

Politics and Communication in the Ciskei, an African 'Homeland' in South Africa

by

LES SWITZER

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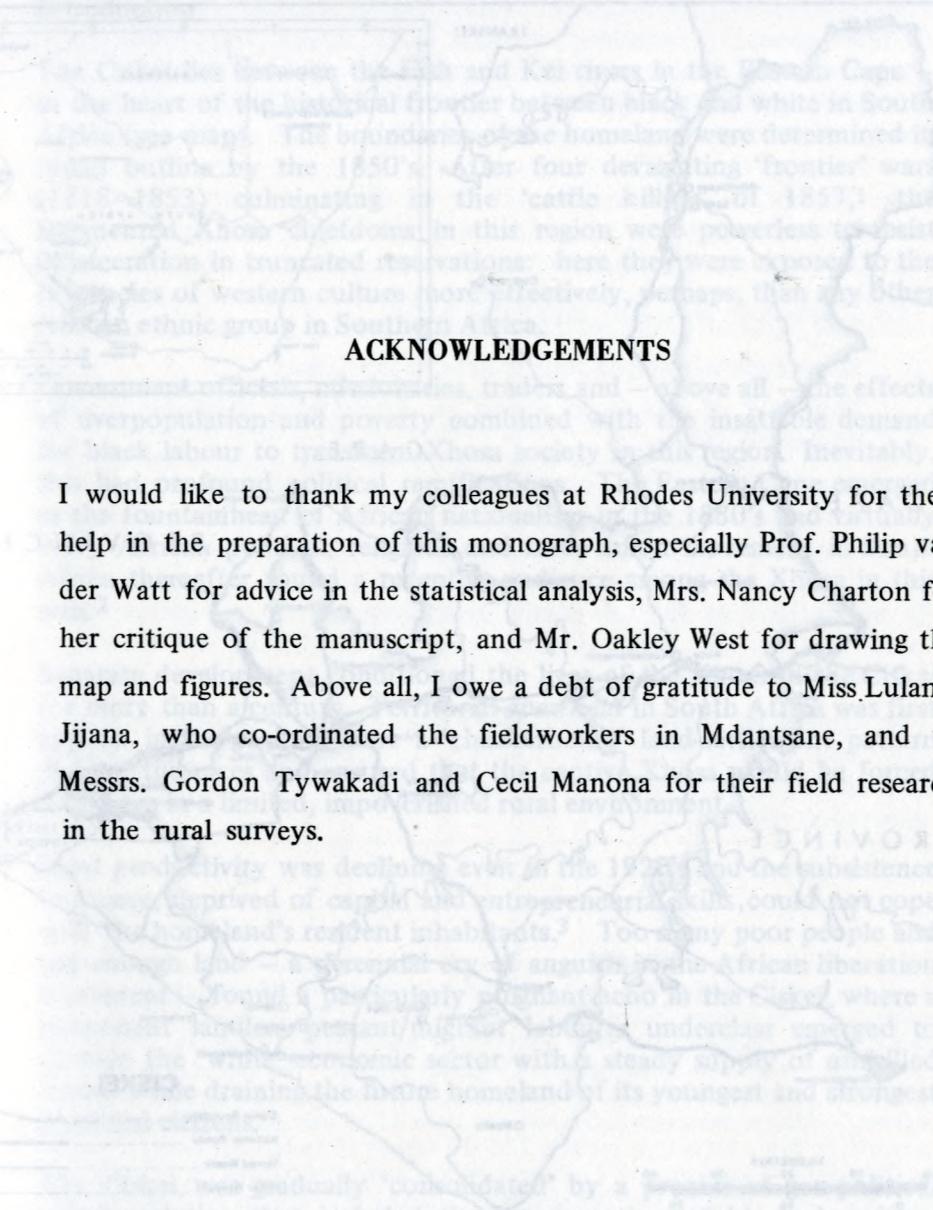
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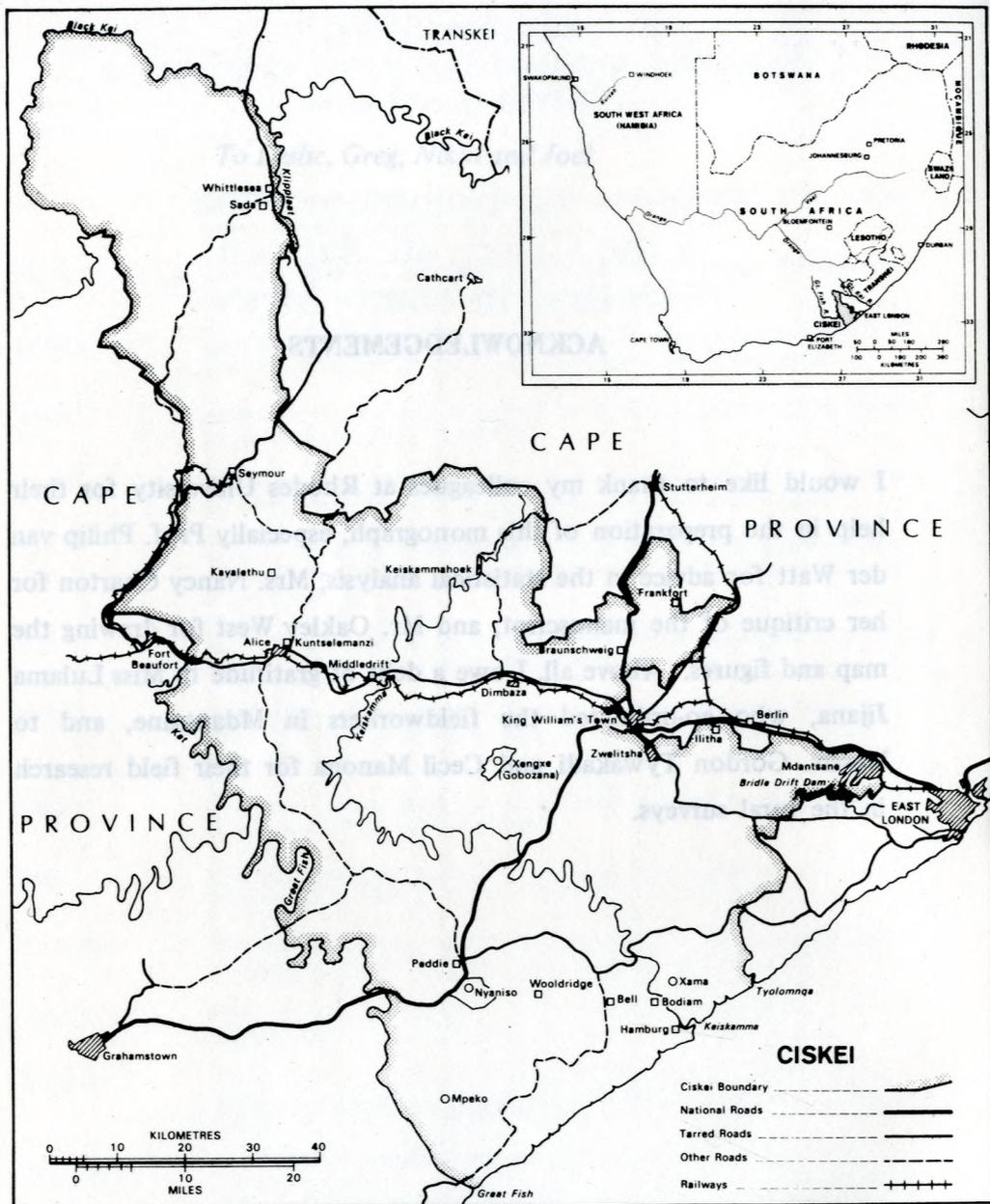
Rhodes University, Grahamstown

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Introduction

The Ciskei lies between the Fish and Kei rivers in the Eastern Cape – in the heart of the historical frontier between black and white in South Africa (see map). The boundaries of the homeland were determined in broad outline by the 1850's. After four devastating 'frontier' wars (1818–1853) culminating in the 'cattle killing' of 1857,¹ the fragmented Xhosa chiefdoms in this region were powerless to resist incarceration in truncated reservations: here they were exposed to the exigencies of western culture more effectively, perhaps, than any other African ethnic group in Southern Africa.

Government officials, missionaries, traders and – above all – the effects of overpopulation and poverty combined with the insatiable demand for black labour to transform Xhosa society in this region. Inevitably, this had profound political ramifications. The Eastern Cape emerged as the fountainhead of African nationalism in the 1880's and virtually every African political, religious and trade-union movement in South Africa thereafter found a receptive audience among the Xhosa in this area.²

Separate development conditioned the lives of the Xhosa in the Ciskei for more than a century. Territorial *apartheid* in South Africa was first applied in the region where a 'checkerboard' land-settlement pattern divided the races and ensured that the captive Xhosa would be forced to survive in a limited, impoverished rural environment.

Land productivity was declining even in the 1920's and the subsistence economy, deprived of capital and entrepreneurial skills, could not cope with the homeland's resident inhabitants.³ Too many poor people and not enough land – a perennial cry of anguish in the African liberation movement – found a particularly poignant echo in the Ciskei, where a permanent landless peasant/migrant labourer underclass emerged to provide the 'white' economic sector with a steady supply of unskilled labour while draining the future homeland of its youngest and strongest potential citizens.

The Ciskei was gradually 'consolidated' by a process of geo-political gerrymandering that included the incorporation of black dormitory townships dependent on 'white' cities outside the homeland for survival. By 1973, the Ciskei homeland's *de facto* population was estimated at 602 000.⁴ Since then, the overcrowded rural population has been

forced to absorb thousands of refugees removed from South Africa's 'white' areas – including several 'black spots' now outside the boundaries of the homeland – and migrants from two districts (Herschel and Glen Grey) formerly in the Ciskei which were ceded by the South African government to Transkei.⁵

Any attempt at measuring the extent to which communication affects the political credibility of the present Ciskei homeland in the eyes of its inhabitants must be weighed against these historical realities.

This monograph is divided into three parts:

1. An outline of the political system in the Ciskei.
2. The role of the mass media in determining attitudes towards homeland news.
3. Some observations on the status accorded oral channels of communication in the transmission and validation of political news in selected rural and urban areas of the Ciskei.+

In obtaining data for this study, five surveys were conducted in two rural villages, the biggest urban area in the Ciskei and the Ciskei Legislative Assembly.

The villages of Gobozana (or Xengxe) and Nyaniso formed the basis of the rural surveys conducted in April – June 1976. Fifty heads of homesteads in each village, in a universe of about 500 homesteads, were selected at random.

⁺The Ciskei homeland was the focus of a recent study conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University (Grahamstown) under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC). Six departments at Rhodes University participated in the project which was directed by Nancy Charton of the Department of Political Studies. The report, submitted to the HSRC in 1978, is entitled "A Socio-economic survey of the Border and Ciskei regions." Unless otherwise indicated, the material in part one of this monograph is based on four chapters in section 3 of the report: Charton and Gordon Renton ka Tywakadi "Emergence of Ciskeian political parties" (chapter 2), "Two township elections" (chapter 3), "Political party activity in a typical rural area" (chapter 4) and Charton "The legislative assembly" (chapter 5). The material in parts two and three is based on a chapter by the author entitled "Mass communication in a transitional society" (chapter 6). The source is cited in the footnotes as *Border and Ciskei survey*.

Mdantsane was chosen for two urban surveys, one conducted by the Political Studies Department of Rhodes University in November 1975 – February 1976 which focused on political attitudes, and one carried out under the auspices of the University's Journalism Department in December 1976 which concentrated on patterns of interpersonal and mass media communication. A dormitory suburb of East London, Mdantsane had an unofficial population of more than 150 000, divided into 10 zones,⁶ in 1976. The political survey comprised a systematic sample of 300 households stratified on the basis of age and sex. The communications survey consisted of a multi-stage cluster sample of 300 heads of households, of which 270 were accepted for analysis in this study.⁷

Forty-four of the 50 MPs in the Ciskei Legislative Assembly participated in the C.L.A. survey conducted in May 1975.

1. The Political System in the Ciskei

The re-establishment of traditional African authority in the Ciskei, as in South Africa's other homelands,⁸ has led to a new political dispensation in which chiefs and headmen again play key roles in decision-making at all levels of administration. The three-tiered system of government in the Ciskei has been built around these two figures: the headman-in-council in the rural village, the chief-in-council in the tribal authority and the chiefs and their councillors in the Legislative Assembly.

Chiefs dominated the Ciskeian Territorial Authority for 12 years before the first elections in February 1973, and 30 of the 50 seats in the Ciskei Legislative Assembly were held for chiefs in the original constitution.⁹ Their representation was subsequently increased to 33 in 1974 and 36 in 1975. The number of elected representatives was frozen at 20. When Ciskei lost the Herschel and Glen Grey districts in 1976, the number of chiefs and elected members in the Legislative Assembly was reduced temporarily to 28 and 15, respectively. By 1978 the number of chiefs had risen again to 32 and the number of elected representatives to 22 in the new 54 - member Legislative Assembly.

The chiefship is a much sought after position in the Ciskei today because it provides a measure of economic and, above all, political security. All chiefs are automatically members of the Legislative Assembly. They receive a small stipend as chiefs, a much larger salary as legislators and many benefit also from a special "discretionary fund" which is at the disposal of the chief minister. There are unquestionably other financial perks as well, for the chiefs occupy a socio-economic status far above the mass of the population.

As described by Charton, the chief has three political roles. He is a legislator at the local 'tribal' level. The chief, together with his council, exercises considerable power over those who are members of his chieftom. The chief is also a government bureaucrat. He is an administrator responsible for implementing the legislation passed by the South African and Ciskei governments and he is a judicial officer in the sphere of traditional African law. Finally, the chief is a legislator and party politician at the national level. However vulnerable the chiefship might be in other respects,¹⁰ those who hold the title are peers of the realm, as it were, for life.

The importance of chiefs in modern Ciskei politics can be seen most clearly with the emergence of political parties in the homeland. With one exception,¹¹ the first general election of 1973 was conducted without political parties. The 20 elected legislative seats were apportioned among 480 801 registered voters – a phenomenal 51,5% of the *de jure* population of the Ciskei¹² – in nine electoral divisions. The 63 candidates were generally aligned to various loose-knit groups dominated by personalities who had been members of the Territorial Authority. The two most important were Justice Mabandla – a chief who had been head of the Territorial Authority for 12 years and was at the time chairman of the executive council of the Ciskei Legislative Assembly – and Lennox Sebe – a commoner who was a member of Mabandla's cabinet. Only one candidate – D.R. Guzana, brother of Knowledge Guzana, leader of the Democratic Party in the Transkei – stood on a multi-racial platform. The rest accepted separate development.

With no ideological differences between the candidates and no political parties, the various factions inevitably used “tribal structures” – the only permissible institutions in the homeland which could be manipulated for political purposes – and exploited “tribal issues” in canvassing the vote. The key difference between the two main candidates was their ethnic origin: Mabandla was Mfengu and Sebe was Rharhabe. The Rharhabe was the bigger chiefdom in the Ciskei and, as a result, Sebe's faction won 13 of the 20 elected seats. After the election, the two major political parties were formed – Mabandla's Mfengu-dominated Ciskei National Party (CNP) and Sebe's Rharhabe-dominated Ciskei National Independence Party (CNIP). The exploitation of ethnic loyalties was to be a key factor in Ciskei political life thereafter.

Nevertheless, Sebe required the allegiance of two independent legislators and 11 of the chiefs to be elected chief minister with 26 votes in the 50-member Legislative Assembly. It was obvious that Sebe could strengthen his party in the Legislative Assembly only by establishing new chiefships. Nine were created between 1973 and 1976 – including one for Sebe – and all those appointed at the time were CNIP members. Since 1975, moreover, only chiefs have received cabinet posts. The relative strengths of the parties and the importance of the chiefship in the Legislative Assembly can be seen in the following table:¹³

**Table 1. Party representation in the Ciskei Legislative Assembly:
1973 – 1976**

Legislators	1973		1974		1975		1976		
	CNIP	CNP	CNIP	CNP	CNIP	CNP	CNIP	CNP	CNUP ⁺
Chiefs	11	19	16	17	18	18	15	12	1
Elected	15	5	16	4	16	4	14	1	—

⁺Chief Siphon Burns-Ncamashe formed the Ciskei National Union Party (CNUP) after he was expelled from the CNIP in 1976.

By 1976 the CNIP, with a majority of the chiefs, was no longer so dependent on victory at the polls.

Although political parties had been functioning in the Ciskei for only three years by the end of 1976, it was apparent that they had already gained a measure of support from the populace. In 1974, a survey of factory workers in the East London area showed that 52% of the respondents claimed to be members of a Ciskei political party, 88% supporting the CNIP and 12% the CNP. In the Mdantsane political survey 32% of the respondents claimed to be party members – 84% supporting the CNIP and 16% the CNP. Charton and Tywakadi judged the percentage polls in various elections between 1973 and 1976 to be “relatively high, especially in the rural areas.”

Nevertheless, “the emergence of a party system” was not yet apparent in the Ciskei and neither party had achieved “mass mobilisation at grass roots level.” The CNIP had about 100 local branches in 1976 whereas the CNP had only 11 branches and most of these were in the towns. Between elections, the local branches “tended to shrink” in the rural as well as the urban areas “as a result of apathy.” Neither party had functioning youth wings, moreover, which suggested “a serious failure to win the youth” to homeland politics.

The elected legislators represented mainly commercial interests – nine of the 18 elected members interviewed in the C.L.A. survey were businessmen. Crucial occupation groups either had marginal representation – three legislators interviewed were farmers – or no representation at all – in this category were included landless peasants, migrant labourers, urban workers and the upper professional elite (doctors, lawyers, academics). Certain sex and age groups – namely, women and youth – were also absent from the Legislative Assembly.

Although the legislators in the C.L.A. survey maintained that they communicated regularly with the voters – addressing public meetings, appearing before various citizens' groups and making themselves available for private interviews – 50 respondents (17%) in the Mdantsane political survey had encountered problems with Ciskeian authorities “in the past year” and only three of these had sought help from the politicians. In the rural areas, communication appeared to be authoritarian and hierarchical – from bureaucrats and legislators in Zwelitsha, the capital, through the chiefs in the tribal authorities to the headmen in the villages. The homestead heads of Gobošana, for example, were “unaware of the existence of the legislature, and of its potential for being lobbied and pressured”, even though their chief was a cabinet minister and two of his councillors were members of the Legislative Assembly.

The CNIP's consistently strong showing at the polls would seem to indicate that their party organisation was more effective at the grass-roots level. In part, this has been attributed to the fact that the party “followed a consistent policy”, never deviating “from the framework . . . of separate development.” The CNP, on the other hand, changed its policy radically in 1974 from one which supported the principles of *apartheid* to one which advocated “multiracialism.” The CNP tried to project a new image in the Legislative Assembly – protesting the South African government's policy of using the homeland as a ‘dumping ground’ for Xhosa removed from ‘white’ areas, claiming the area between the Fish and Kei rivers as the Ciskei's historic homeland and urging amalgamation with the Transkei – but the new strategy apparently has not enhanced its credibility with the voters. Like its counterpart in the Transkei, the CNP continued to function within the framework of *apartheid*, “actively co-operating in legitimizing the institutions created by this policy.”

Perhaps the most important factor in the CNIP's dominance was the

tendency “to follow approved leaders and . . . to take the side of the majority.” Sebe featured in 35,6% of 1 322 stories relating to the Ciskei, for example, which were clipped from South Africa’s daily and weekend newspaper press between April 1974 and April 1977. The Legislative Assembly featured in only 6% of the stories. Sebe was the most popular politician in the Mdantsane political survey with 25% of the respondents choosing the chief minister. Furthermore, there was little sympathy or understanding for the concept of an opposition party which had no parallel in traditional political life and, in any event, which conflicted with the greater need for “solidarity in African eyes.” This was particularly evident, as Charton and Tywakadi point out, in the Mdantsane political survey where voters found it “difficult to discriminate between the ruling party and the government” and did not understand why an opposition party was needed.

In addition, it was said that the CNIP influenced the appointment of headmen in the rural villages,¹⁴ while in the cities allegations of election abuses perpetrated by the ruling party were widespread.¹⁵ Claims were made in the English-language press and by the opposition CNP that the South African government favoured Sebe’s party and interfered in homeland elections.¹⁶ Security legislation also discouraged multi-racial contact on a political level inside as well as outside the Ciskei.

Within the constraints placed on it by the South African government, which subsidizes 79% of the Ciskei’s annual budget, the CNIP apparently has been fairly successful at improving the living and working conditions of those who depend on the party for support – civil servants, teachers, medical personnel, cash-crop farmers, traders and the new industrial and commercial elite who are dependent on the Ciskei Development Corporation for survival. The CNIP’s relatively successful tenure as the ruling party, contrasted with the weaknesses of the opposition, has accelerated the trend towards a one-party state in the Ciskei.

In the June 1978 elections – with several opposition candidates either in detention or in hiding – the CNIP won all the contested seats in the Legislative Assembly. Only six chiefs, moreover, were linked to the opposition parties; the others had joined the CNIP. With this mandate from the people – 53% of the eligible voters cast ballots – Sebe is seeking independence for the Ciskei in 1979.

2. The role of the Mass Media

Against this background, it might well be wondered whether the mass media had any political role to play in the Ciskei. Newspapers, magazines and radio stations were owned and controlled outside the homeland by white South Africans. Television was introduced in South Africa in January 1976 and caters almost exclusively for a white audience. The first cinema built for Africans in Mdantsane – there were none in the rural areas – was not opened until June 1976.¹⁷ Nevertheless, mass media exposure patterns were similar to what one might expect in a developing country. Urbanites were the major mass media consumers while rural villagers for the most part remained on the fringe of mass communication.

Household heads in the Mdantsane communications survey who read newspapers and magazines (85,9%) and listened to the radio regularly (87%)¹⁸ compared more than favourably with urbanites elsewhere in black Africa.¹⁹ The tendency to read English-language newspapers and magazines but listen to a radio station in the vernacular also conformed to the pattern of mass media usage among urban blacks in South Africa.²⁰ Despite the relatively high proportion of respondents who claimed a reading knowledge of Afrikaans (35,6%), virtually no one read publications in this language.²¹

East London's *Daily Dispatch* was read regularly by 76,1% of the urban respondents. Of the 15 newspapers cited in the Mdantsane communications survey, only King William's Town's *Imvo Zabantsundu* with 39,8% of the urban respondents appeared in the vernacular. *Imvo Zabantsundu* and *Weekend World* (33,7%), then published in Johannesburg, were the only newspapers aimed specifically at a black audience. The others – including Johannesburg's *Sunday Times* (25,5%) and *Rand Daily Mail* (3,6%), and Port Elizabeth's *Evening Post* (17,7%) – were white-dominated, English-language newspapers with a multi-racial readership.

Magazines aimed at an African audience fared much better in the urban sample. *Drum* (45,3%), an English-language weekly still owned by publisher James Bailey, was by far the most popular.²² Lagging behind were the vernacular magazines *Bona* (17,3%), a multilingual pictorial monthly published by Perskor, one of the two major Afrikaans publishing companies, and *Inkqubela* (12%), a Xhosa monthly distributed free of charge by the South African government's

Department of Information. English-language magazines like *Scope* (6,6%), a glossy entertainment weekly, the South African edition of the *Reader's Digest* (6,3%) and *Darling* (1,2%), a fortnightly women's magazine, were relatively more expensive and, unlike English-language newspapers, had made virtually no effort to appeal to blacks.

The Xhosa-language broadcasts of Radio Bantu, from studios located in King William's Town, were listened to regularly by 79,6% of the urban residents in the Mdantsane communications survey, and 35,9% depended solely on this station. A factor which could become significant in the future was the number of radio stations for whites listened to regularly by black urbanites. Radio Good Hope (41,5%), Springbok Radio (39,6%) and the South African Broadcasting Corporation's English-language service (25,9%) were the most popular after Radio Bantu and all projected western Christian middle-class cultural values and norms. About 5,2% of the urban respondents who listened to the radio regularly apparently had access to shortwave and received stations in Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia, in addition to the BBC and Voice of America.

The MPs in the Ciskei Legislative Assembly apparently were less exposed to the print media than the urbanites. Only 59% read newspapers regularly – 41% of the chiefs were in this category – while all but one legislator listened to the Xhosa-language service of Radio Bantu regularly. The vernacular *Imvo Zabantsundu* (86,4%), moreover, was read more regularly than the *Daily Dispatch* (75%), while *Inkqubela* (63,6%) and *Bona* (40,9%) were favoured by a large margin over all English-language magazines²³ Only 67% of the chiefs in the legislature, for example, claimed a reading knowledge of English as opposed to 84,4% of the household heads in the Mdantsane communications survey. In part, this may be due to educational disparities. Questions relating to education – as well as household income – were dropped from the C.L.A. survey because too many legislators refused to divulge this information.

In the Mdantsane communications survey, 87,5% of the household heads claimed an educational level beyond standard 2 – UNESCO's minimum criterion for 'literacy' in any language.

None of the prerequisites for exploiting mass communication were present in the rural areas. In fact, the proportion of *de facto* homestead heads who were 65 and above, unemployed and without

formal education was probably higher than normal even for a transitional peasant society.²⁴ Consequently, very few of the respondents in the rural survey had access to the mass media: 78% did not read newspapers, 95% did not read magazines, 91% did not have relatives, friends or acquaintances read to them, and 64% did not listen to the radio. *Imvo Zabantsundu* was read occasionally by 19% of the rural respondents and 36% listened to the Xhosa-language service of Radio Bantu.

The Ciskei, then, was similar to other transitional societies in that the urban inhabitants – conservatively estimated at 23,7% of the resident homeland population in 1973²⁵ – were the main mass media consumers. They showed a preference for a western-orientated, English-language press but preferred to listen to an ethnic-orientated, Xhosa-language radio station. Urban blacks had easier access, moreover, to all the media channels than their rural counterparts.²⁶ Although urban blacks in the Ciskei neither owned nor controlled the mass media, they were not unlike South Africa's affluent white population in their reading and listening habits.²⁷

To determine urban attitudes towards homeland news as communicated by the mass media, household heads in the Mdantsane communications survey were asked to select their *favourite*²⁸ newspaper and radio station from among those which were read and listened to regularly. East London's English-language *Daily Dispatch* (65,1%) and King William's Town's Xhosa-language *Imvo Zabantsundu* (20,3%) were the two newspapers most favoured by the urban household heads and, as expected, the Xhosa-language service of Radio Bantu (72,3%) was their favourite radio station.

The *Daily Dispatch* was published by Crewe Trust, an independent foundation, in 1976.²⁹ In keeping with many other white newspapers in South Africa, the *Daily Dispatch* includes a weekly black supplement in English and Xhosa called *Indaba*,³⁰ but it is also one of the few which try to promote a black image in its news and opinion, sport, women's and society, business and finance pages.

Firmly opposed to *apartheid* and committed to the task of "breaking down the barriers of separation both in thinking and living" that divide the people of South Africa, the *Daily Dispatch* nevertheless accepts the "reality of the homelands."

At least two of the six Africans on the integrated editorial staff work full time on homeland news³¹ and the Ciskei and Transkei governments strive hard to keep the newspaper informed of political, social and – particularly – economic developments. White staffers maintain that the newspaper does not present a “negative” view of homeland news, although they feel that the Ciskei, Transkei and the white corridor in between will eventually be amalgamated into a single “entity”. Consequently, they are “sympathetic” to the Ciskeian opposition party’s declared policies of non-racialism and “union” with the Transkei.

In 1976, however, homeland news had to compete with news from those organisations created inside South Africa since 1968 to articulate the ideology of Black Consciousness. This is why the *Daily Dispatch* – and the *Rand Daily Mail*³² – stood out in the white, English-language press for their coverage of black news. According to the editor at the time, the *Daily Dispatch* encouraged the “legitimization” of these dissident groups in the hope that eventually their policies might be “incorporated into the peaceful options open to all South Africans.”

Imvo Zabantsundu – the oldest continuous newspaper founded by an African in South Africa³³ – is now owned by Perskor, the Afrikaans publishing company. Prominent government ministers and members of the ruling National Party are on the board of directors of this corporation and the newspaper reflects a pro-government view on the advantages of separate development in the designated African homelands. The newspaper maintains a “positive” image of news and opinion on the homelands. As far as political activity in the Ciskei and Transkei is concerned, the newspaper focuses on the activities of the ruling party in each case. This policy was communicated verbally to the newspaper’s 16 black reporters by its white, Afrikaans-speaking editor in 1976.³⁴ When Ciskei and Transkei officials, for example, made speeches which were deemed to be against the interests of the South African government, the stories were rewritten. Less contentious issues raised by the speaker were highlighted or the item was simply emasculated to reflect a neutral point of view.

News generated outside the homeland agenda was not tolerated. Black Consciousness organisations, for example, were not given space to air their views in *Imvo Zabantsundu* and the news generated by these groups was either ignored or reduced to the bare minimum. Although

handouts and stories from contributors comprised perhaps 30% of the editorial space in the newspaper in 1976, leaders, political news and commentary were written by staffers, translated into English or Afrikaans and vetted by the editor before publication. Among other items, letters to the editor were censored for political content and, where necessary, translated for the editor's scrutiny.

As a government monopoly in South Africa, broadcasting offers an ideal medium for communicating the ideology of *apartheid*.³⁵ News and documentary programmes on Radio Bantu focus on ethnic topics: political, social and economic development in the homelands, personality profiles of prominent chiefs and other traditional leaders, efforts to preserve 'tribal' identity in the urban areas, activities of the 'tribal' universities and new developments in Bantu-language dictionaries and literatures.³⁶ Entertainment programmes on Radio Bantu mediate explicit informational messages as well. Virtually every feature and serial, for example, has "a moral lesson", while hymns and traditional African songs are favoured musical fare. Religious broadcasts *per se* comprised only about 4% of Radio Bantu's total weekly transmission of 721 hours in 1975, for example, but all informants interviewed were of the opinion that religious themes played an indirect role in many other programmes as well. Women's and children's programmes, grouped together, stressed, among other things, "character building stories" and included such topics as "rules of etiquette for the Bantu." Sports organisations which supported the principle of racial separation in the selection of local, provincial and national teams were also given favourable coverage. A Bantu Programme Control Board ensured that black and white personnel responsible for programme content on Radio Bantu promoted these policies.

Staff members of the Xhosa-language studios of Radio Bantu in King William's Town, like those employed by *Imvo Zabantsundu*, were expected to reflect a "positive" view of separate development in the preparation of news programmes which were written usually in Afrikaans before being translated into Xhosa. The King William's Town studios broadcast 11 news programmes a day – seven national bulletins, two local/regional bulletins, one headline bulletin and one news commentary on national and international events. National/international news was compiled from the major domestic and foreign wire services by white staffers in Johannesburg. In addition, the King William's Town studios broadcast a summary of local/regional events twice a week.³⁷

National and, of course, local/regional news on Radio Bantu gave more coverage to items of interest to black listeners than the English and Afrikaans services. Like *Imvo Zabantsundu*, however, Radio Bantu broadcast political news outside the homeland agenda only when it could not be ignored – as in the case of the Soweto riots. Apart from these daily/weekly news broadcasts, the Xhosa-language service had a special daily broadcast of parliamentary news for both Ciskei and Transkei. In fact, Radio Bantu unquestionably covered homeland parliamentary activities more thoroughly than either of the two favoured newspapers.

In the Mdantsane communications survey, the household heads were given examples of news relating specifically to Ciskei homeland activities in the rural and urban areas and encouraged to think of other examples from personal experience. They were then asked to evaluate the coverage of Ciskei news in their favourite newspaper/radio station in terms of whether or not they felt it was accurate, impartial and informative. These scores were then combined³⁸ to establish a credibility rating for Ciskei homeland news:

Table 2. Urban respondents' credibility rating of Ciskei homeland news coverage in the *Daily Dispatch* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*, in per cent

	Daily Dispatch (N = 151)	Imvo Zabantsundu (N = 47)
Ciskei homeland news	69,8	77,3

Urban respondents' credibility rating of Ciskei homeland news coverage on Radio Bantu, in per cent

	Daily Despatch Listeners (N = 90)	Imvo Zabantsundu Listeners (N=39)	Other listeners[†] (N = 41)
Ciskei homeland news	71,1	75,2	57,7
[†] 'Other listeners' included those who did not read and those who favoured newspapers other than the <i>Daily Dispatch</i> and <i>Imvo Zabantsundu</i> .			

Both newspapers received a high credibility rating as far as Ciskei news was concerned and, in fact, these scores compared favourably with those for other categories of news rated during the communications survey. Although only 90 (59,6%) of the 151 respondents who favoured the *Daily Dispatch* chose Radio Bantu as their favourite radio station – as opposed to 39 (83%) of the 47 respondents who favoured *Imvo Zabantsundu* – both groups also gave Radio Bantu a high credibility rating for Ciskei news. Those urban respondents who favoured other newspapers or did not read (24,1% of Radio Bantu's listeners) were far more critical of the station's Ciskei news coverage. It is probable that those household heads who favoured other radio stations – SABC English (11,1%), Springbok Radio (8,9%), Radio Good Hope (7,2%) – did so in the belief that they offered news programmes more compatible with their interests and needs.³⁹

These credibility scores compared favourably with the urban respondents' preference for Ciskei homeland news:

Table 3 Urban respondents' attitudes towards Ciskei news in the *Daily Dispatch* and *Imvo Zabantsundu* and for those who do not read: first preference, in per cent.

	Daily Dispatch (N = 151)	Imvo Zabantsundu (N = 47)	Those who do not read (N= 38)
Ciskei homeland news	22,5	34,0	34,2

Urban respondents' attitudes towards Ciskei news on *Radio Bantu*: first preference, in per cent.

	Daily Dispatch Listeners (N = 90)	Imvo Zabantsundu Listeners (N=39)	Other Listeners ⁺ (N = 41)
Ciskei homeland news	34,1	28,2	26,8

⁺ 'Other listeners' included those who did not read and those who favoured newspapers other than the *Daily Dispatch* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*.

Imvo Zabantsundu readers showed a marked preference for Ciskei homeland news which was shared by those who did not read newspapers and magazines. The only other news category evaluated during the communications survey which achieved a similar top-preference rating for both these groups was local (Mdantsane) township news. *Daily Dispatch* readers were generally more balanced in their priorities. Several news categories – including local township, national and international news – vied with the Ciskei homeland for top news preference. All urban respondents who selected Radio Bantu as their favourite radio station, however, were more interested in Ciskei

homeland news. There was little evidence of discrimination based on readership although, once again, local township news vied with Ciskei homeland news for *Imvo Zabantsundu* listeners as well as 'other listeners'. Thus it would appear that *Daily Dispatch* readers, those who favoured non-local newspapers and those who did not read, used Radio Bantu to supplement their information on the Ciskei whereas *Imvo Zabantsundu* readers found their homeland news preferences reinforced by listening to Radio Bantu.

Roughly one-fifth (52 respondents) of the household heads in the Mdantsane communications survey placed Ciskei news in the top preference category. Chi-square scores for this group suggested that education was the most significant variable up to the 0,05 level. A discriminant analysis using seven variables – education, church affiliation, income, employment, sex, age and language fluency (reading knowledge of Xhosa, English and/or Afrikaans) – showed that those who used the mass media and preferred Ciskei news could be correctly classified as such with a probability of 95% . Those who did not use the mass media and preferred Ciskei news showed a reasonable probability of 71% of correct classification.

On the whole, those who preferred Ciskei news in the Mdantsane communications survey were less educated than the other urban respondents and less likely to read newspapers and magazines. In fact, they were more limited in their choice of media channels – being relatively more dependent, for example, on the vernacular newspaper or radio station. Urban household incomes for those who favoured Ciskei news generally were below the *effective minimum level* of R193,70 for an African family of six in October 1976. In essence, those urban household heads who preferred Ciskei news appeared to have a status life more comparable with that of the rural villager.

3. Oral Channels of Communication

Ciskei's rural population remained on the fringe of mass communication but this did not mean that the villagers were isolated from the outside world. Interaction between village and city, for example, was as significant in the Ciskei as in other developing societies.⁴⁰ Interpersonal communication between village and city often worked both ways, moreover, and sometimes the village, as well as the city, initiated exchanges of information and influence.⁴¹

Messages channelled through the Nyaniso and Gobozana village councils, however, were not always validated. Evidence of problems encountered in the agricultural extension officer's attempt to introduce alternative farming methods,⁴² in birthcontrol programmes⁴³ and in efforts to influence the villagers' attitude towards education – none wanted their children to go beyond Std. 8 and only 20% would spend any extra money they might receive on their children's schooling – suggest at least indifference to those messages exhorting the villagers to make specific changes in their lifestyle. It would appear that these change agents did not have the confidence of the villagers and, in fact, only 7% of the rural homestead heads felt these sources provided the most accurate and reliable information they received through the village council.

Political news, however, was a different matter. The most important traditional leader at the local level is the headman who is chairman of both the *imbizo* and the *inkundla* as well as the village committee which assists him in preparing the agenda for the village council and in implementing its decisions. The headman is also the communication link between his village and neighbouring villages, the tribal authority and the central government at Zwelitsha. Obviously, the newly-formed political parties in the homeland had to work through the headmen who, in turn, usually found that it was in the interests of the village to cater to the politicians. Even ethnic loyalty could be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, as Tywakadi has shown for the village of Gobozana which was Mfengu but under a Rharhabe tribal authority. If the headman of Gobozana did not allow the Rharhabe-dominated CNIP to hold meetings in his village, and if he did not help in selling party membership cards and in collecting local party funds, the village would suffer: “. . . the villagers see politics as a zero sum game. Where the winner takes all you must be on the winning side, or stand to lose all.”⁴⁴

Because all Ciskei legislators must compete for political survival within the framework of traditional institutions, even the creation of local party branches in the rural areas was not as important as maintaining good relations with headmen and village councils. News from Ciskei government officials and the MP for Peddie, for example, was transmitted mainly through the headman-in-council at Nyaniso and this appeared to be the preferred channel of communication throughout rural Ciskei.⁴⁵

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It was possible, of course, to subvert the system temporarily – as Manona has shown for Nyaniso where ethnic conflicts in 1973 led to political meetings being held in the local Ethiopian church⁴⁶ – but on the whole it would appear that the credibility of political news received from chiefs and headmen in the rural areas was fairly high. At Nyaniso and Gobošana, 59% of the respondents felt this source provided the most accurate and reliable news they received through the village council.

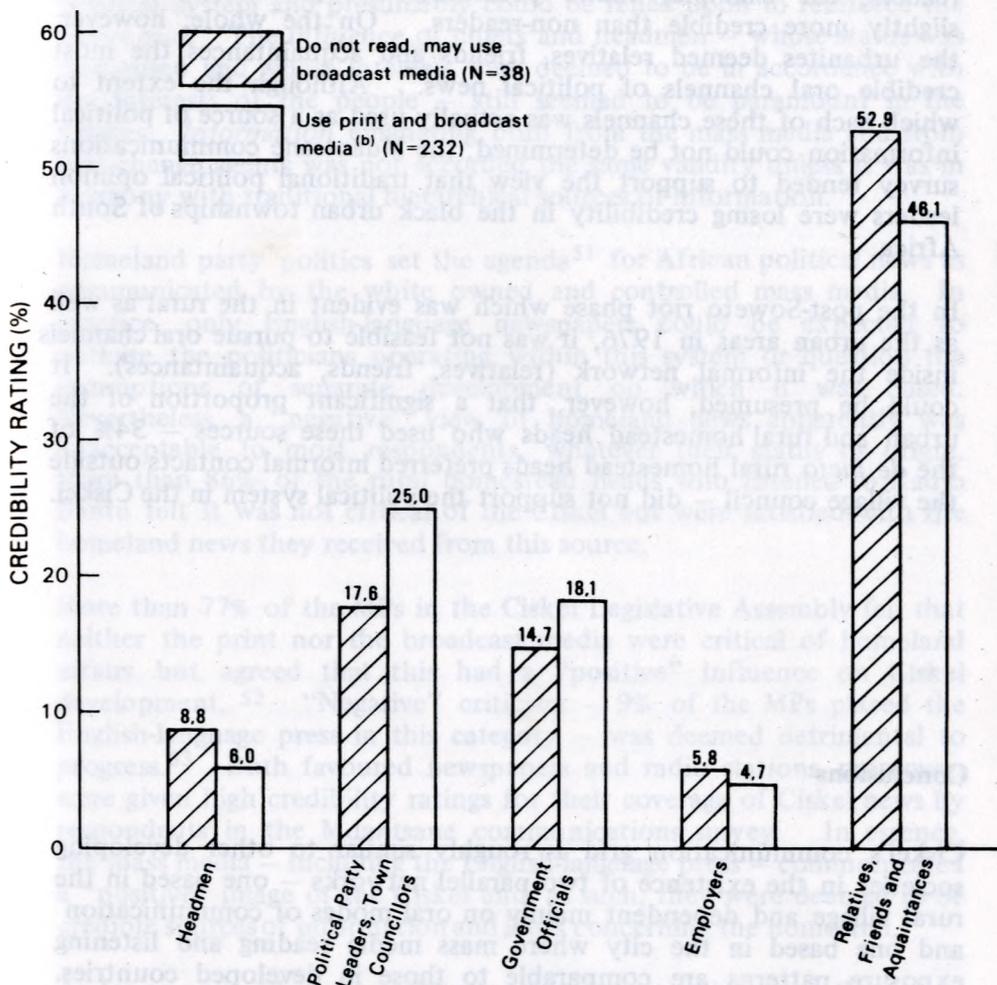
Chiefs and headmen – with the biggest stake in ensuring that the traditional system was preserved – played the major roles in communicating political news in the rural areas. Even the urbanites seemed to have been partially dependent on rural villagers for homeland news, because it was felt that chairmen of the village councils had greater access than urban household heads to Ciskeian government officials and legislators in Zwelitsha.⁴⁷ Above all, traditional political leaders, unlike other change agents, apparently posed no radical threat to village norms, regardless of which political party was favoured.⁴⁸

To suggest how political news not derived from the mass media was communicated in the urban areas, five potential oral channels were pinpointed. Four were deemed essentially official channels of homeland political news – headmen, political party leaders and town councillors (members of the 'Urban Bantu Council'), government officials and employers who were overwhelmingly white (77,8% of the urban household heads). The one designated unofficial channel – relatives, friends and acquaintances – was deemed after pre-tests to be a less favourable conduit of homeland news and a more likely source of alternative, albeit unspecified, political news.

On the surface, it would appear that official homeland channels of political news had the advantage. Mdantsane's 10 zones were divided into street wards to facilitate political communication. Ciskei government officials and politicians as well as the town councillors, who were overwhelmingly CNIP men, communicated their views to the voters through this zonal grid. Many wards, moreover, contained unofficial headmen who performed much the same leadership function in the urban community as their official counterparts did in the rural villages.⁴⁹ In the Mdantsane political survey, for example, about one-third of the respondents said they had been canvassed by members of the Ciskei homeland's political parties. The respondents' employers, mainly white, could also be expected to promote homeland politics.

The following graph suggests the credibility of the five designated sources of political news in Mdantsane:

Figure 2. Urban respondents' attitudes towards oral news credibility, in per cent (N = 270)^(a)



(a) Oral news credibility scores were obtained in the same manner as the media news credibility scores: the 'well-informed' response was given twice the weight of the 'accurate' and 'impartial' responses. The combined score is a mean percent of the 'informed' and 'accurate-impartial' scores.

(b) Those who read but for various reasons did not listen to the radio regularly (17 respondents) were included in this group.

The press in the Eastern Cape acknowledges separate homelands as legitimate outlets for African political aspirations, and Ciskei-Transkei party politics is covered extensively in both the *Daily Dispatch* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*. This might explain why newspaper/magazine readers, for example, found politicians and government officials slightly more credible than non-readers. On the whole, however, the urbanites deemed relatives, friends and acquaintances the most credible oral channels of political news. Although the extent to which each of these channels was actually used as a source of political information could not be determined, the Mdantsane communications survey tended to support the view that traditional political opinion leaders were losing credibility in the black urban townships of South Africa.

In the post-Soweto riot phase which was evident in the rural as well as the urban areas in 1976, it was not feasible to pursue oral channels inside the informal network (relatives, friends, acquaintances). It could be presumed, however, that a significant proportion of the urban and rural homestead heads who used these sources – 34% of the *de facto* rural homestead heads preferred informal contacts outside the village council – did not support the political system in the Ciskei.

Conclusions

Ciskei's communication grid is roughly similar to other developing societies in the existence of two parallel networks – one based in the rural village and dependent mainly on oral modes of communication and one based in the city where mass media reading and listening exposure patterns are comparable to those in developed countries.

Mass communication has accentuated these differences in the Ciskei, as elsewhere, because it has mirrored the frustrations and expectations

of the urban dweller. Rural villagers seemed indifferent to the urban-orientated informational messages of the mass media⁵⁰ and even resistant to change agents who were perceived as threats to their prevailing life style. On the other hand, rural villagers appeared to identify with oral opinion leaders who supported the traditional political system and presumably could be relied upon to reinforce the *status quo*. The *influence* of chiefs and headmen – whose status was recognised and whose interests were deemed to be in accordance with the interests of the people – still seemed to be paramount in the villages. *Information* emanating both from the mass media and from oral change agents was not accorded the same validity unless it was in harmony with traditional hierarchical sources of information.

Homeland party politics set the agenda⁵¹ for African political news as communicated by the white owned and controlled mass media. In practice, only English-language newspapers could be expected to criticise the politicians operating within this system or question the assumptions of separate development on which it was based. Nevertheless, a “negative” view of homeland news apparently was unacceptable to most respondents, whatever their status or origin. More than 86% of the rural homestead heads who listened to Radio Bantu felt it was not critical of the Ciskei but were satisfied with the homeland news they received from this source.

More than 77% of the MPs in the Ciskei Legislative Assembly felt that neither the print nor the broadcast media were critical of homeland affairs but agreed that this had a “positive” influence on Ciskei development.⁵² “Negative” criticism – 9% of the MPs placed the English-language press in this category – was deemed detrimental to progress.⁵³ Both favoured newspapers and radio stations, moreover, were given high credibility ratings for their coverage of Ciskei news by respondents in the Mdantsane communications survey. In essence, the mass media – including the English-language press – communicated a “positive” image of the Ciskei and, as such, they were deemed to be credible sources of information and ideas concerning the homeland.

As far as political party preference was concerned, however, there were important differences between the images conveyed by the English-language press and the Xhosa-language newspaper and radio station. The Ciskei government was “bitterly aware” of the English-language press’ critical coverage of the ruling CNIP,⁵⁴ and, in fact, Sebe announced in 1976 that the government would publish its

own newspaper. An analysis of homeland news in the *Daily Dispatch* and *Imvo Zabantsundu* during the Legislative Assembly session in 1975 suggested that the former favoured the CNP while the latter "displays more balance, reporting both positive and negative items from the government point of view."⁵⁵ The CNIP, however, enjoyed the advantage of good radio coverage which was especially important in the rural areas.

It was assumed that homeland politicians would tend to monopolise formal oral channels of political communication. Nevertheless, a significant minority of respondents in the rural survey and a majority of those in the urban survey preferred informal channels which were not necessarily supportive of the traditional political elite.

Oral news as a whole, however, was rejected overwhelmingly by the majority of household heads in the Mdantsane communications survey who read newspapers and listened to the radio regularly (79,6%). When the urban respondents were asked to designate which news source – newspapers/magazines, radio or word of mouth – they believed in or trusted the most, for example, the preference for newspapers and magazines was very pronounced:

Table 4. Urban respondents' attitudes towards news in newspapers/magazines, radio and by word of mouth: belief or trust in the news source, in per cent (N = 215)

	Newspapers/ magazines	Radio	Word of mouth
News	67,9	28,8	2,8

Combined media credibility scores⁵⁶ for Ciskei homeland news reflected a similar trend:

Table 5. Urban respondents' attitudes towards Ciskei homeland news in newspapers/magazines, radio and by word of mouth: media credibility, in per cent (N = 215)

	Newspapers/ magazines	Radio	Word of mouth
Ciskei homeland news	57,7	37,4	4,9

The print media were clearly regarded as the arbiters of credibility as far as news was concerned, including Ciskei homeland news.

It seems clear, moreover, that these attitudes have been affected by *direct*, rather than indirect, exposure to the mass media. In other words, the urban respondents appear to have absorbed political information and ideas from the print and broadcast media without the intervening variable of oral opinion leaders. The discrimination between English-language and Xhosa-language newspapers and Radio Bantu on the question of political party preference, for example, appears to have been based on reaction to the *content* of these media messages rather than on references to oral sources of information.

There is no evidence, however, to suggest that the mass media *influenced* the urbanites in any way that would constitute a change of attitude or initiate a course of action leading to a change in the *status quo*. In fact, the cathartic effect of the mass media on its consumers that Mosel, for example, found in Thailand would appear to have some validity for the Ciskei. One suspects that even the few English-language newspapers willing to record the activities of personalities and events beyond the boundaries of separate development are read more as "an outlet for unwanted and otherwise inexpressible feelings" than as a catalyst for change.⁵⁷

The Mdantsane political survey confirmed the presence of these feelings. Only 37% of the respondents, for example, identified with the Ciskei homeland against 44% who identified with South Africa, while 45% showed a preference for a "united South Africa with black majority rule" as opposed to 28% who supported the Ciskei homeland. Only 28% of the urban respondents, moreover, felt that ethnic loyalty was a significant issue in the township. When asked to name "two good things" the homeland government had done for the Ciskei people, 53% of the respondents in the Mdantsane political survey said it had done nothing or refused to respond to the question. Only 15% of the respondents felt the Ciskei government could improve the living and working conditions of urban blacks.

With few legal political alternatives outside the homelands – virtually none since the Black Consciousness organisations were banned and most of their leaders silenced in October 1977 – many urban blacks seek the legitimation of their grievances and aspirations in the only news medium willing to record them – English-language newspapers. Thus these newspapers – owned and controlled as they are by white capitalist interests – are being offered a unique role as surrogates for a genuine black press.

There is little evidence, however, to suggest that the English-language press is prepared to accept this role. Even before the managing editor of the *Daily Dispatch* went into exile in 1978, for example, the newspaper devoted most of its 'black' news coverage to the adjacent Ciskei and Transkei homelands. On the whole, the regional press in the Eastern Cape has made virtually no attempt to register the ideas and attitudes – much less promote the policies – of those opinion leaders who remain outside the framework of *apartheid*. In the deep south of South Africa, the English-language press continues to remain a custodian of the *status quo*.

NOTES

1. A short account of the cattle-killing rite can be found in Wilson & Thompson (1969), vol. 1, pp. 256-260. See also Brownlee (1896), pp. 135-170. Most of the Xhosa chiefdoms between the Fish and Kei rivers participated in this event. Perhaps 200 000 cattle were destroyed together with other stock and most of the grain crop. As a result, between January and December of 1857 the Xhosa population in this region declined by two-thirds – from 104 721 to 37 697. At least 20 000 died and 30 000 migrated to the Cape Colony to find work.
2. e.g. Trapido (1968), Williams (1970), Saunders (1970).
3. *vide* Lewis (1976), pp. 31-48 ff.
4. Benbo (1976), p.30
5. By June 1977, about 27 500 registered voters from the two districts, together with their families, had resettled in the Ciskei. They represented 25% of the registered voters in Herschel and 18% in Glen Grey.
6. An 11th zone was not included in the urban surveys, although it already had a number of illegal occupants in 1976.
7. An attempt was made to select the households at fixed-frequency intervals in the communications survey, but geographical factors made it difficult to adhere rigidly to this principle.
8. cf. Bantu Authorities Act (1951), Bantu Homelands Constitution Act (1971).
9. In common with other homelands, the Ciskei was governed initially by a Territorial Authority, members of which were appointed by the South African government, from March 1961. The executive and legislative functions of the Territorial Authority were separated in June 1971, and the homeland was granted limited self-government from August 1972.

10. As Peires (1977) has shown, the nexus of political, economic and religious relationships in the pre-colonial era linking the chief with land and people bears little resemblance to the modern concept of Ciskei chiefship. Charton suggests that the chief is "a mere mediator or broker between the central authority and the local people . . . If one of the objects of incorporating the chief into the legislative process was to legitimate the Assembly, it is doubtful whether this will be achieved. The very incorporation undermines his own traditional legitimacy to a considerable extent; it may also undermine the legitimacy of the Assembly," *Border and Ciskei Survey*, chap. 5 (Charton).
11. S.T. Bokwe, leader of the pro-*apartheid* Bantu Nationalist Conservative Party, was defeated as the party's only candidate in the 1973 election.
12. Benbo (1975), p. 20 (percentage based on *de jure* population in 1970). Ciskeian Xhosa who live in 'white' areas may vote in homeland elections. They have little hope of influencing elections with bloc voting, however, since they must register in their home constituencies where they are outnumbered by the permanent homeland residents. The percentage of Ciskeians living in 'white' areas who actually vote in homeland elections is not known. The Ciskei government has appointed urban representatives "to keep homeland citizens outside the Ciskei informed about developments at home and to assist them with problems of employment, housing, health and education." Urban boards also have been established in the 'white' areas, although they exist solely at the discretion of the Ciskei government's urban representative. In 1975, there were 65 urban boards, 48 in the Cape Province, 14 in the Transvaal and three in the Orange Free State. Although these boards have not remained silent — numerous letters and petitions have been written articulating the grievances of Ciskeians living outside the homeland — there is little evidence that the South African government listens to the protests of the Ciskei government on their behalf. *Border and Ciskei survey*, Chap. 5 (Charton)
13. Compiled from C.L.A. *Debates* 1973-1976.
14. Tywakadi (1978), p. 166.

15. *Ibid.*, chap. 6. In the Mdantsane municipal election of 1974, for example, the Ciskei government nominated the CNIP candidates without consulting their supporters in the township. After the election, party members were awarded additional seats as "nominated councillors." Three opposition councillors were dismissed for allegedly failing to pay their rents, and their places were filled by CNIP members after a by-election in February 1975. Government interference in the Zwelitsha municipal election of 1974 was even more blatant. The pro-Mabandla council, elected in 1971, was dismissed shortly after the formation of the CNIP and the ruling party virtually denied the opposition any opportunity to compete in the subsequent election.
16. Cited in *Border and Ciskei survey*, chap. 5 (Charton), Tywakadi (1978), chaps. 5-6.
17. Prior to June, Africans could attend two 'coloured' cinemas in East London.
18. Reading frequency for each publication in the Mdantsane communications survey was determined by the number of issues the respondent claimed to have read in the previous three months. If the household head read at least three of the last six issues of a daily newspaper and two of the last six issues of a weekly newspaper or magazine, he/she was considered a regular reader of the print media. A regular listener used this channel at least three times a week.
19. cf. Wilcox (1975) and Hachten (1971).
20. *vide* Market Research Africa (Pty) Ltd. (MRA) 1975 survey report, vol. IV. An independent research company, MRA has conducted national newspaper, magazine and radio audience surveys for the four designated racial groups in South Africa since the early 1960's.
21. Figures on African readership of Afrikaans-language publications for the country as a whole should be treated with caution, but it would appear that only 2,5% of the adult population reads newspapers and magazines in this language. MRA 1975 survey, vol. 1. p. ix (overall summary of reading claims).

22. In the 1950's and early 1960's *Drum* was the most prominent black publication in South Africa. The 'legend' of *Drum* may account, in part, for its continued popularity among urban Africans.
23. *Sunday Times* (59,1%) and the now banned *Weekend World* (56,8%) were also popular with those legislators who claimed to have read newspapers regularly.
24. cf. Hirabayashi and Khatib (1958), Deutschmann (1963), Rogers (1965), Donohew (1967), Nader (1965) and Harik (1971). Of the 100 homestead heads interviewed in the rural survey, 37% were aged 65 and above, 77% were unemployed and 48% had never been to school. An additional 24% had not been educated beyond standard 2.
25. Benbo (1975), p. 32 (based on the 1973 *de facto* population estimate of 602 000). In 1975, Benbo estimated that 173 555 Africans lived in Ciskei's urban areas. Mdantsane's population alone in 1976, however, was estimated at more than 150 000 by the University of Port Elizabeth's planning research office in East London.
26. Martin, McNelly and Izcaray (1976): "The less affluent . . . cannot afford to be selective media consumers. They tend to take what they can get from whatever media may be economically and intellectually accessible to them," p. 624.
27. cf. MRA 1975 survey, vols. 1 ('whites'), V ('whites, coloureds, Asians')
38. Each newspaper was divided into seven different categories – news, sport, women's section, leader page, letters to the editor, 'help wanted' adverts, business/finance – with one extra category for non-specified items. Radio listeners were shown 12 categories selected from the South African Broadcasting Corporation's *Radio Bantu Xhosa service information guide*. The respondent picked his favourite newspaper and radio station from the number of categories he/she read or listened to regularly so long as one of these categories was news.
29. Information on the *Daily Dispatch* was obtained from interviews with the editor, deputy editor and business manager and three African reporters.

30. *Indaba* has been published jointly by Port Elizabeth's *Eastern Province Herald* and the *Daily Dispatch* since August 1976. It is concerned almost exclusively with 'sensational' African news – sex, crime and sport – in the townships.
31. The *Daily Dispatch* has six African reporters, one coloured reporter and one Indian sub-editor. Two African reporters – stationed in King William's Town and Umtata, respectively – focus exclusively on Ciskei and Transkei homeland news.
32. The *Daily Dispatch* uses the *Rand Daily Mail* as a guide in the selection of national and international news stories.
33. *Imvo Zabantsundu* was founded in November 1884 by John Tengo Jabavu.
34. Information on *Imvo Zabantsundu* was obtained from interviews with the editor (August 1975 – September 1977) and four African editorial staff members, past and present.
35. The South African Broadcasting Corporation has six services – one external (Radio South Africa) and five domestic. Two national domestic channels are aimed theoretically at a white audience and are broadcast in English and Afrikaans, respectively, without advertising. Of the three domestic services which allow advertising, two are also theoretically for whites – the national bilingual English/Afrikaans service (Springbok Radio) and the regional services (Radio Good Hope for the Cape Province). Radio Bantu is the only service aimed specifically at Africans and it has seven transmissions for the various Bantu-language groups (Zulu/Sotho/Xhosa/Tswana/Pedi/Venda/Tsonga).
36. Information on Radio Bantu was obtained from the SABC annual reports for 1975, pp. 56-71, and 1976, pp. 69-73; interviews with the white manager and three white staffers of the Xhosa-language studios in King William's Town and two African announcers who once worked for Radio Bantu.
37. The editorial staff of the Xhosa-language studios in King William's Town comprised six news writers in 1976, two of whom were stationed in Umtata, the capital of Transkei. Four news writers and 18 announcers, one of whom was stationed in Johannesburg, were African. Local and regional news, in particular, was compiled with the help of 18 regular and irregular Xhosa stringers.

38. The 'informed' score was given twice the weight of the 'accurate' and 'impartial' scores. The combined score is a mean percent of the 'informed' and 'accurate/impartial' scores.
39. There were 34 urban respondents (14,7%) in the communications survey who favoured non-local, English-language newspapers – mainly the *Sunday Times* (6%) and *Weekend World* (5,6%).
40. *vide Border and Ciskei survey*, chap. 6 (Switzer)
41. One instance of this was the death of Mxolisi Sandile, paramount chief of the Rharhabe, in 1976. Rumours stemming from the villages concerning the attitude of the Ciskei government towards Sandile's funeral and the behind-the-scenes struggle to find an acceptable regent were circulating for some time in Mdantsane before they were picked up by the mass media.
42. Nyaniso and Gobozana fieldworkers' notes.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Border and Ciskei survey*, chap. 4 (Charton and Tywakadi).
45. Tywakadi's study of Gobozana, however, suggests that party politics rarely played a role in "associational activities" – voluntary church, farmers, women's and youth groups – of the village. Tywakadi (1978), p. 183.
46. Manona (1975)
47. Nyaniso and Gobozana fieldworkers' notes.
48. Fieldworkers in both rural villages cited cases where 'tribal' office holders actually inhibited the work of change agents who were invariably younger and more educated.
49. Mdantsane communications survey interviews (December 1976). Individuals were given the status of 'headmen' by consensus. Initially, they might offer a specific service – for example, a local shopkeeper with a phone or a self-employed auto mechanic – until gradually they became *de facto* spokesmen for the street residents. As political opinion leaders, they played an important role in the wards and were normally consulted by Ciskeian party officials and town councillors.

50. Nyaniso and Gobozana fieldworkers' notes. Typical rural comments: "What would I query? I know nothing and must accept what is said"; "These modern times are not for me. All that is taking place confuses me."
51. The agenda for news is important in Africa: "While the press may not convince many people what to believe it can determine what they will talk about." Hachten (1975), p. 476.
52. Comments expressed by the MPs on this topic were most revealing. A non-critical or neutral attitude towards homeland news was "accurate", "fair", "unbiased", "true", "encouraged" progress, gave a "correct" reflection of events, was "constructive" and "without prejudice."
53. This conforms to attitudes held elsewhere in independent black Africa. As Wilcox puts it, "a dim view is taken of any press content perceived as a negative comment on the performance of a government official or policy." Wilcox (1975), p. 34. Hachten on the press in Ghana: "The NRC (ruling council) clearly believes the press should avoid news of conflict and stress and instead emphasize unity and harmony within the society." Hachten (1975), p. 462. Both the editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu* and the manager of Radio Bantu used the word "positive" in this sense, contrasting their view of homeland news with the "negative" criticism of the *Daily Dispatch*.
54. C.L.A. *Debates*, vol. 6 (1975), p. 364; vol 7 (1976), pp. 65, 153; vol 8 (1976), p. 580. Cited in *Border and Ciskei survey*, Chap. 5 (Charton)
55. *Border and Ciskei survey*, chap. 5 (Charton)
56. The combined media news credibility scores were obtained in the same manner as the individual media news credibility scores (footnote 38).
57. Pye (1963), chap. 12 (Mosel), p. 226.

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Politics and Communication in the Ciskei

by
Les Switzer

As this monograph illustrates, the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio) have penetrated the rural and urban areas of South Africa's African 'homelands'. The reading and listening habits of the urban black population in the Ciskei, for example, are similar to those of South Africa's white population. The rural villagers still depend heavily on oral modes of communication, however, where the influence of chiefs and headmen is dominant. The two favoured newspapers in the Ciskei, *Daily Dispatch* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*, and the favoured radio station, *Radio Bantu*, are highly credible as regards Ciskei news which may reflect the fact that the mass media in South Africa communicate a positive image of the country's African 'homelands'. As far as Ciskei politics is concerned, oral news is rejected overwhelmingly by the urban media consumers. English-language newspapers and magazines, moreover, are the arbiters of credibility as regards 'homeland' news. Urbanites who are the main consumers of the media, however, do not seem to be identifying with the 'homeland'. In this context, the English-language press in the Eastern Cape does not appear to be offering its black readers any political alternatives, either in the form of information or of opinion, to the present policy of ethnic segregation in designated areas like the Ciskei.

Les Switzer was born and raised in Berkeley, California. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees (History, Geography) and a community college teachers' diploma from the University of California (Berkeley), and his Ph.D. (History) from the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg). Dr. Switzer held various senior editorial positions in eight years as a journalist in South Africa, Britain and the United States. He taught for two years at California State University (Los Angeles), where he was chairman of the Department of Journalism and Broadcasting. For the past six years he has taught at Rhodes University, where he is senior lecturer and acting head of the Department of Journalism. Dr Switzer is co-author of a recently-published book, *Black press in South Africa and Lesotho 1836-1976*, and has contributed to the debate on communications and development in a forthcoming book on the Ciskei.