman stands up and takes a stand they are thought to be disobedient and disrespectful” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It could prove problematic that negative male characters are consistently identified as the most favorite characters in *Makgabaneng*. Not only were they identified as the most entertaining, but they were also identified as the most relatable and in some cases, particularly with the case of Boramane, they were even identified as role models. *Makgabaneng* may want to evaluate what makes these characters so identifiable, and put some of those elements in their positive characters. It is boring to follow a character that is consistently positive. Moreover, it is an unrealistic depiction of how people act. It is possible for a positive character to also make mistakes and do things that are entertaining and funny. Now that we understand how fans of *Makgabaneng* feel about characters, it is important to understand what alternative factors contribute to these identification patterns.
Tradition vs. Modernity in Botswana

It is important to look at age differences within the story because every person is at risk for sexual and health matters. No person is at a place in their lives where they do not need to worry about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Typically in Botswana, older age groups have much more traditional ideologies than younger more modern generations. Based on this knowledge, this section aims to answer the following research question: RQ3a What roles do tradition and modernity differences play in the audience reception process? This is a very important question, as Botswana culture holds incredible respect for tradition within their country.

These older populations are turned to as the authority of almost all decisions. It is possible that once you are put into a position of this magnitude of power, one may begin to feel as though they know it all and no longer need to be cautious of some of life’s’ risks. Moreover, it brings life to some of the sexual issues older generations deal with that may be too uncomfortable to talk about. For example, one of the storylines within Makgabaneng has to do with a husband insisting that his wife is having an affair because she has stopped menstruating. This storyline teaches audiences about the normalcy of menopause and some of the changes that may occur during this time.

There is a strong discrepancy in Botswana culture between traditional and modern ideologies. These differences emerged throughout interview discussions. One young fan of Makgabaneng talked about her frustrations with Boramane’s more traditional outlook on medicine.
“Heish! Sometimes I do feel sorry for his wife because he believed more traditional. There are some things that are good about them, but not that much. Even though he is HIV positive, even though his wife is trying her hardest to show him the way, he’s so stubborn. stubborn, stubborn, stubborn! Very stubborn” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

It appears as though younger more modern individuals have difficulty identifying with the more traditional characters. It may not even seem as though they are living during the same time period. Another respondent mirrored these frustrations with one of the character that believes in luck and karma. She states,

“Some of the things that happen she believes it is bad luck. She doesn’t take them seriously. Every time she is taught, she doesn’t believe everything she hears. She believes everything is bad luck” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

It is important for Makgabaneng to include both modern and traditional storylines in the drama. A Botswana government social worker explains how these traditional views contribute to the HIV/AIDS crisis,

“Especially the belief that if you should sleep with a younger child you will get rid of HIV. Another belief is traditional beliefs and the use of traditional medicine” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Results from the survey suggest that 81.2% of respondents strongly agree or agree that their life is determined by their own actions. Therefore, these more traditional characters and stories may not be the most attractive to that population.
Different generations in Botswana have also been brought up talking about sex differently. For more traditional families, sex is something that is rarely talked about. Younger children tend to find it frustrating that they cannot be honest with their family regarding their relationships. The youngest focus group participants talked at great length regarding this phenomenon. One participant said,

“Now we know more than they do [in reference to HIV/AIDS]. Our parents were taught things back then. You won’t find my mom talking to my Grandmom about sex” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

When asked who they turn towards to talk about sex, the teenagers said they get most of their information from friends or media. This can be problematic, as information can be false or glamorized for the purposes of entertainment. Because of this, the teenage focus group believes,

“Teenage pregnancies are caused by our parents” because they [young people] are forced to sneak around. A Botswana Government social worker agreed with these frustrations saying, “The problem with Botswana is we talk about everything so hypothetical. Sometimes, this thing is here it is happening and gives such and such examples. Some times we are still afraid to talk about sex”  (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

One participant said this change should be reflected in Makgabaneng. This can be done through storylines involving children and parents communicating on the show,
“Should just allow their children to express themselves. I should be able to come to my mom and say “Mom I have a boyfriend.” They shouldn’t shout at me. She should talk to me” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It is clear that many participants believed that traditional values have added to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. While more modern audience members express frustrations with traditional values, many others believe that it is modernity that is contributing to the HIV/AIDS crisis. One respondent said,

“When you look at the young characters in the program they don’t listen to each other, like when they’re mom gives them advice. “No I don’t want your advice”. That thing is happening among teenagers. They don’t listen to each other” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

A popular Botswana pastor agrees and questions the effectiveness of the youth identifying with oral storytelling through radio dramas. He says,

“Storytelling traditionally seems to be something that in the life where we were growing up in villages and that kind of community where people would gather around and maybe as family around fires and you have this oral tradition where stories were told…It was often had illustration on life, how living with a family, living in a community about what is good and what is right, but with me a lot of it was simply for enjoyment. It was fun and comedic. It was for entertainment. I think maybe positively, in our oral traditions and storytelling, we have lost why we had that tradition” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).
These discussions all illustrate the difficulties of both traditional and modern audiences in the identification process with *Makgabaneng*. Not only do these ideologies bring different mindsets, values and experiences to the drama, but also it is possible that a traditional audience and a modern audience could make entirely antagonistic interpretations out of the same storyline. One such example is the story of Cecilia and Oteng.

The Story of Cecilia and Oteng

One of the most interesting storylines within *Makgabaneng* is the story of Cecilia and Oteng. Oteng is a husband who is involved in extramarital affairs. Cecilia is his dutiful wife who is standing by his side and ignoring all of the warning signs of his unfaithfulness. It is very clear that Oteng is a negative character within the drama and Cecilia is a positive character. However, based on the differences between traditional and more modern women within the culture, it is difficult to illustrate the many alternative readings audiences may have regarding Cecilia’s actions.

Some may view her as fulfilling the roles of being a wife and may view her faithfulness and devotion to her husband as a positive way to act. One fan explains why Cecilia is her favorite character.

“She’s a woman of integrity she respects her husband even though her husband is always going out and doing bad things…The guy cheats on her with all these girls. I think he’s trying to be faithful though…She’s very inspiring and when you listen to her most of the time. Most of the people in our country, in Botswana, if
that kind of situation, she just leaves her husband, just goes and leaves” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

This fan showed relief and admiration regarding Cecilia’s decision to stay in her marriage regardless of her husband’s infidelity. Many participants shared in this relief. Another fan also admires Cecilia for not confronting her husband’s cheating saying,

“I like the way Cecilia and Oteng relate, the relationship the marriage it something I admire. I do admire Cecilia…I think Oteng is just confused with life. It’s not the real Oteng, that old Oteng that was the real one. I think he can change. She’s inspiring because you try, even though Oteng is doing all these awful things to you, you trust him. You trust and you try. What he has done I think, even if he tried those other women, you try not to take action you relax and think things will get better. Just forgive, stay married and communicate” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Not only did many fans of Cecilia believe that her actions are admirable and demonstrative of how women should act, but they also believe that this is the main theme that Makgabaneng is trying to extend to its audience.

“The biggest theme is marriage; you have to stick to your partner. This is exemplified by Cecilia. She has kept true and she has accepted all the negative stuff that he’s done…Yes, Cecilia is a good person. That is portrayed by the way she has put up with her husband and stayed by his side even though he did a lot of bad stuff and he never told her… She stood by her husband and managed to stay
for a bit of time even though at that time he was unfaithful” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

However, this relief in Cecilia’s faithfulness was not shared by everyone. The 20-24-year-old focus group was asked about these attitudes and what it means to be a woman in Botswana society. They answered,

“Be there for your man no matter what. The elderly people will tell you that as a woman what you should do when your man goes out there and cheat, even if he happens to have a kid outside of marriage. Be there, help your kids, be there, and guard the home. That’s the Setswana way. Otherwise, people attack you as a woman. If you walk out of the house, as woman, we are being judged by divorce more than men. As men, you always point at us and say she’s a divorsee. But a man can just divorce you today and then tomorrow marry again. As a man they’ll say he wasn’t living right. He had to divorce” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This illustrates societal gender inequities, as though it is the wife’s fault for her husband having to find a small house because she is fulfilling her role correctly. Another respondent agreed with the stigma of being a divorced woman in Botswana society saying,

“Women choose to suffer in silence. It’s not that she doesn’t know that the husband is cheating. She is just waiting to get HIV before she believes that the husband is cheating. She’s worried about what is this going to do to my status in the community” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).
More modern women may view her denial as a risky decision and see her devotion as a negative role model for women. However, this does not mean that they do not love the storyline. One fan said,

“I love the story of Oteng and that one makes me listen to Makgabaneng… If I was Cecilia, I would not take my belongings and leave the relationship” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

The more modern audience had trouble identifying with Cecilia and talked of how her loyalty and devotion to her cheating husband puts her at risk for HIV/AIDS.

“It’s not good for Cecilia to continue to support Oteng because at the end of the day someone is going to contract HIV” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Not only does the more modern audience not agree with Cecilia’s behavior, but they also have a difficult time identifying with the character’s actions.

“The Cecilia part, her particular situation, how she deals with the situation she’s mostly in denial about what is really happening, like finding out her husband is cheating and that. I don’t really believe it could go on for that long and somebody would just not do anything about it. I think they would act more aggressively than how she reacted. It’s just that she’s always acting the victim. So I think she can stand by her husband, but by standing by her husband she’s kind of being the victim. I just think she needs to stand up for herself and realize “I deserve better than this”. I think some of the characters in Makgabaneng are more inspiring than her” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).
This demonstrates a clear generational difference in the role of women in society, as well as the stigma surrounding divorce. Perhaps the group who proved most vocal about Cecilia’s actions was the youngest teen focus group discussion. One participant said,

“I think she’s soft. She doesn’t want to tell his parents about his unfaithfulness. She’s stupid. I think she deserves better than him and at the end of the day, it’s going to affect him instead” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Another participant agreed saying,

“It’s not as though she’s happy with what he is doing. She should divorce him and move on with their lives”.

This is an interesting statement, as it recognizes that women in society should have a choice regarding their partner and how they are treated in a marriage. Participants in this focus group even talked about how ideologies in Botswana are beginning to change through the modernization process.

“I think those people are thinking about the past. Because now, modernization is taking place. It’s no longer 1980. I think if he’s abusing her, even if its just emotional, she has to go somewhere else” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

The story of Oteng and Cecilia demonstrates how difficult it can prove for an entertainment-education soap drama to create a storyline that will be interpreted the same way across audiences. Traditional and Modern audience bring different ideologies, values and experiences to the drama. Therefore, their dominant reading of the media text proves
completely antagonistic to one another. Cecilia is seen as the best female role model for the more traditional audience and is seem as the worst female role model for the more modern audience. At first, it was unclear how producers intended audiences to relate to the Cecilia storyline. Over time, beyond the ten episodes used in this study, Cecilia did contract HIV from her husband. Whether audiences identified or disdained her role in the story, an important lesson was taught regarding the importance of protecting yourself even if you are being faithful. Now that we understand how age influences how fans of Makgabaneng identify with the drama, it is time to turn our attention towards gender.

Gender and Makgabaneng

Previous sections have already revealed some important gender differences between participants, but additional noteworthy discrepancies arose during in-depth discussions. It is important understand how men and women are identifying differently within the story because each group holds their own challenges in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Based on this knowledge, this section aims to answer the following research question: RQ3b What roles do gender differences play in the audience reception process? This is a very important question, as earlier results suggest that Makgabaneng may not attract all audiences equally.

Through interview discussions it became clear that female fans of Makgabaneng identify with characters that they believe are fulfilling societal roles and expectations. This section aims to understand how female audiences identify with female characters in the story, and what these identifications are teaching them about how a woman should act
in society. This proves especially important, as Makgabaneng has strived to create characters and storylines to empower women in society. A professor for the University of Botswana talks about the difficulties for women in Botswana.

“Men have all the powers indirectly. Its not announced legally, but you look at the issues and the men have all the power. Our government has been trying, but everywhere you go, I’m sure you went to the church and everything was done mostly by men” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This section aims to understand if the stories of Makgabaneng are able to help combat these patriarchal narratives.

One of the biggest themes of these discussions is that is admirable for a woman to focus on education, rather than relationships. While previous statements suggested that relationship centered storylines proved most entertaining, they did not include the most positive female role models. In reference to the story of Gorata, one fan said,

“She’s in a relationship now. She doesn’t always have time to concentrate on her relationship because she also has to concentrate on her education, and that is why I like it. It makes the story more realistic. I would like to be like them, but I’d like to be like the young girl who is giving her studies big time and listening to her parents” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Also talking of Gorata, another fan said,

“I think I myself identify with it… There is this young girl who is finishing school getting ready to go to tertiary school, and I think I identify myself with that person because she is so excited. Now I am going to focus, and I am going to teach. I
think she found personal identity, to most she was a young girl who knew what she wanted, though she knew what she wanted, she began accepting other things, like love and all those things. You know how love changes things and brings you dignity and integrity down. I just like the character” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

One fan explained in great detail the story of a female character whose boyfriend proposed marriage. She really admired the way the female character turned him down. This shows a clear contrast to the admiration many traditional audiences felt towards Cecilia for being so faithful to her cheating husband. It represents a sign of progression regarding the independence of women in society.

“He told her to drink it and she drank it, and then she found the ring. He asked her to marry him and she said she told him no. She was not prepared. I liked the response” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

The youngest teen focus group talked of previous Makgabaneng characters that did not focus on education, and ended up regretting their decision.

“Prioritize your life and education is the most important thing. And when you’re in a relationship you get to choose what goes on because she didn’t know, but now she regrets all the opportunities she had” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It is clear through these discussions that male characters stand in the way of a woman’s success. This is consistent with the previous notion that male characters in the story are portrayed as consistently antagonists who engage in negative behavior. While
education should be promoted in storylines, it is important that *Makgabaneng* shows how this focus is important for all genders, not just women.

Another theme that emerged during these discussions was the importance of being able to support yourself, so that you do not engage in transactional and intergenerational relationships. One fan said,

“There was this girl who was dating this old man. Then the uncle came in and the uncle came in and demanded the guy to buy him a bottle of whiskey or something…The uncle asked that person, “Tell this guy to buy me a bottle of whiskey”. Then the guy gave the older guy the young chick money so that she can buy the alcohol. I heard that he promised to buy her a cell phone”. When asked if this story accurately depicts what goes on in households, she replied, “It’s real. It’s happening…I can say that our parents sometimes they contradict the problems of HIV and AIDS. It’s like they’re supporting. If my mother finds that I’m dating an old married man, she should tell me don’t do that, but not ask me to ask that old man for money so that we can support ourselves” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

Females in these discussions talked of how tradition and government were to blame for many of the gender inequalities. During the 20-24-year-old focus group discussion, one participant told her story of how she made choices in life;

“We sell ourselves so we can feed these kids we got from having unprotected sex. The minute you drop out, unless a social worker comes and says you can get free food every month, nobody works to empower me. Nobody says, “My child do
you want to go back to school?” Even if I do want to go back to school, I’m always going to be compared to the smart ones… This is why we have the problem of me, a 19 year old that has four kids. You ask me where did I get four kids? I’m telling you I need to survive. That’s why I sell myself to a taxi driver” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This narrative is not uncommon, as survey results demonstrate that 63.6% of respondents strongly agree or agree that there is pressure on girls to go out with older men to receive gifts from them, and 59.8% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they know girls who seek relationships with older men to receive gifts.

Women felt as though the female characters in the show knew what was best for them, and if they acted out, it was because of pressures from men or those in power. A counseling professor from the University of Botswana talked about the change in Botswana society for women, and how even though they are becoming more educated and independent, traditional mindsets are standing in their way.

“The woman is even given pastoral responsibilities, but the role of being a mother, a wife, an aunt a grandmother they are still expected to play all those roles and also the day to day roles such as cooking, taking care of the children, guiding the children those roles are still expected to be done by women in society” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Women interviewed very much felt as though female characters in Makgabaneng were smarter and made better decisions than male characters. However, it was unclear
whether they also believed this was true in real-life. One fan describes her favorite character, Mma Meshack.

“When she acts, you feel like listening. For example, in life you should advise your husband of what to do and what not to do…I like the way Mma Meshack does things, especially when it comes to her husband. Sometimes her husband forgets about his ARVs and goes for more traditional doctors” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Many also admired her actions in the focus group discussions. One said, “She encourages the husband to take the ARV and take care of himself because he is HIV positive”.

Another participant talked of Mma Meshack and said, “She’s quite aggressive. She protects what she believes in” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010) and, “They encourage a woman to stand up for herself” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Though consistently across age groups, female characters were most likely to be cited as the most knowledgeable and better decision makers. However, there was a clear distinction between these sentiments regarding older respondents and younger respondents. Younger generations seemed to feel as though these strong female characters held control over their lives and decisions. They grew frustrated with characters like Cecilia who were educated but still not taking control of their own sexual health. Older generations also believed that the female characters proved more knowledgeable than the male characters, but tended to still believe that they must yield to
the wishes and desires of the men. This suggests that the younger Botswana generation is growing up feeling more empowered than previous generations.

Female participants of the oldest focus group were asked how a strong female character in *Makgabaneng* would act. One answered that she would,

“Encourage women to use a condom, even with husbands who have developed the infection...teach basic prevention skills” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

This demonstrates how even though women in society have the knowledge of how they can protect themselves; it becomes difficult when men hold the power. Therefore, broader societal equality issues must be addressed in the storyline, not just individual education lessons. A University of Botswana professor explains,

“We women are becoming more proactive they are able to relay into practices what they are learning. They are able to say no and accept no other answer and of course they are learning to have a positive self-image about themselves, and it is the most crucial thing. They also need to know that a woman can be a leader and can achieve their dreams” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Based on these discussions, it appears as though *Makgabaneng* has been successful at pushing forth narratives where female characters are educated, independent and empowered. Through these storylines, men and government powers have been identified as antagonistic to these narratives. The hope is that over time, these empowerment messages will lessen gender inequalities in Botswana. Now that more is
understood regarding how female characters in the show are constructed, it is time to turn attention towards male characters.

Lack of Male Role Models

While Makgabaneng has been successful at pushing forth narratives where female characters are educated, independent and empowered, men have been constructed as uneducated, irresponsible and dependent in society. A counseling professor at the University of Botswana explains how an excess of female empowerment campaigns in Botswana have led to little support for men in society, when they may actually be in more need of such programs.

“Males have a harder time because females are more open. Males in this society are expected to be a man. They are not expected to cry. They are expected to be strong and always show they are leaders, so it’s difficult for them to talk, but for young girls they’re more social” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Men in Makgabaneng are presented as cheaters, thieves, alcohol abusers and drug users. Female characters are constantly coming to their rescue and forgiving them for their actions. Male fans of the show retell the story of some of their favorite characters.

“There is a problem with family, a man and his wife. And at the same time, this man goes cheating around with his wife. There is another family where a male is at a tertiary school and he’s married and unfortunately this man also is a womanizer as well” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Another fan describes his favorite storyline by saying,
“There was a man who was beaten by the boyfriend of his girl. He has impregnated another lady, but the wife is at home, She [the girlfriend] is out of the house and is hiding. I think someone; somehow, somebody is sick and is trying to tell his friend that it’s not bad. You find that most of them are engaged in two or three affairs. In most cases, they’re impregnating those other ladies and are not using condoms, and that is the only way they are spreading HIV. What they’re saying is what is happening. I like it. When the wife goes out of the house I wonder what he is going to say” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

This is not only a problematic depiction of men in Botswana society, but it is also troubling the way some respondents agree with the negative representations. The biggest fear of these consistent negative storylines is that it desensitizes the audience towards negative male behavior and normalizes it for audiences. They may watch the storyline and think “everyone else is doing it; I might as well too”. One male fan said,

“The representations are fair, how we cheat on the wife. It’s fair” Another participant agreed that the representation of Boramane’s drug abuse was accurate because, “Boys don’t smoke cigarettes, they smoke weed, and alcohol abuse. Boys have a challenge; they have this competition [about] who can have more girlfriends. It’s like the person who has sex with their girlfriend wins and gets famous” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

If audiences feel as though this representation of men consistently engaging in bad behavior is accurate, then they may begin to construct this negative behavior as the
way men do and should behave in society. Moreover, this representation clearly does not represent the variety of roles men play and how audiences perceive them.

While negative female characters such as Opelo seem to progress over time, the same does not seem to be true for the males. An additional popular male storyline was, “There was a time when he had a car accident with a family car. He took it on his own, not allowed to do so, he had an accident and the sister who was with got her neck broken and after some time, my feeling was the character would develop and learn from his mistakes, but it seems as though he’s going down and down and down. Right now he’s a drug dealer he’s doing all the bad things you can think of” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

In fact, the most transitional male character seems to be Oteng, who was once a caring, loving husband, and is now engaged in extramarital affairs. His story was repeated often among participants when asked which male represented the biggest issues facing men in Botswana society.

Through interview discussions it became clear that male audiences of Makgabaneng were in search of a positive male role model. One young male respondent identified the female character of Gorata as the character most like himself. He said, “Though she’s a girl, I identify with her because she’s going to tertiary school and is preparing…I just like the character” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

What alternative characters would fans of Makgabaneng be interested in seeing? Another fan said he’d like to see a male character that is,
“The responsible guys, who make positive impact and try to drive positive messages in the society. I try to do that. I try to lead an exemplary life myself. I would say that’s what I relate to most of the time” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Including a positive male role model in the story could make a difference to its audience. Through interview discussions, one participant talked of a character that used to play on *Makgabaneng*, but since has been written out.

“There’s a guy who was going to university, but I remember listening to him back in the days when I was in high school. I remember listening to him and thinking, “This is the guy who’s life I want to emulate. He studies well; he works hard; he does well at school; he’s very good at home; he’s in a very stable relationship with his girlfriend in which he doesn’t cheat” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Unfortunately, that character is no longer portrayed in the *Makgabaneng* story. Many participants recognize the difference between the way female and male characters are portrayed in the program.

“I think at times the defamation of the male character, while yes I will not discard the fact that we have been elements within us, but at times I think it’s too much at the expense of men. The women are presented as perfect, they are smart people…Women have problems as well. Women can do some things that are outward as well…I think that is why I identify with the female character” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).
Another fan talked of how more positive representations of men may actually increase male ratings. Retaining a strong male audience is something that Makgabaneng has struggled with since its 2001 inception.

“There should be a proper representation of each sex. Women identify with the program and love it. If you don’t identify with the program there is no way you will love it. So if you put some element of men with, of course not all men within the program should be good or all the females be good, but if they could put key people that can perfectly represent men, that way I think men can come and say “I love this program because I identify myself with this person”. It will properly represent us”.

Summary of Results

Based on these results, it appears as though Makgabaneng has been successful at empowering females in pushing forth narratives where female characters are portrayed as educated, independent and confident individuals. It is important to note how unique these depictions of strong women are to the Botswana-produced media culture. Norna, Rama & Ndlov (2009) examined gendered representations across media houses and found that there are significantly more men than women overall, and that gendered representations mirrored Botswana’s patriarchal society. It is unusual that in Makgabaneng, men and government powers have been identified as antagonistic to narratives. This has been accomplished by constructing males as uneducated, irresponsible and dependent in society. This is a troubling depiction, as very little support or counseling programs exist.
in Botswana when compared to campaigns designed for female empowerment. Perhaps *Makgabaneng* could address this inequity by creating a more balanced number of positive and negative female and male characters.
“My experience with Makgabaneng has been so great, and it has taught me so much. It’s given me a sense of responsibility. Imagine someone out there experiencing such issues. Imagine someone out there suffering. Why aren’t we helping them?” (Makgabaneng Facebook Fan Club Creator).

People use media to process how they are and how they fit into the world (McKee, 2003). Media aids in the process of audiences socially constructing the environment in which they live. These themes, patterns and narratives within a text are cultural artifacts that shed light on power structures and ideologies within the culture it is produced (Curtin, 1995). This study aims to understand how fans of Makgabaneng are making sense of their own lives by answering the final research question, RQ4: How do audiences of Makgabaneng construct their own lived reality through the radio drama?

Through the survey questionnaire, it became clear that Makgabaneng is indeed influencing its audience. 67.9% of respondents very strongly or strongly believe that Makgabaneng has taught them something they did not already know about HIV/AIDS. 76.8% of respondents very strongly or strongly believe that they have learned about HIV prevention through Makgabaneng. When asked where most of their HIV/AIDS knowledge comes from, 79.4% of respondents said ‘Media’, with the next two closest answers being 6% ‘Teacher’ and 5.5% ‘Friends’. While it is important to know that people believe they are learning from the drama, it is more important to understand how
they are learning. Fans’ self-reported source of HIV knowledge is illustrated in Figure 10 below.

![Figure 10. Source of HIV Knowledge.](image)

Fan Reception of *Makgabaneng*

While the identification and social construction process is a complicated one, some times, through discussions, we are given a glimpse into how this process works for certain individuals. Though it proved rare, some fans of *Makgabaneng* were able to verbalize how they relate to what is going on to the drama, and then how they use those narratives to construct their own lives. For example, one female fan describes a storyline by saying,

“He goes out and he sees other partners out there. He comes to the girlfriend and one day he tells her they’re infected. He beats the girl and then he claims she is
the one who infected him…My boyfriend can do the same to me, just as he did to the girlfriend” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Here, an audience member related to a particular character in the story, identified with the situation that character was involved in, and then learned from the events that happened in that character’s life. This is not to say that she should end her own relationship because of the Makgabaneng story, but she may recognize warning signs of abuse through her experience with the drama.

Another fan describes the story of Makgabaneng as,

“It’s about life. You have men with multiple partners. Oteng was a favorite character, and he was caught. He acts like me” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Clearly, audiences are able to picture their own lives in the drama in they hear on the radio. If audiences are able to identify with characters enough so that they are able to recognize the similarities between their life paths, then they may get a chance to see what would happen if certain decisions were made without actually experiencing those consequences themselves. This particular fan may have seen Oteng as a fun, relatable guy who was just like him. They both enjoyed friends, sports and women. Because he was able to relate to the fun times Oteng was having, he also was able to recognize how those fun times resulted in serious negative consequences for Oteng’s health and family.

It is important to note that identification and character enjoyment is not the same thing. It is possible that a favorite character is not the same character that reminds an individual of themselves. This could be the reason why so many participants talked of the
negative character Boramane when I asked about identification. Another respondent stated,

“I like Boramane because the way he acts gives a lot of people a sense of what they should do and not do in the future. A person should not be promiscuous. They should not have a lot of lovers; they should use a condom and should not be engaged in relationships with much older men” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

It is possible to enjoy negative storylines the most and still walk away with the intended MARCH strategy message. Another participant also learned from this storyline, citing

“What I have learned is that people should use a condom and be faithful to just one partner and not be promiscuous. It teaches you to use a condom because one of the two people in the relationship could be infected and the other could not be” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

A fan described Makgabaneng as a story that it, “teaches young people about HIV and AIDS and how you can protect yourself. I have a friend who has HIV and it teaches me, and I teach him. I’ve learned that when you have HIV you should go to the clinic to get medicine and eat fruits. I can tell my friend that and he should listen to Makgabaneng” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

It is interesting to hear about the reception process of some of the biggest fans of Makgabaneng. Though fans that did not listen to the program on a regular basis found it
difficult to cite specific instances where the program helped them through real-life issues, more regular fans were quick to share stories. One of these fans said,

“I try to understand and put the situation in my own life. If it was my child, how would I have felt? What would I have done?” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

This pattern emerged in other respondents’ interviews as well.

“When I’m listening to Makgabaneng. I just put myself in that situation. Some of the things I’d do, so I know it’s real. It’s not just a drama. It’s real” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

By switching the roles of the characters with themselves and others in their lives, the story of Makgabaneng becomes incredibly important to fans of the show. While it may not be too engaging to listen to a story about Oteng and Cecilia, the story becomes much more powerful when the story becomes about you and your own husband.

These narratives become a factor in individuals’ everyday decision-making process. Audiences are able to learn how they can avoid some of the negative fates of the characters on the show. For example, one fan said that Makgabaneng,

“helped me to choose the right friends, whose behavior is most similar to mine so we don’t clash” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

It is important not to overstate the influence Makgabaneng has over its audience’s real life behavior. Even its biggest fans will not identify with a certain character and then act exactly in accordance with how that character is acting. Based on these conversations though, it appears as though fans of the show are imagining themselves in the role of the
character during the reception process. This allows for them to have multiple narratives of certain behaviors, without actually having to live through those experiences themselves.

Providing a Narrative for Discussion

Not only are the Makgabaneng narratives providing themselves as examples of life choices, but fans of the show are using the narratives as talking points with others in their lives. The creator of the Facebook Makgabaneng fan club said the site is used mainly for discussion purposes.

“We talk about the actors. We talk about the funny episodes…People will explain the things that are funny, the things that they like”.

During the 20-24-year-old focus group discussion, one participant talked about how Makgabaneng is making household conversations about sex and HIV/AIDS a little easier. It is becoming more and more common for families to talk together about sexual issues. It would be difficult for parents to know what pressures their children are facing at school without an outlet like Makgabaneng looking in and retelling the stories.

“It also educates our parents about what we go through as teenagers, because there was this one time when I was listening to it and this girl was being harassed by an older man. Our parents don’t know the challenges that we face, so at the same time it informs them. From the information that they get from the show, then they have a better approach to come to us with. They know what to relate to when they come to us and ask us”.

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The hope is that parents are able to use *Makgabaneng* to see what is going on in schools and the lives of their children. As the country transitions from a more traditional society to a more modern one, parents and children often do not have the same life experiences. One fan said,

“I think parents could use *Makgabaneng*. Especially in Botswana, parents aren’t able to talk to their children openly. So somehow they can use *Makgabaneng* to start communication. For example, if something happened in *Makgabaneng*, like Godfrey and Gorata, they start there. Saying, “see Gorata and Godfrey practice this and this and this”. They are not comfortable just starting the communication and talking about life” (Personal Communication, May 27, 2010).

An educator recalled how he used the stories of *Makgabaneng* in class.

“ Mostly I use it when I teach it. When I’m a guest teacher at a junior school, and also I remember when I was teaching a long time teaching at a school, I mostly referred every issue I discussed to issues on *Makgabaneng*.”

A counselor at the University of Botswana agreed with this progress saying,

“Sometimes, because of being a counselor as a part of my profession, I deal with people every day, so I have to understand how people react. I have to understand how people behave. So each and every issue that is being discussed on *Makgabaneng*, it affects me. Each and every issue discussed on *Makgabaneng*, it effects somebody out there so I have to know every issue on *Makgabaneng*”.

Often times, friends and peers prove the biggest pressures for negative behaviors. These behaviors may seem enticing and the norm in school. However, *Makgabaneng* is
able to intervene and provide an encouraging alternative narrative for individuals to become positive influences instead. One focus group participant said,

“I’ve seen my cousins, my neighbors engaging in several issues being discussed on Makgabaneng, such as drugs, such as pregnancy, such as fights, such as arguments. Some of them, you’ll find out people are there encouraging others. In Makgabaneng somebody is encouraging a teenager or an adult about a certain issue. That issue itself is supposed to happen in society. Somebody is encouraging it in society”. Another fan said, “I think the story for my age, can help us to give advice to younger groups” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

One woman spoke of the storyline that she and her children most relate with.

“A man was married and started cheating on his wife. This led to divorce at which point the family suffers, and the kids are the ones who do the suffering. I relate to this story in a different way. It applies to me and my kids, and it teaches us. My kids will learn from it and in the future they will know what to do…”

When asked if she and her children ever talk about the issues going on in the drama, she answered, “Almost every day”. This is certainly not the norm in society, but it is becoming much more common than it would have been ten years ago.

Not only is Makgabaneng providing a starting point for discussion between parents and friends, but also it is giving individuals involved in relationships a script to use during high-pressure situations.

“Some of the partners, they will want some kind of physical sexual intercourse, but some of them, especially the ladies, will say “No! No! You’ve got to use a
condom.” Because a condom is helpful, especially for those who are unmarried.

So [Makgabaneng] can help someone say, “Every time, we have to use a condom” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

This is incredibly important, as Chillag, Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, et al. (2006) research demonstrates how citizens in Botswana rarely talk about sex. Their study determined that the topic of sex sparked sentiment of shame, and is almost never talked about in public in Botswana culture. Media may be an influencing factor to their candour, rather than just individual characteristics such as age, gender and personality, as previously thought. Perhaps these storylines will help individuals feel more comfortable talking about issues of sex, including control over their body.

Based on these results, it is clear that Makgabaneng is providing narratives that fans are using as talking points with others in their life. These talking points are between parents and children, friends to friends, teacher to students, and girlfriend to boyfriend. Entertainment-education is designed to “show individuals how they can live safer, healthier and happier lives” (Pant, Singhal & Bhasin, 2002, p. 53). What is of most interest is how individuals applying these narratives to their own life scripts.

Personal Life Narratives

Throughout these interviews, it was clear that fans of Makgabaneng use the drama to make decisions about their own life. One of the most consistent lessons that Makgabaneng has taught its audience is that people are not static beings. They are dynamic in nature, and are able to change and evolve over time.
One fan explained her experience by saying,

“Opelo, she’s one character who has lived different lives at different points in the story. She has been this girl who was very irresponsible, promiscuous, likes men, been in lots of relationships with lots of men, and then she changed. Some stuff happened which makes her change her life and now she’s at this point where she’s trying to get her life back on track and trying to put her life back together again. She’s actually in counseling right now. Then you come to realize that people can change. Give them time and they’ll actually change and will live this life that we think is the right one. So that is the theme right there—change can actually happen” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

Through the use of the MARCH strategy, negative characters are able to change their behavior and turn into positive role models. This is an all-inclusive message, as it warns even individuals living most responsibly that every decision counts. It targets healthy members of society as well as those who are currently living with HIV/AIDS. This is a positive, empowering and hopeful message for citizens. Perhaps this uniform hope is one of the biggest weapons that Botswana holds in their fight against HIV/AIDS.

The second most consistent theme that fans of the show were applying to their own lives was the importance of surrounding yourself with good people. One respondent told the story of Makgabaneng.

“Oteng is married and is dating person. It also happens to me, although I’m not married… Ditiro and Sparks they did things together. Sparks taught him things that were not right. He’s willing to do things that are not good for society. And at
the end of the day he decided to go his own way and do his own things. Even though he did negative things, at the end of the day, step-by-step he’s getting better. As a person in life you have to learn how to choose friends in order to live a good friend. For myself, I have learned how to choose friends who are similar to me” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

Another fan agreed saying Makgabaneng,

“helped me to choose the right friends, whose behavior is most similar to mine so we don’t clash (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

*Makgabaneng* is able to show patterns of behavior, and how simply by hanging around with negative friends, an individual may feel increase pressure or be more likely to engage in negative behavior. This was a very prevalent theme among in-depth interviews. Participants strongly believed that *Makgabaneng* pushed the message of carefully choosing friends who behave positively. During the youngest teen focus group discussion, one participant said of the Gorata storyline,

“All these girls, they get in relationships outside of school, with taxi drivers. Some girls after school you see them with the taxi drivers. They come and then they pick up the little girl and then maybe they do shopping, buy the girl some phones and this affects those who are in poverty because they want to improve their lifestyle. You have to be very wise when you’re a teenager. You have to choose your friends”.

Friends are not always the best role models in the story of *Makgabaneng*, and this has not been lost on listeners.
“It advises me because when you look at the way Sparks taught friends, if they engage in farming, if they engage in drugs, they will gain money. At the end of the day it is bad because drugs are not allowed in the country. These things are real. The story advised me about what could happen out there. Friends will tell you things that are not good at all” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Male fans of *Makgabaneng* seemed most intrigued by the drug storylines in the drama. This seemed to be true whether an individual had personal life experience with drugs or not. One fan said,

“There was a time when a character was planting weed in a field, and it helped me because I was contemplating planting some for sales and I listened to the story, and I realized if I did it would get in trouble over and over again. A lot of people are using drugs and its not so good” (Personal Communication, May 28, 2010).

Another fan said,

“I often use [the stories in *Makgabaneng*] because when you look at things that happen in there, it can also happen in real life so I often use the storylines. I used to smoke, then I look at *Makgabaneng* and some of the stories are about drugs and it affected my life” (Personal Communication, May 17, 2010).

This shows the potential influence of storylines about real-life issues that are not necessarily about HIV/AIDS. Fans are very attracted to other pressures that they are facing in their personal lives. However, that is not to say that the story of *Makgabaneng* is not teaching its fans to think differently about what it means to be infected with the HIV virus.
“There was the time when after I heard the advice Cecilia gave, I gave the advice to one of my friends. She was raped so what I told her is that it’s not the end of the world, especially because she was still negative. [Makgabaneng] encourage people that whenever they are HIV positive or they have AIDS, what they have to know is that they have to continue living their life. They don’t have to be disappointed because they’re HIV positive. They actually can do everything they want to do” (Personal Communication, May 25, 2010).

*Makgabaneng* is able to tell stories about how to live positively if you are infected with HIV, and also how important stigma reduction is to those who are not. The program is also pushing forward the story of hard work and perseverance resulting in a successful life.

“The story of Opelo, I’d say that I learned that in life you have to work hard for what you want and that you should be independent because one thing she’s always been dependant on men doing things and she wound up with these STDs. So, I thought for me, you don’t need people to pave way for you in life. Sometimes you just have to work hard to get things” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

These empowering views are new attitudes for the culture of Botswana, especially when targeted towards their youth. Research has found that education in Botswana discourages the development of independent thought, group activity or criticisms of authority. Botswana culture encourages children and students to keep quiet and never query any point of view or opinion of authorities. This consistently leads to a culture of
silence, inactivity and lack of participation in social activities (Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008). Hopefully, through *Makgabaneng* storylines, individuals will feel more empowered to make and control their own decisions.

Abstaining from high-risk behaviors is incredibly difficult for Botswana teens. The youngest teen focus group talked of the pressures that they face every day. One teenage girl said,

“I think men are so eager sexually. Last time, this girl had sex with a boy. Everyone was telling me she’s pregnant. He said congratulations. He knew he had sex with the girl but then denied it. She was in a dilemma and she didn’t know what to do. I learned you should really use protection when you have sex. Especially if you’re a teenager, or before marriage, or at least wait until you finish your education. But come on guys, there’s too much pressure outside. Even I myself I think I’m not going to have sex, and then on Saturday I find myself in bed with a guy. I don’t know what happened but the pressure got to me. There’s too much pressure out there”.

Storylines centered around sexual pressures are extremely important, as this is a dialogue individuals may not be receiving at home. Another teenager said,

“Being a teenager is a very hard task to be young because you have sexual desires you want to satisfy those sexual desires and experimenting.”

This age group seemed to really enjoyed the story of Gorata and Godfrey because,
“She was focused a lot. It is what happens in real life. Next year we’ll be finished our senior year and getting tertiary education. It taught us a lot about how we should be careful”.

Another fan said of the story,

“There’s this girl, her name is Gorata. Gorata is a girl who is just the same age that I am. She has a boyfriend… and Gorata is trying her best to abstain. I learn from her. The things that happen in the drama affect us daily. Drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, accepting gifts from older men and all that stuff… I’m trying to live like Gorato” (Personal Communication, May 26, 2010).

Acknowledging that it is not easy for the female teen character Gorata to abstain and control herself around Godfrey is an important element of the story. Research has demonstrated that Botswana culture closely mirrors Wingwood and DeClemente (2000) Structure of Cathexis model. In this model, women’s sexuality is attached to impurity and immorality. Women are taught to silence their sexuality, and should have sex only for procreation. In this model, women are monogamous non-sexual beings and should not touch their own bodies (Kgafela, 2007). Through the Gorata storyline, audiences may begin to normalize these feelings and behaviors.

Summary of Results

Overall, results of this study demonstrate that Makgabaneng is likely to be interpreted as a drama that is primarily about HIV/AIDS. Messages within the story deal more with fidelity and multiple concurrent partnerships, and the other PEPFAR themes
proved not so prominent within the storyline. Through these storylines, audience were likely to gain a better understanding of the importance of lifestyle choices, stigma reduction and living positively, rather than more concrete educational tools. Characters were defined by sexual choices, age and gender. This demonstrates Botswana’s societal differences in traditional and modern views, the importance of youth in Botswana’s transition and the dynamic nature of human development, as people are able to change even after a lifestyle filled with risky behaviors.

_Makgabaneng_ presents an interesting and engaging story through a well-produced product. Botswana’s culture has been embedded within these storylines and themes and messages change periodically to reflect specific challenges they are facing at any given time. Though any edutainment is far from perfect, this holistic analysis demonstrates the importance of _Makgabaneng_ as a resource in the country’s fight against HIV/AIDS. In addition to many other public health interventions in Botswana, citizens have easy access to entertaining information and education regarding HIV/AIDS matters.

Behavior change is key to the success of an entertainment-education drama. In order to reach that potential, holistic audience reception studies must continue throughout the duration of the program. A popular pastor from Botswana said, “_Makgabaneng_ is very entertaining, and a lot of people are listening to it for entertainment. It’s getting to people. But we need to get the message to settle down. We see a lot of negative things that are happening. We need to make sure people are taking things away, not just have memories of negative behavior.
Maybe if the producer had an opportunity to make sure things aren’t just lost to us because this program is entertaining.”

Though *Makgabaneng* has done a lot of things exceptionally well, most notably its ability to gain a popular fan base and sustain listeners all across Botswana, the recommendation for more participatory monitoring and evaluation efforts cannot be overstated. It is apparent that *Makgabaneng* is making an important contribution to Botswana’s fight against HIV/AIDS, but it falls short of fully capturing the audience’s multiple readings and reflections of their lived experiences and realities. This shortcoming has tremendous implications for monitoring and evaluation purposes, as it prevents producers from enhancing the potential of the audience’s engagement with the drama, and eventually leading towards more long-lasting social and cultural change needed for a more effective response to the epidemic, gender inequalities and other relevant issues.

Unfortunately, it is my belief that this recommendation is already apparent to the producers and employees of the drama, but their hands are tied in regards to their source of funding and the objectives set forth by these donors in order to stay viable. If funders of the program, including PEPFAR, would better support these types of audience reception analyses, then the participatory results could begin to fully guide storylines. This would require donors to relax their control over the predetermined objectives they set forth and allow for the participatory process to take over. This is what would be best for fans, the country and the behavior change process. Perhaps with more audience reception studies such as these, the
need for this type of monitoring, evaluation and production will become more apparent.
CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

Media holds a crucial role in the sense-making process, as its power influences the way cultures, ideologies and societies evolve. That is why media holds such potential as a resource in positive social change in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This research used a cultural studies approach to a media reception analysis. It explored ways in which fans of the popular Botswana radio drama, Makgabaneng, negotiate content in a sense-making process to influence the way in which they see the world. The purpose of this research was not to uncover an ultimate ‘Truth’ regarding the effectiveness of the radio drama, as the research questions did not point towards consummate answers. Instead, results were analyzed based on the assumption that multiple realities exist in a complex sense-making process.

Makgabaneng is just one example of a drama designed as a public health intervention to help facilitate social change through an entertainment-education strategy. The CDC and Global AIDS Program sought to implement projects in primary prevention, improve community and home-based care, and develop capacity and infrastructure through a model strategy aimed at changing behavior that integrates entertainment as a vehicle for education, or entertainment-education. This strategy included an interpersonal reinforcement. This program strategy is called MARCH: Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV (Galavotti, Pappas-Deluca & Lansky, 2001). As previously mentioned, MARCH infers a complex process of audience identification, modeling and individual social construction. Unfortunately, through a meta-analysis, academic research
demonstrates how often scholars situated in the dominant Development Communication Paradigm have ignored the complexities of this sense-making process.

Entertainment-education as a strategy for public health intervention went through an epistemological shift in the 1980s, shedding light on the promise of edutainment and its contribution to public health interventions (Tufte, 2000; Fiske, 1987; and McKee, 2003). The purpose of this dissertation was to examine a public health entertainment-education intervention by exploring the role of the audience in the HIV/AIDS communication process.

Through triangulation methodology, the researcher sought to answer research questions through field visitations, participant observation, in-home visitations, in-depth personal interviews, focus group discussions and a survey with fans of the program. Specifically, this study explored four objectives: generalized consumption patterns, themes and salient messages, fan identification and social construction of reality.

Summary of Results

First, this study examined generalized consumption patterns of fans of *Makgabaneng*. Results from this analysis demonstrate how fans of the program expressed sentiments of being generally satisfied with the production of the program, especially regarding its use of Botswana-specific artifacts and culture, such as language and rural village settings. Fans enjoyed the way current popular music that would be heard in nightclubs was incorporated into storylines. While respondents recognized that wide ranges of people from different backgrounds are fans of the drama, they mostly believed
that the drama is targeted towards youth, and does not include Makgabaneng’s actual target audience of individuals’ aged 10-49 years. Additionally, fans of the drama believe that the program proves more attractive for women than it does for men.

Based on this knowledge, future Makgabaneng programs may wish to include storylines that target towards age groups and male audiences. Results also demonstrate how television is becoming more popular in Botswana, and that the show may increase in popularity if it was redesigned for television broadcast. Nonfans agreed with this sentiment, as they tend to only use radio for news, sports and music purposes. All respondents noted an HIV/AIDS fatigue within the country, as Botswana media is currently bombarding public health messages through all outlets. Individuals expressed sentiments of tuning out any message that centers on HIV/AIDS. This public health educational component may prove a turnoff for listeners, as most described Makgabaneng as a program about HIV/AIDS, not just an entertainment soap drama. Had they described Makgabaneng as an entertainment program, this would be of less concern. However, it was apparent that fans of the program were aware that it was designed to both entertain and educate about HIV/AIDS issues.

This study also sought to understand what themes and salient messages audiences were most likely to interpret in Makgabaneng. Results demonstrate that stories regarding fidelity and the risks of multiple concurrent partnerships were most the most salient. The other five recommended PEPFAR themes (alcohol reduction, intergenerational sex, prevention with HIV positives and abstinence) did not occur as often in the storyline. It was very clear from interviews that fans of Makgabaneng knew it was an HIV/AIDS
initiative, and often questioned its balance between entertainment and education. There were many additional issues concerning the people of Botswana that are not included in the Makgabaneng storyline. Fans especially felt it was important for the drama to include a storyline about a female character who is unfaithful, and insert storylines that center around religion and church. These additions would make the storyline more appealing, true-to-life, and easily identifiable for listeners.

Third, this study explored how audiences of Makgabaneng identify with the radio drama. Results show that fans of the program believe that it is similar to what real-life is like in Botswana. They believe that the characters in Makgabaneng are similar to themselves and people that they know. However, the favorite and most identifiable characters often serve a negative role in the storyline. This is a troubling theme, as the MARCH Model hinges on fans identifying with positive characters and then modeling their behavior. This section also looked at how age influences the audience reception process, and found a discrepancy between traditional and modern fans. It appears as though more modern audiences hold higher levels of HIV/AIDS knowledge. Moreover, these two groups are interpreting storylines very differently from one another.

An example of this traditional and modern discrepancy is the Cecilia and Oteng storyline, where Cecilia is standing by her husband even though he is being unfaithful. More traditional audiences believe that her actions are positive, and more modern audiences believe she is being foolish. This is an interesting consideration for Makgabaneng producers, as Cecilia’s denial of her husband’s affair does put her at higher
risk for HIV/AIDS. It is important that producers stay engaged with fans and understand all of the possible alternative interpretations of a text.

Gender differences in the audience reception process were also examined. Results demonstrate how female fans of *Makgabaneng* receive a large number of empowering messages and role model characters. However, male fans of *Makgabaneng* talked of how the male characters in the drama mostly engage in negative and high-risk behavior, and are entirely dependent on the more knowledgeable females in the storyline. Many male fans of *Makgabaneng* find themselves identifying with female characters, or worse, seeing the negative male behavior as the norm in Botswana society. Based on this knowledge, *Makgabaneng* may wish to include more positive male role models into their storyline. It is not fair to isolate one gender in order to empower another.

Finally, this study examined how audiences of *Makgabaneng* construct their own lived reality through the radio drama. This was done by asking fans of *Makgabaneng* how they engage with the identification process when listening to the drama. The most enthusiastic fans of *Makgabaneng* talked about how they imagine themselves or their loved ones in the situation that the characters find themselves in. These results also demonstrate how fans of the drama are using storylines to initiate conversations about the storyline in real-life situations. This includes parents asking their children if they are experiencing what is going on in the drama, teachers using the storylines as examples in classrooms, and friends using the characters and storylines to give advice to their peers. Through these interviews, it was clear that fans of *Makgabaneng* are learning from the drama and using the story to make decisions about their own life. They are able to
experience the consequences of life choices of particular characters without actually
making those decisions themselves. This demonstrates the potential of *Makgabaneng* as
an HIV/AIDS public health development intervention to help facilitate social change.

It is unrealistic to expect any public health intervention to be perfect, especially
given their limited budget and their focus on education. However, this research does
illustrate ways in which *Makgabaneng* could improve its production and story in order to
maximize its impact. Moreover, it sheds light onto how fans of the program are
identifying and learning through the stories. However, none of this research is necessary
if the intervention is unable to sustain itself as a viable media production. Through my
time working with the organization, many insights were given regarding how
*Makgabaneng* plans to sustain itself after funding for the edutainment series ends in
2011.

Sustainability and Recommendations

Though the issue of sustainability permeates almost all decisions at
*Makgabaneng*, it was the director who expressed the most concern when speaking of the
future of the program. Currently, *Makgabaneng* is under pressure to demonstrate tangible
statistical evidence that the program is a successful behavior change tool. This is another
demonstration of how driven donors are with obtaining quantitative data from
intervention evaluations. With just enough funds to employ two monitoring and
evaluation employees, these types of reception research studies often prove difficult and
costly. The director explains how instead of relying entirely on donor funds, *Makgabaneng* has implemented a Special Projects Department.

The coordinator of the Special Projects Department creates HIV/AIDS messages for outside organizations (mostly NGO’s) across the country. Because *Makgabaneng* has the resources to create their own promotional materials, they have extended their services to other organizations that may be interested in paying for their skills. This includes designing and creating promotional posters, radio advertisements and even custom mini dramas for outside organizations. Though this department was only in initial stages of development, it was apparent that it held promise in creating revenue for the organization. It is interesting to see how closely messages created for outside organizations follow the MARCH strategy and process. Even though *Makgabaneng* was in need of the extra funds that these outside projects provide, they were cautious that they only included messages that would broadcast on the drama itself. This includes abstinence-only messages, as approved by PEPFAR.

This trend is a bit unsettling, as research points to the importance of culturally produced messages. Because *Makgabaneng* is successful at producing messages in Botswana, does not mean that those same messages will prove influential for other areas. Though it is clear that *Makgabaneng* understands this importance (due to the great deal of effort put into including cultural-specific artifacts in their own drama), it is difficult to turn down this extra business, especially given the impending funding termination.
Utilizing New Media

A second theme that emerged through sustainability discussions with employees of *Makgabaneng* was the incorporation of new media. Currently, *Makgabaneng* is primarily a radio-based program. The production room for the drama is very small with moderate resources. Sound effects, staging and equipment are all positioned in a small room within the organization’s office building. Because *Makgabaneng* began as a trial project, production for the drama has remained modest. However, the producer of the series explained how Botswana has advanced technologically and should begin to turn their attention towards producing a television drama instead. The Producer of *Makgabaneng* believes that the organization holds the talent and skill to produce high quality television series. He also believes that this is the only way to sustain listenership among impressionable youth in the country, as they have mostly grown up their entire lives with television sets and are not as interested in traditional media such as radio.

*Makgabaneng* has also begun incorporating an interactive dialogue after the drama airs on Wednesday evenings. With the increase in mobile technology throughout the country, more citizens have personal access to the technology necessary to participate in these interactive conversations. While the soap drama is traditionally most popular among female audiences, a project officer explained how males are most interested in calling in and talking during the program after the drama airs. This new audience is essential in illustrating the success and the importance of the edutainment series.

There are many examples of other public health interventions in Africa that utilize mobile communication. Cell-Life is a not-for-profit organization that provides innovative
technology for the management of HIV and other infectious diseases, and is currently working in partnership with over 50 organizations (Cell-Life, 2010). In Uganda, Text to Change (2010) utilizes an SMS-based quiz to raise awareness among phone users about HIV/AIDS that brought a 40% increase in the number of people getting tested. It appears as though new social technologies such as mobile communication hold great promise in advancing public health.

Throughout all of these discussions, it became clear that Makgabaneng plans to expand the project to reach as many audience members as possible by utilizing new technologies. Though no employee mentioned plans to create a website for the drama, one may assume that is the direction the series will take once more Botswana citizens gain internet access. Based on survey results, it is evident that television and mobile phones hold the high prevalence rate across the country at this time.

Inclusion of Health Messages Beyond Those Dealing with HIV/AIDS

The script editor of Makgabaneng explained how the program has also received feedback citing the fatigue Botswana citizens are currently facing regarding HIV/AIDS messages. Citizens are bombarded with HIV/AIDS messages on billboards, radio programs, television programs and in school education. It is no longer the silent issue that it once was. Youth are beginning to tune these messages out because they believe they are aware and educated on the issue. It is imperative that Makgabaneng stays fresh and includes other health concerns in the drama as well. The script editor cited one example of a story that included one of the characters driving recklessly and drunk. This character
went through the same transitional stages as the other HIV/AIDS storylines, but it also added a new element of alternative life struggles beyond HIV/AIDS to the script. Audience members wrote letters and called in response to the storyline. A storyline that did not include HIV/AIDS was very well received among audiences. She hoped that donors would begin allowing inclusion of alternative messages in addition to HIV/AIDS so that they could keep up the same level of enthusiasm in future scripts.

_Makgabaneng_ is nondiscriminatory in its health messaging, as the program includes characters from every socioeconomic background and health status. This exploratory analysis examined future plans of financial self-sustainment within _Makgabaneng_. It is important to note that during these interviews, no mention of the community-based reinforcement aspect of the model was given. As current edutainment literature begins assessing how to adequately bridge mass media interventions into more participatory community initiatives, similar questions of sustainability will rise.

Due to edutainment’s heavy reliance on mass media, it tends to be regarded as an diffusion-centric model. This study suggests that _Makgabaneng_ is not turning to community-based interpersonal communication as a resource in their quest for sustainability. This is a troubling finding, as current literature suggests that the reinforcement element in MARCH holds the most promise in long-term impact (Petragilia, 2007).

Limitations
This case study serves as an example of a holistic audience reception study of a public health entertainment-education intervention that explores the role of the audience in the Development Communication process. It is just one example of research that reflects the discipline’s shift towards more qualitative audience reception analyses, which branches away from the more dominant media effects paradigm (Tufte, 2000; Fiske, 1987; and McKee, 2003). Based on this understanding, it is important to recognize what it is that this type of research is able to tell us, and where it falls short.

This study primarily relied on self-defined fans of *Makgabaneng* for data analysis. Fans of the program were asked to complete the questionnaire, participate in personal interview discussions and focus groups. All participant observation and field visits were completed with self-defined fans of the program. Though some nonfans were consulted regarding their opinions of *Makgabaneng*, the sample was certainly biased towards self-defined fans of the drama. Therefore, this research does not reveal a consummate understanding of how citizens of Botswana interpret the drama. Instead, it sheds light onto how listeners of the drama identify and construct their own environment through *Makgabaneng*.

Additionally, the more quantitative portion of this triangulation study was the survey questionnaire. It is important to note that this questionnaire was only distributed to fans of the drama. Therefore, the data recorded only reflects the responses of individuals who have defined themselves as listeners of the HIV/AIDS program. Though it is not clear how similar this population would be to non-listeners of *Makgabaneng*, one could suggest that HIV/AIDS knowledge levels reflected in this study could prove higher than
the general Botswana population. Whether this is a result of the educational component of *Makgabaneng*, or that individuals who would be interested in an HIV/AIDS drama would likely also be interested in alternative HIV/AIDS initiatives, thus would hold higher levels of HIV/AIDS knowledge, is unclear. It is important that these percentages are not comprehended as knowledge levels other than the population surveyed.

The population of this study consisted mostly of urban residents in the capital of Botswana. Though the researcher attempted to also include locations where more rural residents would frequent, such as a nearby village and the bus station, the urban bias is important to note. This is especially true when considering findings regarding media access and use. The urban center of Gaborone provides much more opportunity for newer media such as Internet cafes and mobile phone vendors. However, this population may also have more access to alternative media other than radio. Therefore, these results may represent a population that is less attracted to radio dramas like *Makgabaneng* than what you would see if you traveled further away from Gaborone.

The researcher of this study is also an outsider to the population of interest. As a white, female, English-speaking American, many challenges arose in the data collection process. Though a trained translator accompanied the researcher at all times, many Setswana respondents felt uncomfortable participating in the study. Other respondents also were hesitant to participate, as they were not sure of the researcher’s connection with the Botswana government or *Makgabaneng*. Had the researcher been a member of the culture being studied, it is possible that more respondents would have been willing to participate. These results should be interpreted with the understanding that only those
who were approached and comfortable talking with someone from an outside culture about their experiences as a fan of *Makgabaneng* were included in this study.

Most importantly, this research should not be read as a general evaluation of how successful *Makgabaneng* proves at changing attitudes and knowledge levels of HIV/AIDS in Botswana. This audience reception study is not intended to measure behavior change or provide statistical information of attitudes and intentions. Instead, it provides a glimpse into how the fans of the program are identifying with and interpreting the storyline. That is not to say that the information gathered is not useful; it simply does not provide the type of information that statistical evaluations of public health campaigns generally provide. It does, however, provide a glimpse into some changes that future entertainment-education programs that utilize the MARCH strategy may consider in the future.

**The MARCH Strategy**

MARCH (Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV/AIDS) is a behavior change strategy that provides alternative entertainment-education narratives where individuals hold control over their sexual and reproductive behavior (Galavotti, Pappas-DeLuca, & Lansky, 2001). Consistent with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, this strategy is designed so that behavior change does not take place simply by including a desired messaging in these narratives, but by having audience members identify with the storylines of which they are engaged. Identification is established through positive, negative, and transitional character development strategy. Narratives include positive
role models who consistently make responsible health decisions; negative characters who consistently engage in risky and irresponsible behaviors; and transitional characters, who may start making risky decisions, but evolve over the series into empowered, knowledgeable, and positive characters. The strategy also includes an interpersonal reinforcement stage where audiences are encouraged and given the necessary skills to achieve behavior change.

This study demonstrates several challenges of the MARCH strategy. For example, even the acronym of MARCH, which stands for Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV/AIDS, was identified as problematic in this analysis. Based on this study, it is understood that most individuals are not interested in listening to HIV/AIDS-centric messages for long periods of time. Participants expressed fatigue with the subject matter, and storylines become predictable and boring over time. Instead, fans of the program retold stories about drug and alcohol abuse, relationships, inheritance and career struggles. The hope of any successful drama is to make a drama feel as true to life as possible, and there is not a single culture where HIV/AIDS is the only issue that individuals combat each day. Instead, a multitude of everyday issues face all cultures, and entertainment-education programs hold great promise in influencing lives positively in many areas other than just HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the idea of combating HIV/AIDS alone discredits its link to other social structure variables, such as power relations and poverty.

As previously noted, interviews with employees of Makgabaneng demonstrate the organization’s newly initiated a Special Projects Department, designed to create HIV/AIDS messages for outside organizations. The main objective of this department is
to create additional revenue for the NGO. However, messages of these projects were very similar to messages that would broadcast on the drama itself. This is an unsettling trend, as research points to the importance of creating culturally produced messages. Stories that may prove successful in Botswana may not be interpreted the same way in other cultures.

This study demonstrates the importance of having culturally produced messages in entertainment-education dramas. It is not enough for dramas to assume that this is done successfully when characters speak in the local language and deal with cultural specific issues. Fans of *Makgabaneng* were having a hard time identifying with characters despite these elements being present. Church is such an important part of the fans’ lives that it proved difficult to relate to characters that never took part in religious rituals. Church was also identified as the reason why individuals were able to avoid high-risk activities, despite being in an environment of constant pressure. Though experts and public leaders in the region may be consulted about specific cultural artifacts that they believe should be included in the drama in order to fight HIV/AIDS, this study demonstrates the importance of dialogue with fans about how to make characters more relatable and true-to-life.

For example, teams of researchers have decided that it is important for *Makgabaneng* to include transactional relationships in the storyline because it is a cultural problem that they believe strongly contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, simple additions, such as popular music, names of local businesses, and public holidays go a long way in the identification process. It is also important that successful organizations do not lose sight of the importance of culturally produced media, even if
outsourcing production means gaining additional revenue. It would be difficult for an
NGO in Botswana to produce messages that would have as much impact on an audience
in Zambia.

This study also illustrates the complex sense-making and audience interpretation
process. Factors such as gender, age and ideologies greatly altered the way audiences
made sense of a storyline. Often times, these factors cause completely alternative
readings of which characters were positive and which characters were negative. What is
interpreted as positive, relatable behavior for one type of audience may be interpreted as
negative and absurd to another. It is important that entertainment-education organizations
do as much as possible to understand how different populations could read a text before
broadcast. What may be educational and positive for one population could be detrimental
for another. It also is important that real-life populations are not ignored or represented
fairly in the drama. Though some cultures may identify gender inequalities as a problem
in society, the solution is not to consistently empower half of an audience and make fools
of the other. Dramas should instead take great care in ensuring that every person who
may be attracted to the story has a positive character that they are able to identify.

As the media climate in a particular society changes, it is important that
entertainment-education programs change accordingly. Participants in this study were
incredibly excited and motivated towards newer media, such as television, internet and
mobile phones. They expressed how much their media consumption habits have changed
over the past few years. In fact, if most participants were not already fans of
*Makgabaneng*, they likely would not currently listen to the radio program at all, as they
are only tuning into radio to listen to a longtime favorite program through appointment listening. This can be problematic when it comes to recruiting new fans to a drama, especially in regards to the younger age group. Respondents discussed their preference towards entertainment-education television dramas, even if they come from an outside culture, over locally produced programs that are broadcast on traditional media. They were also excited about ways in which the traditional radio programs are able to incorporate mobile phones into their extra talk radio program, and talking with other fans through the online social networking site, Facebook. It is important or other MARCH projects to consider the media climate before producing an entertainment-education program. Fortunately, the choice is often not one media or another, but new technologies are able to work together to reach larger audiences.

Finally, this study demonstrates the importance of holistic audience reception studies for initiatives that are produced based on the MARCH strategy. It showcases the types of information that can be uncovered when monitoring and evaluation efforts branch away from the more dominant media effects paradigm. Rather than allowing initiatives, such as PEPFAR, to predefine the objectives that an entertainment-education program focuses on in a top-down manner, this study suggests it would be more meaningful to have the target audience identify objectives instead. Results of this study illustrate how different issues of common concern are to the audience of Makgabaneng than the issues of common concern to the funders of the program. Some of the most successful interventions tend to use a variety of components, including media, interpersonal communication, social mobilization and advocacy. The MARCH strategy
Makgabaneng very much focus on community reinforcement and message content and could improve on building the synergies of multiple communication components.

Though literature in the discipline speaks a great deal of how important it is for initiatives to be produced through more participatory, bottom-up efforts, this study demonstrates how important this epistemological shift is in the monitoring and evaluation process as well. Audience reception studies are able to engage communication in a two-way process to allow objectives to emerge through interpersonal dialogue with the target audience. This type of research does take more time and economic resources, but it is necessary to the successful sustainment of an entertainment-education program. Alternative evaluations, such as quantitative surveys or longitudinal behavior assessments also provide meaningful data analysis and should not be ignored. These methodologies are not mutually exclusive from one another and should be utilized together for the most effective monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The MARCH strategy does not provide clear guidelines regarding the monitoring and evaluation process. This is very different from other entertainment-education strategies. As previously noted, The Johns Hopkins Model for Public Health Messaging, otherwise known as the ‘P’ Process, highlights analysis, strategic design, development pretesting production, management implementation modeling, impact evaluation and planning for continuity. It recommends that 10% of an organization’s total budget should be spent on evaluation. Though great efforts are placed on monitoring and evaluation at Makgabaneng, this emphasis does not exist in the MARCH strategy itself. This study suggests that MARCH could incorporate more guidelines that include participatory
monitoring and evaluation into its strategy, so that future behavioral change strategies recognize the importance of audience reception studies. Entertainment-Education strategies would benefit from more holistic insights on audience identification with characters. These types of studies, both qualitative and quantitative, help explain the connection between the drama and its audience. This draws light onto the reception and interpretation process, as well as the sustainability of fans.

These results provide a deep insight into how audiences of *Makgabaneng* are responding to the edutainment drama. This analysis focused both on how well they respond to the predetermined intended outcomes that MARCH seeks to achieve, but more importantly, it also gained insights into fan reactions through a more bottom-up and participatory means of reception analysis. This holistic research approach told us much about the success and challenges of *Makgabaneng* as a public health edutainment initiative. However, it is also important to analyze this case study from a conceptual and theoretical perspective on a much more broad macro-level.

Through the following discussion section, we will further explore the use of reception study for evaluations of Entertainment-education interventions, the role of E-E programming in the everyday lives of fans, the complex nature of the audience sense-making process, future challenges of monitoring and evaluation frameworks and how these insights are able to be applied to general media studies audience reception research.
CHAPTER 13: DISCUSSION

This case study was designed as a media reception study aimed at better understanding how listeners of Makgabaneng interact with a public health entertainment-education intervention. It is based on development communication and entertainment-education theory, and serves as a cultural studies approach to media studies. It examines how audiences make sense and negotiates media messages and its influence on behavior, culture, ideologies and society. Results from this study demonstrate the potential and challenges of media as a resource in positive social change in the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, beyond a call for more holistic reception studies for public health interventions, this research also sheds light on the complex process of audience sense-making and negotiation.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following research questions: What generalized consumption patterns exist among fans of Makgabaneng?; What themes and salient messages are audiences likely to interpret in Makgabaneng?; How do audiences of Makgabaneng identify with the radio drama?; and How do audiences of Makgabaneng construct their own lived reality through the radio drama? In truth, this project was tackled with the understanding that these questions would never be definitively answered. It is impossible to clearly identify how audiences negotiate media artifacts to make-sense of their own lives in the social construction process. However, this does not diminish the importance of this type of research. Instead, many insights into how negotiations are managed in audiences are offered below.
Negotiating Through Personal Experience

The term sense-making is referred to as a set of assumptions to study the making of sense that people do in their everyday experience (Dervin, 1992). This process is individualistic and structural, as individuals are the carriers of communicative action and embody outside structures. Media reception research tends to focus on sense-making through two central entities: the person engaging the media product, and the media product itself (Reinhard & Dervin, 2009). However, it is important to note that this process also takes place in various life contexts. These three variables (individual, media and context) are central components to how audiences receive media content. Based on this understanding, it seems unfair to blame entertainment-education programs entirely if audiences are not homogeneously influenced towards the desired positive behavior change. After all, media content is only one third of this sense-making equation. It is impossible for producers to account for all individual and consumption context possibilities.

Based on this understanding, the criticisms put forth by this reception study are not necessarily criticisms of Makgabaneng. It is impossible for an entertainment-education drama to create a storyline that impact all audience members identically. Media reception combines with too many extraneous variables to account for all possible negotiations. When the sense-making process is looked at from a public health intervention perspective, researchers tend to become centrally concerned with evaluation results. Much literature criticizes these evaluations for being top down in nature, serving donor agendas, rather than the peoples’ agenda, and having little to no long-term
individual follow-up (King, 1999). Overall, research calls for more longitudinal people–centered, qualitative evaluation methods. However, how can researchers criticize entertainment-education top-down evaluation efforts when stories are being produced in a top-down fashion for the purposes of funding?

While this study echoes the call for more holistic evaluation efforts, it is done with the understanding that these studies are also time consuming and costly. Results of this study point to these participatory evaluation methods proving most useful during the production process, rather than as a retroactive evaluation. It would be best if entertainment-education interventions such as Makgabaneng were able to conduct similar studies before creating storylines to define what is of biggest concern and culturally appropriate for their target audience. However, if the intervention is based on the recommendations of their funders (PEPFAR, in Makgabaneng’s case), that costly and time-consuming evaluation may prove futile and be their death sentence for future funding.

This study was done through triangulation methodologies. Fans of Makgabaneng were asked through various means (survey, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, participant observation and field visitations) how the drama could be made more realistic to their everyday lives. Literature makes clear the central role culture plays in the media identification process. That is why it was no surprise when fans of Makgabaneng repeatedly spoke of the absence of religion in the drama. One participant called it, “A glaring hole” Another said “Church has to be added on to the situation … to make it more realistic”. Moreover, many interviewees who seemingly came from a high-risk
background cited church as a reason they have abstained from high-risk behaviors. One fan said, “I center my story around faith and Christian views. I hope the children listen and adopt what’s being preached in the story then it would help me. Adopting a faith lifestyle could empower their lives”. Church not only plays a central role in the lives of these Makgabaneng fans, but it also appears to be a source of positive guidance in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

These results demonstrate the importance of church to the people of Botswana. Its absence from the characters’ lives is noticed by fans and is not an accurate representation of the culture of Botswana. Moreover, church has been identified as one of the most consistent reasons why individuals say they abstain from engaging in high-risk behaviors. This population living positively should be the target respondent for future reception studies like these.

Singhal (2010) studies the method of positive deviance for social change. This is defined as a process that “enables communities to discover the wisdom they already have and then to act on it” (2). Rather than focusing on what is wrong with a community, the positive deviance approach seeks out those few key community members who are in a high-risk situation, but are behaving positively. Researchers learn how and why these individuals are able to work towards positive social change and are then able to mirror their suggestions. Though this research did not follow the positive deviance approach exactly, results are consistent with its premise. If church is being used as a model of positive behavior in the fight against HIV/AIDS, perhaps more could be done in entertainment-education interventions to encourage that specific positive behavior.
through the modeling process. It is important to note that Positive Deviance is a social change strategy and requires researchers to give up a lot of control in their findings. Though I may not agree that *Makgabaneng* should begin including storylines that center around religiosity, it is definitely a theme that emerged in my analysis. The church-going behavior may not seem very “deviant” in its own regard, but the methods utilized to uncover that recommendation certainly mirror elements of Singhal’s (2010) strategy.

Rather than serving as a retroactive evaluation though, this research suggests it would prove most effective if this type of holistic audience reception study was done prior to production. This is not to say that *Makgabaneng* did not research the Botswana culture before implementing the entertainment-education behavior change initiative. In fact, the MARCH strategy places a strong emphasis on synthesizing culture in the production process. Curious about why *Makgabaneng* does not include church in their storyline, I asked the head of the Writing Department about the absence of religion in the drama. She explained that *Makgabaneng* understood the cultural importance of religion and Botswana, as well as its role in promoting positive behavior. She explains, “The church/religion is very vital in Botswana. When all else fails, people here turn to God, and the church is aligned with good behavior. *Makgabaneng* has not explored the church because of the many Christian fraternities here. We did not want to sound biased to traditional African Christian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Charismatic or Pentecostal Churches”.

The exclusion of church in the *Makgabaneng* drama is purposefully done, but its absence still remains unsettling to its audience. While it is easy for outside evaluations
such as these to come into an intervention and criticize efforts, the opportunity for feedback from producers is not always available. These extra steps are imperative.

During my time as an intern with the Makgabaneng organization, much discussion among staff was placed on how to best implement specific cultural elements into the storyline. Though including church may not be the answer in Botswana, this research suggests that by better detailing the positive deviance approach in the MARCH strategy, the identification process of audiences could potentially be strengthened. Rather than showing positive behaviors, such as monogamy that may go against certain cultural practices (e.g. multiple concurrent partnerships), the positive deviance approach could point towards a much more culturally appropriate behavior (wear a condom) where individuals could learn more about healthy living. Moreover, using the positive deviance approach at the front end of the production process would also make the characters as identifiable as possible.

It may seem strange if some of the long-term Makgabaneng character favorites such as Cecilia or Gorata suddenly began going to church. Moreover, it would take time for audiences to strongly identify with brand new church-going characters. If the positive deviance approach was completed prior to production, these behaviors could have been implemented from the beginning. As such, this research strongly encourages the positive deviance approach to be incorporated into the evaluation process of future entertainment-education public health interventions. Additionally, it strongly recommends that the MARCH strategy details the positive deviance approach specifically as a modeling and
evaluation requirement, as well as a methodology used prior to production in future initiatives.

The most urgent suggestion of this study is a call for donors to cease the application of specific predefined objectives that interventions must meet in order to receive funding. Instead, it should support participatory receptions evaluations such as this one to help determine what the needs of the community and culture are. Consistent monitoring through focus groups, discussion sessions and one-on-one interviews should be done throughout the duration of the entire drama to better understand how audiences are interpreting storylines. These additions will best address the three central entities of the audience sense-making process: individual, media and context.

General Audience Sense-Making

Beyond public health interventions, the results of this study provide many other insights into the general audience sense-making process. Cohen (2001) was interested in identification and audience reception. He defined identification as, “a mechanism through which audience members experience reception and interpretation of the text from the inside, as if the events were happening to them…Identification is a central mechanism for explaining such effects” (245). This research criticizes media research for providing a vague instrument for measuring character identification. Cohen suggests measuring through questions such as, “While viewing program X, I felt as if I was part of the action,” and “When character X succeeded I felt joy, but when he or she failed, I was sad” (256). These measurements all illustrate how much audiences ‘put themselves into
the shoes’ of the characters that they are watching. However, through the interviews done in this study, respondents consistently referenced humorous characters as the most memorable, regardless of how alike their personality and/or life situation proved.

It is important to note that ‘identification’ and ‘most memorable’ are not necessarily the same construct. However, when a drama is interested in facilitating behavior change, it may make sense to turn attention towards storylines that fans remember most while they make decisions in their everyday life. For example, if fans of *Makgabaneng* are considering engaging in drug use, the hope is that they are able to reference a storyline where a character engaged in drug use and had a negative consequence as a result of that negative decision. This memory recall may deter them, or make them reflect, think, discuss about that decision, as though it was a part of their own life experience. The most troubling finding in this study is that fans of *Makgabaneng* answered ‘Boramane’ as the character and storyline that they most identified with as well as enjoyed.

Boramane’s character is a negative role model, and his story is one filled with infidelity and drugs. These negative behaviors also make him one of the most humorous and entertaining characters in the drama. While fans of *Makgabaneng* may not necessarily see themselves in his character, they consistently referenced how enjoyable his character is to follow. One fan stated, “The bad characters are the ones that people will most enjoy”. Another fan said, “When it’s his part, you always want to listen. He’ll make you laugh more than half the time”. These statements are obviously troubling when examined from the MARCH model perspective. The public health intervention would not want fans of *Makgabaneng* to model the behaviors of their most negative characters.
However, based on identification research, it should not matter how humorous a situation is, if the character is antagonistic enough that audiences would not want to ‘put themselves in their shoes’. This disparate finding suggests more needs to be done to understand the relationship between identification and humor.

Attachment towards a negative role model is not a new phenomenon in media studies. Vidmar and Rokeach’s (1974) classic research explains how the main character of All in the Family, Archie Bunker, was produced as a negative role model. His character perpetuated sentiments of bigotry, racism and prejudice. To the surprised of producers, fans of All in the Family identified with Archie bunker, thus began emulating his behavior (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). These findings are not consistent with traditional media studies research that states the identification process requires audiences to feel as though events are happening to them (Cohen, 2001). Rather than identification being strongest when audiences see themselves in their characters and ‘put themselves into their shoes’, these results seem to suggest that a positive emotional responses, such as laughter, was highest when recalling humorous stories. It does not seem to matter what kind of negative antagonistic behavior characters engage; if they are funny, they are likable. Humor and entertainment played a much greater role in the characters fans wanted to talk about and associate themselves with, as opposed to more identical features such as gender, age, income or life situation. This does not suggest that identification and story recall is the same thing. However, story recall is a critical piece to the behavior change process. This it serves as a call for more investigation on humor and identification in the sense-making process.
Negotiating ‘The Other’

Clearly, the audience sense-making process is incredibly complex. Consistent with past research, everyday fans of the drama were not always able to verbally reflect on how the three variables of reception (individual, media and context) work together to influence their behavior. However, respondents’ consistent reflection on the behavior of ‘others’ could be a very telling piece to entertainment-education interventions. It is possible that individuals are not interpreting storylines by reflecting on their own actions, but rather the social environment around them. Entertainment-education may be best served if they focus on social issues (e.g. stigma reduction) rather than specific individual behavior change issues (e.g. wear a condom). If they are able to reflect on those around them through storylines, it has great promise towards reducing stigma or increasing cultural tolerance.

Survey results demonstrate that 87.3% of *Makgabaneng* fans strongly agree or agree that they would care for someone who is infected with HIV, pointing towards a low amount of stigma. Fans also verbalized that they felt stigma reduction could be achieved by acknowledging a link between poverty and HIV/AIDS. One said, “I think HIV is the biggest problem. It’s also poverty. I think if they could always make it clear. They need voiceovers for the people in the show connecting these things.” These findings show that *Makgabaneng* has promise as a tool for promoting stigma reduction. Unfortunately, this is not one of the five recommended PEPFAR themes. Instead, donors tend to focus on more individual behavior change goals, such as condom use and HIV testing. If those
individual changes are more complicated than social reflections, perhaps the focus of entertainment-education should shift.

Tufte’s (2005) research strengthens these sentiments, citing that in order to pursue sustainable solutions to HIV/AIDS, causes of these problems, such as poverty and social inequality, must be brought to life. One way entertainment-education is best able to aid with this fight is to give voice and visibility to marginalized people. He suggests that media begin to transition towards citizen media, “where the media can serve genuine citizen concerns and where the media promote empowerment of the people, democracy and public service” (3). Often times, smaller media outlets, such as community radio, prove much more equipped to give a voice to a marginalized group than larger mass media outlets. This is because they are not focused on marketing towards a homogenous audience. They are able to incorporate smaller niche cultural complexities into storylines and focus their stories accordingly. Based on what we already know regarding the importance of incorporating culture into a media product, this holds true.

These results may mean that entertainment-education proves most effective in smaller media formats. Rather than producing a large-scale radio drama suited for all of Botswana, it may be more effective to divide the country into subpopulations and produce several smaller dramas for more specific target audiences. Perhaps public health interventions become less effective as its audience increases. One cannot ignore the financial and production challenges this change would bring, but this balance should certainly be investigated in future research.
Alternative Audience Readings

Certainly the expectation when entering an audience reception evaluation is that there will be differences in participant interviews as individuals retell and reflect on media content. This is because so many variables go into the audience sense-making process (media, individual and context). Not everyone comes to a media text with the same life experience or the same media environment. Generally, researchers are looking for consistencies and patterns of interpretations. However, what does it mean when audiences negotiate opposing meanings of the same storyline?

Oteng is a husband in Makgabaneng who is involved in extramarital affairs, and Cecilia is his dutiful wife who does not interfere and stands by his side. One fan spoke of Cecilia by saying, “She’s a woman of integrity she respects her husband even though her husband is always going out and doing bad things…She’s very inspiring and when you listen to her most of the time. Most of the people in our country, in Botswana, if that kind of situation, she just leaves her husband, just goes and leaves”. This fan felt as though Cecilia serves as a role model to fans of Makgabaneng. Her commitment to her husband is exemplary and should be modeled by everyone.

Another fan states, “I think she’s soft. She doesn’t want to tell his parents about his unfaithfulness. She’s stupid. I think she deserves better than him… she should divorce him and move on with their lives”. This fan felt as though Cecilia is a weak character. She is a bad role model and is too old fashion in her ideologies regarding the role a wife should serve.
These are two very different readings of the Cecilia/Oteng storyline in *Makgabaneng*. Almost half of those interviewed believed that Cecilia’s behavior was positive; that she was serving as a positive role model for women in Botswana regarding what it means to be a good wife. The other half of fans believed that Cecilia’s behavior was negative, weak and risky. Both viewpoints stem from the same media broadcast.

Because this storyline is a part of a public health intervention, it can be assumed that producers of *Makgabaneng* told this story to demonstrate the risks of infidelity. Therefore, if Cecilia stays in a relationship with her husband and does not insist on practicing safe sex, she opens herself up for HIV infection. This storyline is particularly moving because Cecilia is not engaging in negative behavior herself, but her ignorance and lack of personal empowerment is placing her at risk. With the knowledge that this storyline was produced with hope that audiences would not model Cecilia’s behavior, the question becomes, how could so many audience members not associate her behavior as being negative? Was this story just poorly produced on *Makgabaneng*’s end?

McKee (2003) explains how all, “texts are interpreted in different ways by members of varying sense-making communities”. Multiple readings are perhaps the only consistent reality in the audience sense-making process. It is natural for audiences to have many different interpretations of the same storyline, as they all bring a different set of assumptions. Absolutely no public health intervention is able to account for the media product, the person engaging the media product and the context in which consumption takes place. The best *Makgabaneng* and other entertainment-education programs can do
is to monitor its audience reception in order to determine how storylines evolve to promote the most positive behavior possible.

Therefore we must ask: Does this study only reaffirm what is already out there in regards to sense-making process? In a way, yes. Dervin (2003) states that the power of narratives is contingent on three themes: the nature of reality, one on the nature of human observing, and one on the involvement of power. Reality is socially constructed through an individual’s own lived reality, their perceived lived reality, and their capacity to mirror the combination of these realities. This is a very circular process, where one construction heavily influences all three. Sense-making is described as, “a dialogic circling of reality, a reality that can be reached for but never touched, described in gossamer but never sculpted. This practice focuses on metadesign—design about design—and explicitly acknowledges that its work involves not merely transferring information from here to there but assisting human beings in their information design” (54). Behavior change is complicated, and is contingent on a great number of interacting and variables that are consistently in flux.

The very idea of evaluating a media text to see if it is able to successfully or unsuccessfully spark behavior change goes against everything we know about how audiences make-sense of media. Entertainment-education is just one piece of a very complicated social construction equation; however, at least we know it is a positive piece. Does this mean that every E-E project is doing a good job? Of course not. Does this mean that researchers should not even attempt to conduct evaluations on E-E efforts?
Absolutely not. However, monitoring and evaluation cannot simply be done through quantitative means that serve donor agendas.

It does show how imperative it is that this type of reception study is done consistently throughout the entire course of production. Producers must always be aware of the different meanings audiences are making of their storylines. These are not the types of findings they would get once a year through survey analysis or by examining audience letters. Dialogue and discussion about the story is critical to understanding media influence. It is only through these efforts, that stories are able to evolve and improve.

Results from this research provide many insights on the audience sense-making and negotiation process. It suggests that the Positive Deviance Approach be used for future public health interventions, both before production, as well as a monitoring and evaluation tool. It also points to humor as a crucial component to the character identification process. Respondents of this study were consistently able to reference instances of personal reflection on the behavior of an ‘other’, rather than their own. This suggests that entertainment-education may be best served if the focus shifts from individual behavior change issues (e.g. wear a condom) to more social issues (e.g. stigma reduction). It also raises questions about the effectiveness of large-scale mass media interventions rather than smaller media formats such as community radio. These smaller formats would give voice to a marginalized group, as well as make production as culturally appropriate as possible for the smaller, more targeted audience. Finally, it
confirms much of what we already know about media reception research, including the possibility of multiple readings of a single media text.

*Makgabaneng* proves itself as a potential and resource in Botswana’s fight against HIV/AIDS. Though this holistic reception study does point to many recommendations and challenges for the program, its positive impact on Botswana society was apparent. The story of *Makgabaneng* does reflect the everyday challenges and culture of its audience. “I often use [the stories in *Makgabaneng*] because when you look at things that happen in there, it can also happen in real life … it affected my life” (12M22). Even though respondents are not always able to verbalize exactly how this behavior change process works, they are still able to recognize it as a positive influence. Of all the negative stimuli individuals are exposed to, it is comforting to know that there is one working towards positive efforts.

The story of *Makgabaneng* teaches fans to think differently about what it means to be infected with the HIV virus. It is no longer a death sentence, and too many public health interventions are using scare-tactic approaches. This only stigmatizes individuals living with HIV further and prevents them from being open about their status. “There was the time when after I heard the advice Cecilia gave, I gave the advice to one of my friends. She was raped so what I told her is that it’s not the end of the world...

*Makgabaneng* encourage people that whenever they are HIV positive or they have AIDS, what they have to know is that they have to continue living their life. They don’t have to be disappointed because they’re HIV positive. They actually can do everything they want to do”. These messages are necessary and rare.
Makgabaneng is also pushing forward the story of hard work and perseverance resulting in a successful life. “The story of Opelo, I’d say that I learned that in life you have to work hard for what you want and that you should be independent because one thing she’s always been dependent on men doing things and she wound up with these STDs. So, I thought for me, you don’t need people to pave way for you in life. Sometimes you just have to work hard to get things”. Makgabaneng is much more than a program about HIV/AIDS. It teaches everyone how to live positive, responsible lives.

It would be difficult to find these same themes in other HIV/AIDS media, such as brochures, public service announcements or health billboards. Education is often not interesting and turns audiences away. Experiences with data collection for this reception study show that everyday citizens of Botswana are familiar with the drama. Even if they were not consistent fans, they still associated positively with its message and could name characters. However positive these pieces may be, it is imperative that development communication interventions practice more of these types of audience reception studies.

Petraglia (2009) argues that in order to contextualize behavior change, audience dialogue is necessary. Through the use of audience reception, narratives and dialogue, contextually appropriate personal, social and environmental issues can best be developed. There was never a point during this research project where I was struggling to find avid and enthusiastic fans of Makgabaneng. This type of audience sustainment and branding is one of the most difficult pieces to a successful entertainment-education initiative. It would be a shame not to maximize its impact on audiences through poor monitoring and evaluation efforts. I can say with complete assurance that Makgabaneng is a positive
piece of the conversations and lives of the Botswana culture; its impact would only grow stronger with more participatory processes and audience reception research.

This study specifically aimed to look at identification and the audience social construction process. As anticipated, it proved incredibly rare for fans of *Makgabaneng* to verbalize specifically how they relate to what is going on to the drama and use narratives to construct the world around them. This process is generally done subtlety, with very little cognitive awareness. Because media only plays a partial role in the behavior and decision-making process, it makes sense that audiences would not be able to speak about their personal negotiations and social constructions. However, some participants did allude to pieces of this process.

One female fan describes a storyline by saying, “He goes out and he sees other partners out there. He comes to the girlfriend and one day he tells her they’re infected. He beats the girl and then he claims she is the one who infected him…My boyfriend can do the same to me, just as he did to the girlfriend” Here, an audience member related to a particular character in the story, identified with the relationship that character was involved with, and then learned from the events that happened in that character’s life. One can clearly see the three variables of the audience reception process. She negotiated the media content with her individual life experience to make sense of a particular situational context.

More often, respondents had a difficult time directly applying the story of *Makgabaneng* to make sense of a particular event happening in their own lives. Surprisingly, audiences were able to consistently reference how a storyline in
Makgabaneng helped them reflect on the action of an ‘other’. While most reception research focuses on how audiences interpret storylines to negotiate meanings with their own lives, this ‘otherness’ focus is rarely referenced in media reception literature.

Rather than stating how a particular storyline helped audiences deal with a problem they were having in their own lives, fans would instead tell the story of how Makgabaneng helped them understand what someone else was going through. For example, one participant said, “I’ve seen my cousins, my neighbors engaging in several issues being discussed on Makgabaneng, such as drugs, such as pregnancy, such as fights, such as arguments…Somebody is encouraging it in society”. This type of reflective reflection on ‘the other’ was much more prominent than citing a specific instance of personal behavior.

It is unclear whether this reflection on ‘the other’ is just a strategy by respondents to provide an answer that they felt the researcher desired, or if this is one-way audiences are able to negotiate media texts. Perhaps the ‘individual’ variable of the sense-making process is overstated. Maybe audiences find it difficult to see themselves in negative characters, and so they instantly reflect on the behaviors of those around them. Perhaps it is easy to imagine oneself as a positive role model and express how you are similar to desirable traits. When it came to negative behaviors, respondents of this study consistently cited the behaviors of others rather than themselves. This could be a strategy to save face in front of the researcher, or it could be an insight into the audience sense-making process and character identification. More research in this area is certainly needed.
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APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

*Makgabaneng*

Instructions: This study examines audience reception of *Makgabaneng*. The information collected will be treated anonymously and confidentially. *Please, do not put your name anywhere on this survey.*

Age: Gender: M F
Marital Status (please circle): Single Married Living Together Divorced Widow
Household salary:
Size of Household (including yourself):

Most of my HIV/AIDS knowledge came from:

1. Media 4. Teacher 7. Other: __________
2. Parents 5. Friends
3. Church 6. Doctor

Please rank the following forms of media entertainment on a scale from 1-3 (1 being the media used least often, and 3 being the media used most often):

_____ radio ______ television ______ Internet

Do you have a radio in your home (please circle)? Yes No
If no, do you still listen to the radio?
If yes, where?
How many hours a day do you listen to the radio?
Do you have a television in your home (please circle)?  Yes  No
If no, do you still watch television?
If yes, where?
How many hours a day do you watch television?

Do you have a computer with Internet in your home (please circle)?  Yes  No
If no, do you still have access to a computer with Internet?
If yes, where?
How many hours a day are you on the Internet?

Do you own a mobile phone (please circle)?  Yes  No
If no, do you still have access to a mobile phone?
If yes, where?
How many hours a day do you use your mobile phone?

Do you listen to *Makgabaneng*?  Yes  No

If yes, for how many years? _________

Other than *Makgabaneng*, what other radio programs do you listen to?
________________________

How many times a week do you listen to *Makgabaneng*? _________

When was the last time you listened to *Makgabaneng*? _________
Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement regarding *Makgabaneng*:

1 = Strongly Disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree; Undecided  
4 = Agree  
5 = Strongly Agree

1. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with infidelity.  
2. I have learned about HIV prevention through *Makgabaneng*.  
3. I try to get home in time to listen to *Makgabaneng*.  
4. Life presented in *Makgabaneng* is similar to my own life.  
5. I recognize myself in characters from *Makgabaneng*.  
6. *Makgabaneng*’s stories seem realistic to me.  
7. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with HIV.  
8. *Makgabaneng* has not taught me anything I did not already know about HIV.  
10. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with marriage struggles.  
11. I talk to my friends about what is going on in *Makgabaneng*.  
12. I prefer *Makgabaneng* to other programs on the radio.  
13. There is too much sex presented in *Makgabaneng*.  
14. I have called in to talk about issues discussed on *Makgabaneng Extra*.  
15. I listen to *Makgabaneng Extra*.  
16. I would attend a *Makgabaneng* road show in my community.  
17. Media talks about HIV issues too much.
18. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with sexual matters. 1 2 3 4 5
19. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with STI’s. 1 2 3 4 5
20. *Makgabaneng* has taught me things that I did not know about HIV. 1 2 3 4 5
21. Media does not talk about HIV issues enough. 1 2 3 4 5
22. I watch every episode of *Makgabaneng*. 1 2 3 4 5
23. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with adolescent relationships. 1 2 3 4 5
24. *Makgabaneng* has taught me about protecting myself from HIV. 1 2 3 4 5
25. My favorite stories on *Makgabaneng* deal with drug abuse. 1 2 3 4 5
26. If *Makgabaneng* was cancelled, I would feel sad. 1 2 3 4 5

Please identify which *Makgabaneng* character best answers the statement below

1. I most identify with: ________________________
2. I least identify with: ________________________
3. The best role model is: ________________________
4. The worst role model is: ________________________
5. My friends are most like: ________________________
6. My friends are least like: ________________________
7. I most enjoy storylines about: ________________________
8. I most relate to storylines about: ________________________
9. My favorite character is: ________________________

**HIV/AIDS Knowledge**

This survey will ask you questions regarding HIV/AIDS infection. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree; Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. A healthy looking person could be infected with HIV.  
2. HIV can be transmitted through sexual intercourse with unknown person. 
3. Condoms can prevent HIV/AIDS transmission.  
4. HIV can be transmitted through infected mother to her unborn baby. 
5. Most of my friends have been tested for HIV.  
6. HIV can be transmitted through sharing shaving equipment. 
7. Most people will isolate someone if they know they are infected with HIV. 
8. HIV can be transmitted through kissing. 
9. Condoms can be used more than once.  
10. HIV can be transmitted through shaking hands.  
11. I would care for someone who is infected with HIV.  
12. HIV can be transmitted through blood transfusion. 
13. Most people my age will tease someone if they know they are infected with HIV.  
14. HIV can be transmitted through breastfeeding. 
15. There is no reason for a person to hide the fact that they are infected with HIV.  
16. HIV can be transmitted through saliva. 
17. I have close friends who are infected with HIV.  
18. HIV can be transmitted through mosquito bite.
Personal Attitudes and Behaviors

This portion of the survey will ask you questions regarding personal attitudes and behaviors. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree; Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. It is okay for a man to have sex with a woman who is not his steady partner.  
   1  2  3  4  5

2. I have been in a relationship with someone 7 years older or younger than me.  
   1  2  3  4  5

3. My life is determined by my own actions.  
   1  2  3  4  5

4. I will use a condom every time I have sex in the next six months.  
   1  2  3  4  5

5. I use birth control every time I have sex.  
   1  2  3  4  5

6. I am afraid my partner would reject me if I suggested using a condom.  
   1  2  3  4  5

7. To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings.  
   1  2  3  4  5

8. A boy who uses a condom is showing respect to his partner.  
   1  2  3  4  5

9. I waited to have sex until I was married.  
   1  2  3  4  5

10. I remember to use condoms, even after drinking alcohol.  
    1  2  3  4  5

11. When I get what I want, it's usually because I worked hard for it.  
    1  2  3  4  5

12. It is okay for a woman to have sex with a man who is not her steady partner.  
    1  2  3  4  5

13. Drinking alcohol is a nice way to celebrate.  
    1  2  3  4  5
14. I am confident I could get condoms without feeling embarrassed.
15. Condoms are for boys who have sex with more than one girl
16. A girl should have a baby to prove she is fertile.
17. I have made risky decisions after drinking alcohol
18. It is unrealistic to expect men to be faithful.
19. Alcohol helps people to unwind after a stressful day.
20. It is never okay to cheat on your partner.
21. Condoms can ruin the sexual mood.
22. I believe the only acceptable form of birth control is abstinence.
23. I have never cheated on my partner.
24. There is pressure on girls to go out with older men to receive gifts from them.
25. If you really love your partner, it is okay to have sex with him/her.
26. My friends use condoms whenever they have sex, even with a steady partner.
27. It’s easier to meet people of the opposite sex after drinking alcohol.
28. Most women cheat on their husbands.
29. Most men cheat on their wives.
30. Success depends on whether I’m lucky enough.
31. It is okay if a boy has sex with an older woman to gain sexual experience.
32. I know girls who seek relationships with older men to receive gifts.
33. A girl who uses birth control is being responsible.
34. Getting gifts from a partner stops you from talking about safe sex.
35. I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people.
APPENDIX B: SETSWANA SURVEY CONSENT FORM

Ohio University Tumelano ya go tsaa karolo mo Patlisisong.
Setlhogo sa Patlisiso: Motshameko wa Mpekweneng mo Botswana: Tshekatsheko ya kamogelo ya thuto seka-motshameko go bareetsi.
Motsamaisi: L Megan Pierce (LMEGS84@hotmail.com)
O kopiwa go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e. Gore o kgone go tsaa tshwetso e e maleba pele o amogela go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e, o tshwanetse go tlhaloganya gore patlisiso e ka ga eng, le gore a e mosola kana nyyaa. Tsele e ya go tsaa tshwetso, e bidiwa go tsaa tshwetso e e nang le kitso. Pampiri e e tlhalosa maikaelelo, tsamaiso, bomo le bodiphatsa jwa go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e. E tswelela e tlhalosa ka fa kitso ka ga wena o le motsaa karolo e tlaa dirisiwang e bo e sirelediwa ka teng. Fa o setse o badile pampiri e e bile o arable dipitso, o tlaa kopiwa go e tloatsa. Seo se tlaa go letlelela go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e. O tlaa boa o amogela moriti wa pampiri e e nna wa gago.

Tlhaloso ya Patlisiso.
Patlisiso e e direlwa go sekaseka ka fa barati ba Mpekweneng ba tsayang ditshwetso mo matshelong a bone a letsatsi le letsatsi, le ka ba ithutang ka teng ka motshameko o wa seromamowa.
Fa o amogela go nna motsaa karolo, o tlaa botswa dipotso go ka ga boitemogelo jwa gago jwa Mpekweneng. O tlaa botswa le ka ga kitso ya gago ka ditshutiso le boitshwaro jwa batho ka bolwetsi jwa HIV/AIDS.
Ga o a tshwanela go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e fa o sena kitso ka motshameko wa Mpekweneng, kgotsa o le ka fa tlae ga dingwaga tse lesome le borataro.
Dikakgelo tsa gago mo patlisisoong e di tlaa go tsaa metsotso e ka nna masome mararo.

Bodiphatsa
Ga go na bodiphatsa jo bo solofelwang.
**Bomosola**

Patlisiso e e mosola mo thutong le mo sechabeng ka e tlaa thusa go lemoga ka fa bareetsi ba *Makgabaneng* ba ikamanyang ka teng ba bo ba ithuta ka bolwetsi jwa HIV/AIDS mo motshamekong o wa seromamowa.

**Tshireletso le Dikarabo**

Kitso e o e fang e tlaa sirelediwa ke mmatlisisi, L. Meghan Peirce. Ga go na kitso epe mabapi le wena e e tlaa dirisiwang mo patlisisong e.

Mo godimo ga moo, le fa maikarabelo otlhe a tlaa tsewa go sireletsa kitso e o abang, go na le kganasego ya gore kitso eo e tlaa aroganwa le:

- Makalana a puso, sekai lephata la tsa bodiredi, le maikemisetso a lone e leng go sireletsa batsaa karolo mo patlisisong;
- Baemedi ba Ohio University (OU), go akarediwa le komiti ya basekiseki, komiti e e okametseng dipatlisiso kwa OU.

**Megala.**

Fa o na le dipotso ka ga patlisiso e, tshwaragana le *L. Meghan Peirce*, *LMEG84@hotmail.com* kgotsa 26775243864.

Fa o na le dipotso ka ga ditshwanelo tsa gago jaaka motsaa karolo, tshwaragana le Jo Ellen Sherow, mookamedi wa Ditumalano tsa Patlisiso, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

Ka go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e, o dumalana gore:

- O badile tumalano e (kgotsa o e baletswe) le gore o filwe sebaka sa go botsa dipotso dib o di arabia.
- O boleletswe ka ga kgonagalo ya bodiphatsa wa bo wa tlhalosediwa seo ka botlalo
- O tlhaloganya gore Ohio University ga e na madi fa thoko go dikgobalo tse di ka go tlagelang fao tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e.
- O n a le dingwaga tse di fetang lesome le borataro.
- Botsaa-karolo jwa gago ke ka boithaopo.
You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to complete the survey. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

**EXPLANATION OF STUDY**

This study is being done to assess how fans of Makgabaneng are identifying and learning through the radio drama.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer questions regarding your experience with Makgabaneng, as well as information regarding attitudes, behaviors and HIV/AIDS knowledge.

You should not participate in this study if you are not familiar with Makgabaneng or are under the age of 16.

Your participation in the study will last approximately 30 minutes.
Risks and Discomforts

No risks or discomforts are anticipated

Benefits

This study is important to science/society because it will help us understand how Makgabaneng’s audience is identifying with and learning from the HIV/AIDS radio drama.

Confidentiality and Records

Your study information will be kept confidential by the researcher, L. Meghan Peirce. No identifiable information will be on the survey instrument.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact L. Meghan Peirce, LMEGS84@hotmail.com or 26775243864.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
• you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
• you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
• you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
• you are 16 years of age or older
• your participation in this research is completely voluntary
• you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
APPENDIX D: SETSWANA INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Ohio University Tumelano ya go tsaa karolo mo Potsolotsong.
Setlhogo sa Patlisiso: Motshameko wa Makgabaneng mo Botswana: Tshekatsheko ya kamogelo ya thuto seka-motshameko go bareetsi.
Motsamaisi: L Megan Pierce (LMEGS84@hotmail.com)
O kopiwa go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e. Gore o kgone go tsaa tshwetso e e maleba pele o amogela go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e, o tshwanetse go thalaganya gore patlisiso e ka ga eng, le gore a e mosola kana nnyaa. Tsela e ya ga tsaa tshwetso, e bidiwa go tsaa tshwetso e e nang le kitso. Pampiri e e thalosa maikaelelo, tsamaiso, bomosola le bodiphatsa jwa go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e. E tswelela e thalosa ka fa kitso ka ga wena o le motsaa karolo e tlaa dirisiwang e bo e sirelediwa ka teng. Fa o setse o amogetse pampiri e e bile dipotsa gaa ka potsolotso e e arabilwe, o tlaa kopiwa go e baa monwana. Seo se tlaa go letelelela go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e. O tlaa boa o amogela moriti wa pampiri e e nna wa gago.

Tlhaloso ya Patlisiso.
Patlisiso e e direlwa go sekaseka ka fa barati ba Makgabaneng ba tsayang ditshwetso mo matseleng a bone a letsatsi le letsatsi, le ka fa ba ithutang ka teng ka motshameko o wa seromamowa.
Fa o amogela go nna motsaa karolo, o tlaa kopiwa go araba dipotsa ka ga boitemogelo jwa gago jwa Makgabaneng o na le batsaa karolo ba bangwe ba ka nna boferabobedi kgotsa lesome.
Ga o a tshwanela go tsaa karolo mo patlisisong e fa o sena kitso ka motshameko wa Makgabaneng, kgotsa o le ka fa tlase ga dingwaga tse lesome le borataro.
Dikakgelo tsa gago mo patlisisoong e di tlaa go tsaa sebaka sa oura e le nngwe.

Bodiphatsa
Ga go na bodiphatsa jo bo solofelwang.

Bomosola
Patlisiso e e mosola mo thutong le mo sechabeng ka e tlaa thusa go lemoga ka fa bareetsi ba *Makgabaneng* ba ikamanyang ka teng ba bo ba ithuta ka bolwetsi jwa HIV/AIDS mo motshamekong o wa seromamowa.

**Tshireletso le Dikarabo**

Kitso e o e fang e tlaa sirelediwa ke mmatlisisi, L. Meghan Peirce. Ga go na kitso epe mabapi le wena e e tlaa dirisiwang mo patlisisong e. Batsaa-karolo ba tlaa tsewa mantswe, mantswe a bone a tlaa bewa ke mmatlisisi. Di tlaa lotlelelwa dingwaga tse tlhano pele ga di ka senngwa, gape di tla tsenngwa mo lebokosong le le lotletsweng ka nako ya fa mmatlisisi a le mo mosepeleg go tswa Botswana go ya Amerika. Batsaa-karolo ba tlaa kopiwa go dirisa maina a e seng a nnete ka nako ya potsolotso go sireletsa sekao sa bone.

Mo godimo ga moo, le fa maikarabelo otlhe a tlaa tsewa go sireletsa kitso e o abang, go na le kganasego ya gore kitso eo e tlaa aroganwa le:

- Makalana a puso, sekai lephata la tsa bodiredi, le maikemisetso a lone e leng go sireletsa batsaa karolo mo patlisisong;
- Baemedi ba Ohio University (OU), go akarediwa le komiti ya basekiseki, komiti e e okametseng dipatlisiso kwa OU.

**Megala.**

Fa o na le dipotso ka ga patlisiso e, tshwaragana le *L. Meghan Peirce*, LMEGS84@hotmail.com kgotsa 26775243864.

Fa o na le dipotso ka ga ditshwanelo tsa gago jaaka motsaa karolo, tshwaragana le Jo Ellen Sherow, mookamedi wa Ditumalano tsa Patlisiso, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

Ka go baa monwana pampiri e, o dumalana gore:

- O badile tumalano e (kgotsa o e baletswe) le gore o filwe sebaka sa go botsa dipotso dib o di arabiwa.
- O boleletswe ka ga kgonagalo ya bodiphatsa wa bo wa tlhalosediwa seo ka botlalo
- O tlhaloganya gore Ohio University ga e na madi fa thoko go dikgobalo tse di ka go thagelang fao tsaar karolo mo patlisisong e.
- O n a le dingwaga tse di fetang lesome le borataro.
- Botsaa-karolo jwa gago ke ka boithaopo.
- O ka emisa go tsaa karolo kak nako nngwe le nngwe. Fa o swetsa go emisa go tsaa karolo, ga go na kotlhao epe mo go wena gape g ao nke o latlhegelwa ke bemosola bope ko ntle ga go builwe jalo.

Name (baa monwana)........................................................ Letsatsi..................
Leina...........................................................................
APPENDIX E – ENGLISH INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: Botswana's Makgabaneng: An Audience Reception Study of an Edutainment Drama

Researchers: L. Meghan Peirce (LMEGS84@hotmail.com)

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

EXPLANATION OF STUDY

This study is being done to assess how fans of Makgabaneng are identifying and learning through the radio drama.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer questions regarding your experience with the radio soap Makgabaneng in a one-on-one personal interview setting.

You should not participate in this study if you are not familiar with Makgabaneng or are under the age of 16.

Your participation in the study will last approximately 60 minutes.

Risks and Discomforts

No risks or discomforts are anticipated

Benefits

This study is important to science/society because it will help us understand how Makgabaneng’s audience is identifying with and learning from the HIV/AIDS radio drama.

Confidentiality and Records
Your study information will be kept confidential by the researcher, L. Meghan Peirce. No identifiable information will be on the final analysis. Participants will be audiotaped and stored in the researchers home. They will be kept locked for five years before destroyed, and will be checked in a locked suitcase during the researcher’s transit from Botswana to the USA. Participants will also be asked to use fake names during the interview to protect their confidentiality.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact L. Meghan Peirce, LMEGS84@hotmail.com or ________________

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
• you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
• you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
• you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
• you are 16 years of age or older
• your participation in this research is completely voluntary
• you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_________________________________________ Date
Printed Name_________________________________________

Version Date: [insert mm/dd/yy]
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Name, age, family members, place of origin, number of years in this area.

*Preferred radio drama*

Which programs do you prefer to listen to on the radio?

Why?

Which radio soap dramas do you listen to?

What is the story of your preferred radio drama? Tell the story.

What do you like in it?

Do you recognize anything from your everyday life in the drama?

What?

Does the story seem realistic?

Why or why not?

What is realistic/what is not realistic?

Do you imagine neighborhoods like your own in the radio drama?

If no, why not, do you think?

*Identification*

Why do you like to listen to radio dramas?

Who do you like best in *Makgabaneng*?

Why?

Do you recognize anything of yourself in the characters of *Makgabaneng*?

What do you recognize?

Would you like to live like the main characters of *Makgabaneng*?

Why/why not?

*Traces of the everyday*

Do you daily think about the drama/the character/the story?

What do you think about?
Do you talk to friends/colleagues about the radio drama?
Do you use the story of the radio drama in your everyday life?
How?
Does the radio drama give inspiration to solutions of problems in your everyday life?
Which?

Production
Do you notice the music in the radio drama?
Do you like it?
Why/ why not?
Is it possible for you to follow the story of the radio drama if you miss some of the episodes?
If yes, how do you do that?

Your own radio drama
If you could make your own radio drama, imagine you could tell a story in a radio drama, which story would you like to tell?
Why?
The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies):

Project Title: Botswana’s Makgabaneng: An Audience Reception Study of an Edutainment Drama “A”

Primary Investigator: L. Meghan Peirce
Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Rafael Obregon
(if applicable)

Department: Media Arts & Studies

Rebecca-Cale, AAB, CIP
Office of Research Compliance

Approval Date
04/09/10
Expiration Date
08/11

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW IRB APPROVAL

The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies):

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Project Title: Botswana's Makgabaneng: An Audience Reception Study of an Edutainment Drama "B"

Primary Investigator: L. Meghan Peirce
Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Rafael Obregon

Department: Media Arts & Studies

Rebecca Cale, AAB, CIP
Office of Research Compliance

Approval Date 04/09/10
Expiration Date 04/08/11

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.