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Political Subjectivities in Post-colonial States: Identity and Belonging Among Botswana's non–Tswana Migrant Descendants

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Political Subjectivities in Post-colonial States: Identity and Belonging Among Botswana's non–Tswana Migrant Descendants

by

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In
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Supervisors: Professor Loren B Landau and Dr Jean Pierre Misago

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis, ***Political Subjectivities in Post-colonial States: Identity and Belonging Among Botswana's non–Tswana Migrant Descendants***, is my original work and has never been submitted in part or whole to any institution for assessment or award for any degree. Quotations and references have been attributed accordingly to their authors or sources.



(Signature of Candidate) SNM (738950)

Dedication

> Do not forget your lineage, do not shrink. Do not bend yourself, do not shift your tongue for anyone. Whenever you forget who you are, remember the history you have inherited. Now, speak.
>
> - Umebinyuo (2016),

For my departed grandparents.

My grandfathers - the late John Mhlauli "Johnnie Walker" Mlilo and the late Thomas Mlilo. Thomas' defiance of the then Southern Rhodesian government to occupy our land began a journey of migration for our family - the Mlilo's and Mpofu's into Bechuanaland in 1950. His actions, unknowingly, are the seeds that would contribute to my life's story and lay the foundation and conceptualisation of this thesis over seventy years later.

And to my loving grandmother, the late Emily Masala "Baby" Mlilo - née Mpofu, you left us when I was knee deep into writing this thesis. Although I wish you were still here to see the end result, I know you would have been immensely proud *ntombi yami.*

Thesis Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of people with immigrant ancestry in Botswana. It considers how they position themselves in relation to political communities where indigeneity and ethnicity are the foundations of official national imaginaries and state practice. The thesis draws on various methodological approaches and interdisciplinary scholarship to address a gap in the literature on citizenship and state-building in postcolonial Africa. It is based on historical comparative research that combines two primary methodologies: a historiography of state formation and in-depth narrative interviews with research participants and key informants.

The thesis finds that people with migrant backgrounds in Botswana embody a politics of ambivalent citizenship, characterised by their mixed feelings towards the Botswana nation-state and its citizenship. This is visible in their ambiguity and use of various tactics and strategies – conscious and unconscious – to navigate their ambivalence and assert their identities and belonging. This ambivalence is further enunciated in their multiple, hyphenated identities and their diverse, multi-sited forms of belonging.

The politics of ambivalent citizenship described here, challenges traditional nationalistic notions and highlights the complexity of people with a migrant background's engagement with the state. In surfacing the experiences of non-citizens and citizens with a migrant background, the study also reveals how such seemingly marginal groups actively shape their citizenship experiences and challenge dominant hegemonic narratives through their agential practices.

This work contributes to postcolonial and citizenship studies through its nuanced perspectives on belonging shaped by generation and geography. Moreover, it challenges conventional citizenship views framed on civil and social rights, active political participation and identity. It does so by building on studies that have explored unconventional forms of citizenship such as citizenship from below and acts of citizenship. This body of work further highlights the tactical and strategic actions of what scholarship considers as "marginalised" groups and demonstrates how they react to this marginality by offering a fresh lens to discuss migrant struggles without reinforcing problematic stereotypes.

In its exploration of life in the margins, the study shows that sites often portrayed as oppressive or exclusionary, are potential sites where agency and creativity can be expressed as acts of citizenship. Moreover, the study reveals that despite facing some structural challenges, people with migrant backgrounds continuously influence decisions and contribute to shaping and re-shaping the postcolonial state through their ambivalence which is expressed in their agency and ambiguity.

This research ultimately contributes to African scholarship examining the tensions within postcolonial nation-states as they construct a national "political community" amidst diverse ethnic loyalties. It enhances discussions on citizenship by integrating postcolonial nation-building and migrants' discourses and thus offering a nuanced understanding of their intersection. In so doing, the thesis further challenges the conventional understanding of citizenship to provide nuanced insights into tactical citizenship and the agency of migrant descendants in influencing state practices and discourses on identity and belonging in postcolonial states.

Key words: Agency, *Ambivalence, Belonging, Botswana, Citizenship, Identity, Migrant Descendants/People with a Migrant Background, Nation-building, Postcolonial States, Politics of Ambivalent Citizenship, Tactical Citizenship*

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To My Mother, Irene Sibongile Mlilo:

Mama, we made it! I say "we": because none of this would have been possible without your love, faith, constant prayers, and unwavering support. You believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself and saw my potential before I did. Thank you for funding the first year of my PhD, for encouraging me to pursue this journey despite my initial doubts, and for supporting my decision to turn down a high-paying job to start over in Johannesburg as a full-time student.

Thank you for your love and care during the seven months I spent writing drafts of this thesis in my childhood bedroom. You made sure I ate and took breaks when I became too absorbed in my work and neglected myself. Your comfort and encouragement, especially in moments of doubt or when I wanted to give up, kept me grounded and motivated. Thank you for believing in me, Mama - *ngiyabonga*. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. This is for us.

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A Note to the Reader:

Botswana is a country in southern Africa. The people of Botswana are called *Batswana* (plural), while a single citizen is referred to as a *Motswana*. Although English is the official language, the national language is *Setswana*, which is also the language spoken by the *Tswana* ethnic groups. The term "*Tswana"* or "*Tswana ethnic groups*" in this thesis refers to the eight main groups recognised in the Constitution of Botswana: The *Barolong, Bakwena*, *Bangwaketse*, *Balete*, *Bakgatla*, *Batlokwa*, *Bangwato*, and *Batawana*.[1]

These are the only ethnic groups officially recognised in Botswana's Constitution. Other ethnic groups are considered minorities. The *Tswana* groups also share similar dialects and have comparable economic, political, social, and legal structures (Moeti, 2023). Geographically, the *Tswana* groups are distributed across three regions in Botswana: Southern District: *Barolong, Bakwena*, *Bangwaketse*, *Balete*, *Bakgatla*, and *Batlokwa*; Central District: *Bangwato* and Northwest District (Ngamiland) *Batawana* (See map in Figure 1).

[1] According to Mogalakwe (2006:68), the Tswana are found in the interior of the Southern African sub-continent, mainly in present day Botswana, and in the North West and the Northern Cape Provinces of South Africa. The Tswana are part of a larger Sotho-Tswana linguistic and cultural sub-group of the Bantu people of Southern Africa. According to Tlou and Campbell (1984), archaeological investigations indicate that the Tswana were probably settled in this area as early as 450 A.D. The origin of the name Batswana is said to have been indirectly interpreted to mean "the little off shoots from tswa", to go out, according to Schapera (1984) cited in Mogalakwe (2006:68) or to come from, or the name could mean those who are alike (from Tshwana). The Tswana discussed in this thesis are those that constitute and are referred to as the eight main ethnic groups found in Botswana and recognised in the Constitution of Botswana as such.

An Invitation



> As I begin, I invite you into my world of meaning-making, by availing seminal touchpoints of my research journey for your engagement and scrutiny, starting with personal motivation – why, out of all the existing gaps in literature, I chose to pursue this particular one. This enables you to come to an understanding of the type of knowledge I have produced, while also formulating your own.
>
> - Jiyane (2022)

The Adinkra[2] Sankofa visually represents this thesis' premise. It is derived from the Akan proverb, "*Se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenkyiri"*[3] meaning, "It is not taboo to go back for what you forgot (or left behind)."[4] A symbol of wisdom and learning from the past to build the future.[5] Sankofa represents my aim with this thesis: going back to understand the present. To consider Botswana's history and its impact on current and future generations; to appreciate how such histories shape national identities, citizenship, and belonging for groups that do not necessarily fit into the constructed narrative of a *Tswana* national identity in Botswana.

Looking back at Botswana's history has been an exercise in looking back at my own history. This has helped me to understand how my personal experiences inform my subjective political views, and, in many ways, it has helped me to make sense of my own identity and belonging. Questions of who I am and where I belong are existential and have

[2] Adinkra's are visual symbols that represent concepts, proverbs, and aphorisms. They originated from the Gyaman people of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (adinkrasymbols.org, 2024). According to Adinkra Symbols and Meanings (2024), Adinkra's are rich with meaning and have become emblematic of the richness of Akan culture specifically and African culture in general. They effectively convey profound truths through visual representation, with many symbols linked to Akan proverbs. Their widespread adoption, especially among African Americans and other members of the African diaspora, has cemented their status as significant icons of African symbolism and philosophy.

[3] Adinkra Symbols and meanings (2024)

[4] Ibid: Footnote 3

[5] Ibid: Footnote 3

occupied my psyche from a young age. Before embarking on this journey, I did not have the language to fully articulate my experiences and through glimpsing at the experiences of my research participants, I was able to find a new vocabulary to articulate my own. This process further inspired me to investigate my own history and to reflect on how it has shaped the person I am and continue to be.

To this end, I interviewed my own family, particularly my mother and aunt, to get a better understanding of our family history and where we come from. According to both their accounts,[6] my grandfather's younger brother, Thomas Mlilo, crossed the border from Southern Rhodesia into Bechuanaland in 1950 to seek a place of settlement, or *boagedi,*[7] from Tshekedi Khama, the chief regent of the *Bamangwato*[8] tribe at the time. Thomas was fleeing the Rhodesian government, which sought to persecute him due to his strong opposition to their occupation of the family's land and his outspoken political dissent.

Tshekedi Khama granted his request and allocated the family a piece of land in the North-East region of the country, marking the beginning of the family's move from then Southern Rhodesia into Bechuanaland. The family arrived in Bechuanaland by train in the same year – 1950, 16 years before modern Botswana's independence. When Botswana became an independent state, the newly formed government granted citizenship to all who had already settled in the country at the time, making my family who had long settled in the country *Batswana* or citizens.

Botswana citizenship is one that I now possess as well, many years after my family settled in the country. It is not only my place of birth, but a country I call home and with which I identify through my nationality. Before this research, I had grappled with many questions regarding my identity and belonging in Botswana. Just as with my research participants, I did not feel I fitted into the constructed narrative of the national identity. As I reflect now, I realise that ambiguity and ambivalence have always been central themes in

[6] Interview with my mother – Irene Sibongile Mlilo and aunt - Thokozile Mongwa née Mpofu on 16 June 2024.
[7] Setswana term for citizenship
[8] This is an ethnic group mostly located in the Central District of Botswana and is one of the eight ethnic groups officially recognised in the country's Constitution.

my life. Growing up as an ethnic *Ndebele*[9] in Botswana, with migrant roots in what is now Zimbabwe, brought to the fore many questions of identity and belonging for me.

I navigated these questions of identity and belonging while living between borders due to schooling in both Zimbabwe and South Africa for my basic and higher education, respectively. These experiences contributed further to the layers of my understanding of who I was as a person. It took me a long time to be comfortable with the fact that I possess multiple identities; that I belong to multiple places and yet I am still rooted in Botswana as my country of birth and one of the places I call home.

Reckoning with this reality was liberating. Just like the participants in this study, I realised that ambiguity and ambivalence are familiar and comfortable aspects of my life rather than sources of frustration. I found that both ambivalence and ambiguity shaped my identity and sense of belonging. I can recall that from a young age to date, my name and surname raise questions of identity and belonging. Throughout my life I have faced questions such as "where are you from?" or – more pryingly – "where are you *really* from?" "How are you a Silindile Mlilo yet claim to be from Botswana?"

In one instance, while renewing my *Omang*[10] (national identity card) in 2016, an official demanded I renounce my Botswana citizenship because I was not a *Motswana.*[11] The official came to this conclusion through a series of presumptions: my mother had received her *Omang* a year after I was born, and presuming that she could not have held citizenship before receiving this identity card, or be a *Motswana*, the official perceived my

[9] According to Skhosana (2010), the name '(ama)Ndebele' is a generic name used to designate three Nguni speaking nations found in Africa. The author further states that two of these (ama)Ndebele Nguni ethnic groups found within the Republic of South Africa are known as Southern and Northern (ama)Ndebele and the third is in the Matabeleland region in Southern Zimbabwe. Due to migratory patterns, (ama) Ndebele are also found in some parts of the North-East region of Botswana. These are believed to be offshoots of (ama) Ndebele originating from Zimbabwe. The (ama) Ndebele in Botswana can be found in villages such as Siviya, Senyawe, Jackalas No. 1 and 2; in Moroka (which is my home village), Ramokgwebana and Matsiloje. The Ndebele groups speak isiNdebele, the same language and dialect as that of those based in Zimbabwe. Thus, in the context of this thesis, ethnic Ndebele refers to (ama) Ndebele in Botswana.

[10] A Setswana term that directly translates to "who are you" and is used to refer to the National Identity card (ID) of Botswana. According to the World Bank (2016), Identification plays an important role in proving one's identity, exercising one's basic rights, claiming entitlements, accessing a range of governmental services, and conducting many daily activities. In Botswana, the Omang was first introduced in 1988 (World Bank, 2016).

[11] A Motswana is a singular term to refer to a Botswana citizen. In other contexts, it can be conflated to refer to a person that comes from one of the eight Tswana groups.

citizenship to be in contravention of the Citizenship Act of 1998 which granted citizenship if at the time of birth, one's parent was a *Motswana*.

Despite my efforts to show the official that her assumptions were not true, and my older siblings had successfully renewed their *Omang* without issues, she did not want to listen to me and kept insisting that I renounce my Botswana citizenship. This surprised me because when the *Omang* was first introduced in Botswana in 1988, my family had been settled there for nearly 40 years. Not every citizen had applied for an *Omang* immediately after its introduction and their adoption of it was gradual and only later became mandatory to access services offered by the state. Hence, the application for an *Omang* by some citizens happened much later when having an *Omang* became a prerequisite for accessing essential services.

When I told the official that Botswana was the only home I knew and that I only identified as a *Motswana* (as far as my citizenship is concerned), she rudely suggested that I might be a Zimbabwean or Nigerian and advised me to check with my parents about my "true" origins. Fortunately, I was able to escalate the issue to a senior official, who resolved the matter promptly and apologised for the misunderstanding and the officials' behaviour. Despite eventually renewing my *Omang*, this experience left me unsettled and with many questions.

It made me question my identity and belonging even more because I had always considered myself a *Motswana*. The incident forced me to re-evaluate my sense of self and national identity. Even though I had always been aware of my ethnicity and migrant background, and I had never felt a complete sense of belonging in the country, the legitimacy of my Botswana citizenship had never been questioned or threatened.

Identifying as a *Motswana* was all I had known and embraced. Despite my ancestral roots in Zimbabwe and my *Ndebele* ethnicity, I never fully identified with the country as a national or citizen. The officer's questioning led me to reflect on what it truly meant to be a *Motswana*. In my reflection at the time, I wondered if citizenship was judged based on

the date a parent obtained an *Omang* or where they were born[12], or whether my ethnic identity was also a factor when thinking about this issue.

It further raised questions for me about the social criteria used to determine citizenship and who decides who is an "authentic" *Motswana*? I also wondered if my experience would have been different if I had a *Setswana* name. I may never truly get the answers to this, but that experience further revealed gaps in the system and the subjective interpretation of citizenship. The officials' understanding of citizenship requirements, highlighted how personal biases and outdated interpretations of the law can affect individuals' identities. Hence, combining all my experiences as a third-generation migrant, including questioning my own identity and belonging in my country of birth, sparked my curiosity and interest in this subject matter. I became curious about the meaning/s of identity, belonging, citizenship, and nationhood for people such as myself who do not fit into the normative "criteria" of the ethnic citizenship and belonging crafted or imagined by states such as my own – Botswana.

This experience also prompted me to explore these issues more deeply with the aim of understanding if others, in similar situations, had experienced the same encounters, and to gain insights into how they made sense of their experiences and dealt with them. It was also an invitation to move beyond the personal, and to frame my study within broader scholarly discussions on citizenship, identity and belonging in postcolonial states in Africa.

[12] The Botswana national ID/Omang states the place of birth of every citizen. This can sometimes lead to discrimination, or to one not being considered an "authentic" Motswana, especially if a person was born out of Botswana.

Figure 1: Map of Botswana with Sub districts[13]



[13] This is the map of Botswana which also includes sub-districts. It presents the geographical landscape of the country and some of the areas that are discussed in the thesis. The map was: accessed at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Subdistricts_of_Botswana..png on 30 April 2024

1 Chapter One: Research Background and Contribution

"If you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere" - Theresa May (2016)

1.1 Part A: Research Overview and Structure

1.1.1 Introduction and Setting the Scene

This thesis explores the experiences of migrant descendants or people with a migrant background[14] to examine what their sense of identity and belonging can tell us about citizenship and national belonging in postcolonial states. I use the example of Botswana, to explore how such groups relate to the nation-state and the communities where they live through unpacking their everyday experiences in relation to their citizenship, identity, and belonging in Botswana.

This thesis is crucial because it invites us to critically re-think citizenship by centering the perspectives from the margins. In doing so, the thesis enacts a postcolonial critique that challenges and speaks back to dominant "centres" by underscoring the need to re-think how we understand citizenship, identity and belonging in post-colonial Africa. Moreover, the thesis contributes to discussions that question and subvert the taken for granted notion that conceptions of citizenship, identity and belonging in African societies are best illustrated through ethnic identities and thus challenges this essentialisation.

This chapter therefore provides a brief foregrounding of the main discussions in this thesis. A detailed historical background of Botswana's nation-building and citizenship developments will be covered in Chapter Three. Furthermore, the chapter further demonstrates why this thesis has problematised issues of citizenship, identity and

[14] These terms will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis although the term people with a migrant background will be used more generously.

belonging with a specific focus on people with a migrant background in the context of Botswana.

This chapter further examines Botswana's development as a democratic state that was built on an assimilationist model. This approach is one that has promoted a national identity rooted in *Tswana* cultural norms and the *Setswana* langauage while marginalising those considered "outsiders." I begin the thesis with this framing because it is central to the study's concern with how identity and belonging are constructed and contested in postcolonial Botswana. By foregrounding the political and ideological foundations of the state, I am able to situate the lived experiences of people with a migrant background within the broader social, economic and political structures that shape inclusion and exclusion in post-colonial Botswana.

This context is also crucial for understanding how national identity is produced, who is granted recognition and belonging, and how these dynamics impact those whose histories and identities fall outside the dominant narrative. All of this is pertinent to this thesis' inquiry. Hence, it is imperative to begin by highlighting some of the discourses that dominate the scholarship on ethnic minorities in Botswana to contextualise issues of citizenship, identity and belonging that this thesis grapples with and unpacks in relation to the experiences of the research participants.

At independence, Botswana's nation building strategy was to adopt an assimilationist model in an effort to create a unified civic identity. According to Solway (2002), *Tswana* assimilation was purposely promoted by the country's elite founding leaders after independence in 1966. This led to the adoption of assimilationist policies as part of their nation-building strategy. These policies aimed to unify the ethnically diverse groups living within the territory at the time. Moreover, these policies also resulted in the absorption of various ethnic groups spread across the country under one *Tswana* identity and the adoption of *Setswana* as the national language to create a singular national identity (Werbner, 2004). Thus, Botswana fell into what Basil Davidson (1992), cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), describes as the "black man's burden", arguing that many African leaders borrowed westernised ideas, institutions, and templates in the design of post-colonial Africa while ignoring their history, values, and cultures.

Nyamnjoh (2002) and others who have written about Botswana acknowledge that since the 1990s, Botswana began to experience a resurgence of identity politics and tensions surrounding the issue of belonging. This arose from ethnic minority groups' pursuit of equality, improved representation, and greater access to national resources and opportunities. Selolwane (2004) concurs and argues that ethnic undercurrents have been an ongoing subtext in Botswana's nation-building and modernisation programme throughout the post-independence era.

For example, Selolwane (2004) writes about the tensions between the *Tswana* and *Kalanga*[15] subtext ethnic conflicts. Werbner (2002) on the other hand, using a different perspective, has extensively discussed the *Kalanga* elite in his work, particularly how they navigate differences yet transcend them. A process he refers to as "cosmopolitan ethnicity" which he defines as a simultaneous 'inward and outward' ethnic stance that "constructs difference while transcending it" (Werbner, 2002:731).

Other scholars, including Gwatiwa (2014), have written about the need to economically include the enterprising *Zezuru* ethnic group in the economic development of policy implementation. Nyati-Ramahobo's work (2000, 2002a) has explored the language issue in Botswana and the struggle for recognition and reintegration faced by ethnic minority groups. Meanwhile, Nyamnjoh (2002, 2007) has focused on the representations of identity politics, belonging, and xenophobia in Botswana.

These studies and many others do not only underscore Nyamnjoh's point on ethnic tensions that have since emerged in postcolonial Botswana, but bring to the fore the contradictory nature in which the state has incorporated its citizens and the way in which it has dealt with diversity and inclusion. Moreover, the studies also highlight that, despite the democratic processes that have been adopted, Botswana's assimilationist approach continues to exclude other non-*Tswana* ethnic *Batswana* from the national narrative and from their full recognition and representation in the country.

These paradoxes in Botswana's democracy and nation-building strategy have led observers such as Solway to contend that Botswana's assimilationist approach simultaneously creates both assimilation and difference (2004:715). Solway further argues that this is due to the nation's bureaucratic rationalisation - where the state has largely fared

[15] A detailed discussion on the various ethnic groups found in Botswana will follow in Chapter Three.

well in its distribution of resources and access to services for most of the population (Solway, 2002). This approach is contrary to what some other African states have experienced, where the lack of equal distribution of resources has resulted in ethnic tensions and conflicts. These tensions have been well documented in Sub-Saharan countries such as Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2009).

Scholars such as Gapa (2017), however, observe that, even though the government of Botswana's management of resources has ensured that they benefit the whole nation rather than a specific ethnic group, there are still concerns about ethnic suppression. Gapa further argues that the distribution of resources has been most beneficial in the case of ethnic minority groups that have assimilated or aligned their interests and identities with the modern nation-state of Botswana. Other groups, such as the *Basarwa* or San[16] groups continue to face exclusion and limited access to the country's resources because they have chosen a non-assimilationist identity.

Writing about the plight of the *Basarwa* the or San, Moeti (2023) argues that in postcolonial Botswana, the status of the San is evidence of the inadequacies of the constitutional and legal protection of minorities in Botswana. Moeti further states that the colonial remnants of the economic, social and political facets of the country continue to persist in the country. This relegates groups such as the *Basarwa* to the margins of power where they constitute "the invisible and inaudible citizenry with majority of their concerns going unresolved by the government of Botswana" (Moeti, 2023:2).

Werbner (2002) similarly argues that the dominant *Tswana* groups sometimes overlook or question the citizenship of the postcolonial migrant descendants. For example, citizens belonging to ethnic minorities such as the *Kalanga, Zezuru* and *Ndebele* who are also found in neighbouring Zimbabwe are often treated as if their primary belonging and identity is Zimbabwean. Thus, Saetermo (2016) argues that the ideas of who can belong

[16] According to Moeti (2023) citing Kuela Kiema, Tears for my Land (Bay Publishing, 2010), In Botswana, the San—also referred to as Basarwa or Bushmen—are made up of various groups, each with its own language and identity. These groups include the Ju/'hoansi, Bugakhwe, //Anikhwe, Tsexakhwe, !Xoo, Naro, G/wi, G//ana, Kua, Tshwa, Deti, ǂKhomani, ǂHoa, //'Xauǂesi, Balala, Shua, Danisi, and /Xaisa, among others. Moeti (2023) further underscores that in contemporary Botswana, the San remain the most socially, politically, and economically excluded ethnic group.

and in what ways are closely related to ideas of identity, and in the case of Botswana, the *Tswana* identity.

It is against this context that Werbner (2002:735) suggests that the politicised question then becomes that of who came first and belongs in the country as a whole? And who is new? Moeti (2023) concurs and uses the case of the San, noting that their indigeneity is a subject of ambiguous policy as they are only recognised for touristic purposes. This is notwithstanding the fact that in some literature (see Chapter Three), they are recognised as the indigenous people of the country. A fact the government of Botswana continues to evade which leaves room for indigeneity to be interpreted based on the *Tswana* identity.

It is for these reasons that I add to Saetermo's questions by asking: who, considering the above discussions, is considered an authentic *Motswana*? How do people with a migrant background in such contexts self-identify? How does the national discourse inadvertently prescribe modes of belonging? And how does this influence the way such groups conceptualise and seek to realise their sense of identity, belonging and understanding of citizenship? (Saetermo, 2016).

Based on the above discussions, primarily focused on ethnic minorities, I argue that what is missing from the conversation is the experiences of people with a migrant background both in Botswana and in the broader African postcolonial contexts. I take a leaf from Zambakari (2012), who urges us to extend studies on such groups by exploring questions of citizenship and belonging in connection with the history and context of a place. Thus, this thesis sought to understand the experiences of these groups in the context of historical narratives of nation-building that extend beyond ethnic discourses to include the voices of people with a migrant background in post-colonial states.

Through exploring these experiences, this work contributes to discussions on the identity and belonging of people with a migrant background and nation-building in post-colonial states. I further introduce the concepts of nation-building and national identity through a postcolonial lens, contributing to discussions that are often overlooked or fail to fully address these issues within the context of migrant descendancy. While I build on and engage with classic scholarship on hybridity, and the third space (Bhabha (1994); liminality (Turner, (1969), tactics and strategies (de Certeau, 1984, Lee, 2006) and Bauman's (1991) conceptualisation of ambivalence to examine postcolonial citizenship, identity, and

belonging, I argue that focusing on people with a migrant background offers deeper insights into these topics that other studies have not been able to capture.

This approach further highlights the nuances and ambiguities present in contexts like Botswana, and contributes to enriching our understanding of postcolonial citizenship, identity, and belonging. My study further distinguishes itself in that it uses the experiences of individuals with a migrant background to contribute to discourses on postcolonial citizenship and the evolving meanings of citizenship in postcolonial states.

In locating the study against broader debates or discourses on citizenship, identity and belonging beyond Botswana, I draw from Kandemir's (2018) article on ambivalent citizenship as an entry point. The article discusses Tom McCarthy's (2017) critique of Theresa May's speech at the Conservative party conference in October 2016 (see this chapter's opening quote). The article highlights a tension in May's wording between the explicit rejection of global citizenship and the failure to explicitly reinstate a nationalist citizenship. The result, Kandemir argues, is ambiguity, a tactic often employed in political discourse.

In the context of this thesis, these current debates or discourses on citizenship offer potential entry points when exploring some of the complexities of postcolonial citizenship through the experiences of people with a migrant background in Botswana. To achieve this, the thesis employs a comparative historical approach using qualitative research methods to examine state-society relations through the lived experiences of individuals with a migrant background. Additionally, in exploring the Botswana nation-state, the thesis follows scholars such as Ndhlovu (2020) and adopts a bottom-up perspective to understand the nation-state from the margins of society.

This bottom-up approach further helps to highlight how marginal groups such as migrant descendants reject imposed, traditional understandings of the state and instead choose to engage with it in ways that align with their everyday realities (Ndhlovu, 2020). As stated, this thesis employs a qualitative research approach and integrates both primary and secondary data collection methods. It employs archival research and secondary data alongside empirical data gathered from in-depth narrative interviews with research participants and key informants. Drawing from a historiography of Botswana's nation building process and its creation of a national identity, combined with in depth narrative

interviews with 22 research participants, this thesis explores the experiences of individuals with a migrant background, particularly in contexts where indigeneity and ethnicity underpin national narratives and state practices.

Beyond Botswana, this study examines these issues against a context where globally, there has been a rise in identity politics and anti-immigration sentiments, as well as populist nationalism in Europe, the United States, South Africa, and other regions (see for example, Fukuyama, 2018; Leykin and Gorodzeisky, 2024; Indelicato and Martín, 2024; Kapelner, 2024; Noury and Roland, 2020; Misago and Landau, 2022; Machinya, 2022; Chisadza, 2024 and Gordon 2024). These phenomena have led to restrictive forms of recognition based on nationality, religion, sect, race, and ethnicity (Fukuyama, 2018).

Post-colonial Africa continues to grapple with challenges of achieving adequate representation and participation for various ethnic groups in national discourses. Hence, Bloom (2017) argues that the struggle of citizenship has been the struggle for representation, rights and recognition in the absence of an alternative option to that of the current one that is based on liberal democratic values. This study, therefore, explores these issues through the lens of nation-building in post-colonial states, with a particular focus on the Botswana nation-state.

The thesis also considers the political structures and cultural context that inform the experiences of people with a migrant background (Hanonou, 2011). It does this by merging nation-building processes with the experiences of the research participants. To do this, I build on studies that have shown the role of postcolonial states' practices and ideologies in the construction of an exclusionary or inclusionary national identity (Khalema et al, 2018).

Unlike many African countries, postcolonial minoritisation has been a non-violent process in Botswana (Werbner, 2004). Hence, the curiosity to understand the country's management of diversity and its impact on minority groups and migrant communities. I do this by expanding on the work of historians such as Grant (2012), Gulbrandsen (2022), Volz (2003), Ramsay (1995), Ngcongo (1989), Mgadla and Campbell (1989), Morton and Ramsey (1987), Tlou and Campbell (1984), ViveJo (1976), Tlou (1972), Young (1966), Schapera (1952), and Sillery (1952, 1965) among others who have written extensively about Botswana.

I also draw from the above authors' work and many others to provide a historical overview of Botswana's nation-building process as discussed in Chapter Three. My specific focus here has been on Botswana's approach to dealing with diversity when building a nation while documenting how people with a migrant background position themselves vis-a-vis the nation and negotiate their inclusion and exclusion in the modern matrix of post-colonial states. I also show how the construction of Botswana's national identity and belonging shapes these relationships.

The case of Botswana is instructive for this thesis because the country is a mono-ethnic state, which allows for further exploratory possibilities. For example, the foregoing discourses can be positioned within the broader debates on post-colonial states and migrant descendants' integration and assimilation into society. In addition, the discussion of Botswana as a mono-ethnic state provides insights into how national identity construction and belonging shapes the relationship of research participants with the state, and the communities where they live. These experiences further bring to the fore the political subjectivities of the research participants in the context of historical and ongoing colonial influences.

1.1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This research project aims to explore the experiences of people with a migrant background in Botswana. To draw meaningful conclusions about citizenship, identity, and belonging in postcolonial states, it is crucial to contextualise the research within a specific setting. Furthermore, the objective of the study has been to understand the ways in which people with a migrant background in Botswana identify themselves in relation to the Botswana national identity. And to explore what their identity and sense of belonging tell us about citizenship and national belonging in postcolonial states such as Botswana. To achieve this, the thesis empirically explored the subjective and objective positions of people with a migrant background through the following main research question:

How do people with a migrant background position themselves vis-a-vis a Botswana national identity, and what are the implications for their identity and belonging?

To gain a better understanding and to help unpack the factors that influence the experiences of such groups, I further inquired on the following:

Sub questions:

1. What do the experiences of people with a migrant background's identity and sense of belonging tell us about citizenship and national belonging in postcolonial states such as Botswana?
2. How do people with a migrant background's view of the Botswana nation-state shape their self-identification, belonging and constructions of citizenship?
3. What implications emanate for people with a migrant background's citizenship and national belonging in relation to their relationship with the Botswana nation-state, and the communities they live in?

1.1.3 Main Thesis Argument and Contribution

At the heart of this exploration, this thesis argues that people with a migrant background embody a politics of ambivalent citizenship. This is characterised by their mixed feelings towards the Botswana nation-state and its citizenship. This ambivalence is further expressed through their ambiguity, multiple – hyphenated identities, multi-sited forms of belonging and mobile histories. This body of work also underscores the agency and assertiveness of people with a migrant background and pushes against normative and linear perspectives that underlie national identity and belonging through bringing often overlooked complexity and nuance to the discourse.

The thesis further contributes to debates on citizenship which goes beyond legal and rights based approaches and instead, by centering interpretations of citizenship from the margins, the thesis challenges notions of ethnicised citizenship and territorial belonging by demonstrating multiple, fluid forms of citizenship enactment and being. In so doing, the thesis de-centres ethnicity and nationality as the primary frameworks of identity as mentioned. Moreover, this inquiry contributes to African literature that examines the challenges faced by post-colonial nation-states in forging a "political community" among individuals with multiple ethnic loyalties and identities.

At the basic level, the research contributes to a global literature on citizenship, self-identification, and belonging of people with a migrant background. To date, this has been

largely explored from a global north perspective[17], especially from the lens of second-generation migrants (see for example, Mlilo, 2015, Liu, 2015; Berry and Hou, 2019; Hansen and Kučera, 2003; Finnie and Mueller, 2008; Boyd and Grieco, 1998; Picot, 2008; Ellis and Almgren, 2009; Lev Ari and Cohen, 2018; Portes and Zhou, 2001; Beyer, (2005) Anderson and Taylor, 2015; Hiller, Linstroth and Vela, 2009; Simonsen, (2016); Portes, Fernandez-Kelly and Haller, 2009; Dusi, Messi, and Falcon, 2015; Grant, 2007; Zevallos, 2004; and Portes and Rumbaut, 2005).

Although these studies are valuable in advancing our understanding of issues on integration, assimilation, acculturation, identity and belonging for such groups, they do not reflect the nuance and agency that people with a migrant background possess. For instance, in this thesis, the research participants demonstrated that it is their ambivalence and ambiguity towards the Botswana nation-state and its citizenship that gives rise to their agency. This, in turn, continues to influence their decisions and contributes to the shaping and re-shaping of the postcolonial nation – state from the margins.

As an intellectual project, the thesis endeavours to overcome the global north bias of migration studies and to contextualise the experiences of people with a migrant background within the African context. Through engaging these experiences, the research contributes to the literature on the evolving meanings of citizenship, identity, and national belonging in postcolonial states (Segzin, 2013). The thesis further enriches global and local discussions on the integration, citizenship, identity, and belonging of people with migrant backgrounds in post-colonial societies. At the global level, it engages scholarship on unconventional forms of citizenship, such as "citizenship from below" and acts of citizenship by scholars such as Rygiel (2015), Isin (2008), Lee (2006) and Nyers (2006).

While at the local level, it speaks to scholars such as Landau and Freemantle's (2010) work on tactical cosmopolitanism and different modes of belonging (Kihato, 2009)

[17] In this study I will refer to the dichotomous terms of global north and south. According to Khan, Abimbola, Kyobutungi, and Pai (2022), these terms were originally employed to denote disparities in regional economic development during the 1980s. In the case of this thesis, I draw from Sims (2024) who uses the terms as meta-contexts to both highlight pragmatic differences and signal the reality of global knowledge production hierarchies. Sims further states that geographically, these terms are often tied to certain locations (although they are not strict categorisations). For example, regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania are often included as the global South (discourse and geography wise) while Europe and North America are within the global North.

as well as Nyamnjoh's (2015) concept of incompleteness.[18] These bodies of work contribute to discussions and literature on the evolving meanings of citizenship, identity and belonging that go beyond legal and rights frameworks in postcolonial states which my study lends a voice to. Furthermore, this study highlights the tactics and strategic actions of groups considered "marginalised" or on the periphery of society and demonstrates how these individuals respond to their "marginalisation".

The thesis highlights that individuals with a migrant background in Botswana challenge the notion of a singular way of being a *Motswana* or belonging to the nation. By doing so, they contest the monoethnic and uni-identity ideals traditionally associated with Botswana's national identity. I argue that the tactics and strategies they employ reflect a form of subversiveness, which I conceptualise as 'tactical citizenship'. This illustrates their agency in shaping their identity, navigating belonging, strategically utilising citizenship, and aligning with the idea of tactical cosmopolitans as described by Landau and Freemantle (2010).

In this thesis, tactical citizenship which is further elaborated on in Chapter Five draws from Lee's (2006) conceptualisation of the same and is based on their study with undocumented domestic workers in the United States. Thus, tactical citizenship here refers to the alternative uses of citizenship or the unconventional ways of participating as citizens. Often these ways constitute reactive responses to navigating viable solutions to migrant descendants' challenges and complex lived experiences, as citizens and non-citizens who do not fully belong (Lee, 2006).

To advance my main argument on the politics of ambivalent citizenship, I aimed to deepen the understanding of this concept and develop a framework for interpreting the ambivalence and tactical citizenship expressed by the research participants. This work aligns with similar research that builds on Bauman's (1991) conceptualisation of

[18] This concept presents a strong framework for understanding the complex and often ambivalent experiences of citizenship by individuals such as people with a migrant background who do not conform to the traditional notions of national identity. Nyamnjoh's concept of incompleteness is further relevant in that people with a migrant background in Botswana demonstrate this as they navigate a society where citizenship is often tied to a *Tswana* national identity that is characterised by exclusionary practices and policies. At the same time, it is this very incompleteness that becomes a source of empowerment that allows people with a migrant background to foster strong connections, transcend boundaries, and contribute to a more fluid and inclusive understanding of citizenship as a continually evolving project.

ambivalence, such as the studies by McIlwaine and Bermudez (2015), Jacobsen (2016) and Mandache (2024).

Zygmunt Bauman is credited with having implicitly and explicitly devoted in-depth attention to the phenomenon of ambivalence in modern social life (Jacobsen, 2022). In conceptualising ambivalence, Bauman (1991:1) states that "ambivalence, the possibility of assigning an object or an event to more than one category, is a language-specific disorder: a failure of the naming (segregating) function that language is meant to perform."

Here Bauman is of the view that ambivalence may be likened to a disorder because it causes discomfort when we cannot clearly interpret a situation or decide how to act (Bauman, 1991). Moreover, he further postulates that this uncertainty leads to anxiety and indecision, making ambivalence to be viewed as a flaw and thus blaming either the imprecision of language or its misuse. However, Bauman emphasises that ambivalence is not a linguistic error but a natural and inherent part of how language functions. Accordingly, Jacobsen (2016) states that Bauman's analysis of ambivalence assumes that ambivalence is an inevitable consequence of modernity's obsession with order – whether it be in society or science, an era to which Bauman later describes as "solid modernity".

Jacobsen further states that Bauman is of the view that once the processes of organising, designing, and structuring are initiated and properly aligned, anything that does not fit neatly into established categories or classification systems is relegated to the realm of ambivalence (Jacobsen, 2016). This realm encompasses everything that is deemed intangible, uncontrollable, or inherently threatening by society or science (Jacobsen, 2016). For these reasons, Jacobsen (2022:4) further states that:

> Ambivalence is thus a notion capturing the experience or feeling that life is seldom clear-cut, one-dimensional and unambiguous. There is always, it seems, something that annoyingly sticks out like a sore thumb, something that resists, something that provokes, something making unambiguous decisions, unquestionable choices, rock solid classifications and incontrovertible claims is difficult. This is, at least sometimes, what we call "ambivalence". Ambivalence opens up our eyes to the fact that the world is seldom as straightforward or uncomplicated as we might think. We sometimes want things that are incompatible or even in conflict with each other – such as freedom and security, immersion and superficiality, excitement and stability – or we are confronted with contradictory expectations.

In essence, Bauman's conceptualisation of ambivalence infers that modern society and science are focused on organising and categorising everything to make sense of the world. However, some things do not always fit neatly into these categories and when this happens, society labels those things as confusing, unpredictable, or even dangerous. This, as Bauman argues, creates a sense of ambivalence where these uncategorisable things are seen as both unsettling and problematic. Additionally, McIlwaine and Bermudez (2015) build on Bauman's ideas of modernity and ambivalence, arguing that ambivalent attitudes "from below" can be seen as a response to the top-down imposition of dominant, hegemonic notions of citizenship.

It is important to highlight that Bauman's earlier work on social theory emphasises the role of ambivalence in understanding social order and modern societies. According to Junge (2008), this perspective has opened the recognition of numerous social, cultural, and moral phenomena for their inherent ambivalence and has paved the way for theorising ambivalence itself. In the same vein, Junge argues that in considering the centrality of ambivalence, Bauman has used the chance to avoid four common problems in social theories using ambivalence only implicitly.

The first problem speaks to Bauman's explicit focus on ambiguity and ambivalence from the beginning, thus, naming both as the starting point for an analysis of social order (Junge, 2008). In this case, Bauman builds on earlier ideas, like Georg Simmel's work, but avoids the assumption that opposing forces are metaphysical or fixed (Junge, 2008). In dealing with the second problem, Bauman explicitly defines ambiguity and ambivalence and is thus able to avoid the reduction of both to a concept of tension or antagonistic contraries (Junge, 2008). Here, Bauman emphasises that ambivalence and ambiguity are unavoidable and cannot be eliminated.

Concerning the third problem, with the conceptual twins of ambiguity and ambivalence, Junge argues that Bauman is able to construct a social theory that brings together cognition or knowledge and action and experience as two sides of the same single process constituting a social order. Finally, departing from most sociological theories that ignore individual feelings, Bauman incorporates inner experiences into his analysis, showing how ambivalence and ambiguity contribute to the structure and critique of society (Junge, 2008).

In the current study, those who do not fit into the constructed *Tswana* identity and citizenship are seen as the "other" and in some cases as will be shown in the ensuing empirical Chapters, their indigeneity and full access to rights and membership are questioned. Because my research participants are aware of this fact, I argue that this gives rise to a form of ambivalent citizenship that is presented in the ways they relate and engage with the state as I have already argued above. Hence, I conceptualise the politics of ambivalent citizenship in this thesis as the paradoxical way, through the *Tswanadom*[19] approach, the Botswana nation-state imposed hegemonic notions of citizenship and national identity from above which people with a migrant background embrace in ambivalent ways from below.

I also demonstrate that, like the findings of McIlwaine and Bermudez (2015) in their study of Colombians in London and Madrid, migrant descendants, despite being entitled to civil rights (particularly those who hold citizenship), face significant challenges in claiming certain rights, self-identifying, and achieving a sense of belonging. These challenges stem from socially constructed understandings of citizenship, which often exclude or marginalise such groups at the societal level.

This creates structural ambivalence for migrants who even if they practice their citizenship in other ways, exercise individual ambivalence because they cannot engage with a system that cannot fully accept them. Thus, the conceptualisation of ambivalent citizenship in this study encompasses the contradictory complexities inherent in the *Tswana* ethnicised citizenship approach that in many ways actively privileges *Tswana groups* and consequently excludes non-*Tswana* groups in mutually constitutive ways.

McIlwaine and Bermudez (2015) further highlight that the concept of ambivalence has been employed in various ways by sociologists and psychologists, often emphasing a distinction between individual and structural ambivalence. However, Connidis and McMullin (2022:565) argue that these levels are interconnected, as ambivalence arises from the contradictions and paradoxes embedded in structured social relations that unequally distribute opportunities, rights, and privileges.

[19] Tswanadom is a term which is said to be invented by Neil Parsons. In pre-colonial and one would argue even in the postcolonial era, 'Tswanadom,'applied to those states where Tswana political culture was dominant (Murray,1990).

Building on the work of McIlwaine and Bermudez (2015), I suggest that this framework resonates strongly with how migrant descendants navigate and negotiate their citizenship rights in diverse and complex ways. In this way, I also draw on postcolonial literature on citizenship and belonging to explore how citizenship in these spaces is embodied and how groups considered on the periphery or outside the margins engage with politics to reshape their citizenship experiences. In addition, as this thesis focuses on ambivalence and tactical citizenship, I draw upon postcolonial literature concerning the state, citizenship, identity and belonging.

These concepts are interwoven and elaborated upon throughout the empirical chapters, particularly in Chapter Four, Five and Six. This is because my interest is looking into the future of citizenship in these places and what groups such as my research participants are likely to become in terms of how they re-shape citizenship and engage in politics of identity and belonging. Furthermore, understanding the state through migrant descendants also facilitates the mutation of these individuals into ambivalent entities that defy and challenge nationalistic notions of citizenship and belonging (Ndhlovu, 2020). This approach also provides a more nuanced lens for discussing migrant struggles without reinforcing problematic stereotypes.

I also build on studies such as Mandache (2024), Fleischmann and Steinhilper (2017) and others that propose ambivalence as a productive theoretical tool that can pull together different contradictory tendencies and understand the nuances of people with a migrant background towards the Botswana nation-state. Moreover, like Mandache (2024), the strength of ambivalence as a theoretical angle in making sense of the complexities or tensions and discontinuities is emphasised in this work. In this context, it helps unravel the nuances of citizenship embodied by people with a migrant background in postcolonial states.

The study further adds to discussions of citizenship by inviting us to revisit the concept of citizenship in postcolonial nation-states like Botswana that frame the lives of people with a migrant background through monoethnic lenses. This helps with providing an appreciation of what happens as Bloom (2017) argues, when citizenship is experienced in ways that challenge standard interpretations, and in this case, when citizenship is ambivalent. Furthermore, as Bloom states, by acknowledging that citizenship can be

ambivalent or in some cases unwanted, it is possible to provide a more complex characterisation of the reality that is not limited by the liberal democratic principles that states built their citizenship upon. The case of Botswana as will be shown in Chapter Five embodies both the liberal democratic values and an ethnicisation of its citizenship and national identity.

This study's findings on the politics of ambivalent citizenship offer valuable empirical and theoretical insights into the experiences of individuals with a migrant background, both in Botswana and more broadly within African postcolonial states. This research contributes to contemporary and interdisciplinary scholarly debates on state building, postcolonial citizenship, identity, and belonging in at least three significant ways:

First, it challenges and addresses the weaknesses of top-down understandings of citizenship and national belonging through understanding it from the margins of society. The dynamic and fluid identities of the research participants demonstrate the complexity of their sense of identity and belonging, which is characterised by a simultaneity of belonging and non-belonging. Simonsen (2017) aptly described this feeling or process as being a citizen without being a member. Thus, this study illustrates that, despite the assimilationist model of the national project of Botswana, migrant descendants have managed to create their own space and chart their own diverging identities and sense of belonging. These identities exist alongside and in parallel to the constructed national narratives of civic identification and what it means to be a *Motswana* in Botswana.

Second, like studies such as Linstroth, Hall, and Douge-Prosper (2009), the study argues that people with a migrant background demonstrate an approach of being “here and there” through the divergent ways in which they identify with Botswana, their countries of origins /descent. This type of thinking reveals that scholars need to reconsider the politics of identity and belonging in postcolonial states beyond ethnic conflicts and essentialist forms of belonging. Furthermore, the study challenges us to rethink the ways in which groups such as people with migrant backgrounds are finding ways to insert themselves within the boundaries of the nation-state while simultaneously choosing to operate on the periphery or margins. Thus, Botswana, through its adoption of a *Tswanadom* approach to nation-building, reveals a fragile and bounded hegemony evidenced by the experiences of those outside of these constructed confines or margins of the nation-state. The findings of

the research also contribute to discussions that view the state as existing in people's imaginations, yet it is practically bounded by a national identity shaped by a monoethnic lens such as the case of Botswana.

Finally, this study challenges the hegemonic or monoethnic nature of the state and shows that the Botswana state, although bounded, is at the same time unbounded because it has not been able to capture the imagination of everyone, especially groups such as my research participants. Furthermore, evidence of this unbounding is highlighted in key discussions in this thesis that demonstrate that over the years, there has been reforms to the citizenship policies (1984, 1998, 2023) instigated by ethnic minorities, minority groups and women. This reveals that the state is also beginning to slowly rethink its rigid nature and begin to incorporate or reflect the diversity on the ground.

In addressing the main research questions, the thesis reveals that the experiences of people with a migrant background provide a window to observe how postcolonial citizenship is being continually shaped and reshaped at the margins. These experiences challenge normative, rigid ideas of citizenship and belonging by disrupting dominant narratives and traditional ways of claiming rights in postcolonial states. The findings also speak to existing scholarship that discusses issues of ambivalence, tactical citizenship and hybridity or fluid identities and marginalisation.

The thesis is in conversation with these discussions by showing through the experiences of the research participants what life at margins looks like. This challenges Bhabha's concept of hybridity and the concept of marginalisation. While the notion of hybridity helps to illuminate the fluid and ambiguous identities of the research participants, it does not fully encompass their experiences. Additionally, the study challenges the traditional understanding of marginalisation as solely a space of oppression, demonstrating its limitations in this context. This is because the participants in this study have demonstrated that even though they may not be fully integrated, they are comfortable with that position. In this sense, the study challenges these theoretical and conceptual frameworks by showing that marginalisation can be a space of agency, creativity and negotiation, rather than just suppression.

1.1.4 Study Motivation and Literature Gap

The study integrates postcolonial citizenship literature with discourses on people with a migrant background which also includes second-generation migrants. While the primary focus of this research is not specifically on second-generation migrants, I drew from the existing literature on this group as mentioned to situate and frame my study within broader discussions on identity, belonging, and postcolonial integration and assimilation.
These studies and many others show the prominence of second-generation migrant studies in the global north since the 1990s.

This scholarship serves as a useful foundation for discussing issues of identity and belonging among people with a migrant backgrounds, including my research participants. However, scholars like Jayasinha (2015) criticise the traditional focus of second-generation migrant studies on assimilation, acculturation, and integration, describing it as one dimensional. Jayasinha (2015:79) further cautions against this narrow perspective, arguing that it reinforces an "immigrant-centric discursive construction of the second-generation migrant". This approach according to Viruell-Fuentes, (2011) also uncritically questions the seemingly homogeneous cultures of the receiving society and among the immigrant group. Furthermore, Jayasinha states that the assimilationist centric lens assumes that second-generation migrants will struggle to navigate between the cultural divide of their parents' country of origin and their country of birth.

This literature on second-generation migrants, although not discussed in detail here, is relevant because it addresses similar issues to this study, such as how people with a migrant background navigate and define their identities and belonging while straddling multiple worlds as mentioned. It also helps to locate the study within the global debates on identity and belonging although from a global south perspective and using the experiences of people with a migrant background. Moreover, drawing on second-generation migrant literature is pertinent because there is limited literature on people with a migrant background in Africa. When it comes to Botswana, no such studies exist; hence the choice to build on second-generation migrant scholarship using a postcolonial lens framework.

Chiyangwa (2022) argues in her study on second-generation migrants in South Africa that most migration literature in this context is largely focused on first-generation

migrants (economic migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers). This is compounded by the lack of research contextualising second-generation migrants' experiences within the African context, except for authors such as Clark-Kazak (2011), Abiola and Ndisika (2022), Onukogu (2018, 2022), Daimon (2014), Chiyangwa (2022) and Bashonga (2025).

Onukogu (2022) is of the view that this paucity in literature is the reason the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the term and experiences of such groups are yet to gain much prominence in African migration studies and research (Onukogu, 2022). Furthermore, Onukogu states that some of the few scholars writing about second-generation migrants in the global south, including herself, draw their interpretation of the term from a body of literature emanating from the global north studies or scholarship.

In the global south, studies have focused on the challenges of nation-building and issues of belonging for ethnic minorities post-independence, with very few looking into the experiences of people with a migrant background. While studies on ethnic minorities in Botswana and elsewhere have contributed valuable insights, they do not help us understand how nation-building processes continue to shape and inform the identity and belonging of people with a migrant background in postcolonial societies. These groups are important because they help us understand how postcolonial citizenship continues to shape the experiences of groups that do not necessarily fit into the national narrative of the imagined state and groups that may belong to multiple spaces and contexts.

By looking into these groups, this thesis moves away from a singular analytical and theoretical approach to national identity and second-generation migrant belonging, in this case, migrant descendant belonging. The thesis aims to address a bias in the literature on post-colonial Africa, with a few exceptions (see for example Clark-Kazak, 2011; Daimon, 2014; and Groves, 2020). And by examining these groups, the study broadens the scope of understanding in this area. Additionally, even though literature on postcolonial identity and belonging in relation to the challenges of nation-building regularly references boundaries and the exclusions of citizenship, this body of work mostly overlooks the position of new migrants or people with a migrant background.

This is because most of the literature has focused mostly on indigeneity, ethnicity and autochthony as the basis for belonging, which does not speak to all immigrant experiences. For example, Adejumobil (2001), Englund and Nyamnjoh (2004), Ceuppens

and Geschiere (2005) and Geschiere and Jackson (2006) and Geschiere, (2009) are some of the many scholars that have highlighted the effects of the states' emphasis on autochthony and indigeneity that leads to exclusionary norms and practices in Africa.

Overlooking groups like people with a migrant background limits our understanding of postcolonial citizenship, identity, and belonging. This gap is what this thesis seeks to address and highlight the nuanced experiences of people with a migrant background within the global south and also contributing to the broader literature on citizenship, identity, and belonging. Furthermore, in focusing on people with a migrant background, this thesis challenges the one-dimensional approach and assumed challenges of straddling different worlds that Jayasinha argues against. As will be shown in the empirical chapters of this thesis, ambivalence and ambiguity informs my participants' experiences, including people that can be classified as second-generation migrants.

Jayasinha (2015) expands on her point and emphasises that it is important to be mindful of research that privileges such theoretical frames for its potential to invisibilise other avenues of identification and closing off other forms of lived experiences from being understood. Most importantly, Jayasinha underscores the pervasiveness such research may engender in terms of the discursive construction of an essentialised identity of the migrant that encourages and neutralises the hegemonic immigrant-centred view of culture and the second-generation migrant (Jayasinha, 2015).

As such, the discussions in this thesis draw attention to how debates over Botswana are situated (or not) within a global literature on second-generation migrants or people with a migrant background. Furthermore, as highlighted, most of the existing studies in Botswana and the broader Africa scholarship focus on discourses surrounding minority issues. Building on this foundation, I have expanded the literature to include discussions of nation-building and national identity, specifically in relation to people with a migrant background within the African context. By situating the experiences of these individuals through the lens of second-generation migrant literature, this study addresses a gap in both Botswana's and broader African migration studies.

The study also enhances our understanding of the various forms of belonging in postcolonial states, while exploring the complexities of postcolonial citizenship. Specifically, the study compares two forms of citizenship in Botswana: the officially

recognised form and the one negotiated and contested by migrant descendants. In support of this approach, Aguillar (1999) argues that the understanding and articulation of citizenship are often shaped by territorial boundaries and the historical context of different nation-states. This highlights the importance of considering context when examining citizenship. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the experiences of my research participants, citizenship holds different meanings for different people.

Williams (2010) is of the view that the concept of citizenship may vary significantly between individuals and state policies, leading to a wide range of interpretations. Nordberg (2006) supports this view, noting that much of the existing literature on citizenship is theoretical and lacks empirical analysis of how people understand their citizenship. Hence, one of the main objectives of this study is to explore how migrant descendants in Botswana perceive and understand their citizenship.

The Botswana case is particularly noteworthy as outlined in the introduction section for the following reasons. Firstly, Botswana offers a paradoxical approach to its citizenship that is plagued with contradictions, as on the one hand it recognises individual rights (the civic model) while simultaneously advancing the *Tswana* hegemony (the mono-cultural/ethnic model). Secondly, since the interest is on post-colonial nationalism and the friction between modern visions of nationalism (Werbner, 2004), Botswana became an interesting case to explore because of its *Tswana* nationalism. Thirdly, as previously mentioned, there are notable gaps in the literature on the experiences of people with a migrant background within the African context that this study bridges.

The study also uses lessons from Botswana to contribute knowledge that informs empirical and theoretical literature on African postcolonial citizenship, identity, belonging, and, more broadly, people with a migrant background's inclusion in postcolonial states. As such, it differs from the few research studies on second-generation migrants or similar groups in Africa because such studies have typically examined migrants with similar backgrounds, either from the same country or generational cohort.

For example, studies like those by Chiyangwa (2022) and Onukogu (2018) in South Africa focus on youth and children from specific backgrounds. Chiyangwa's study looked at migrant youth from Mozambique, while Onukogu's research focused on children of Nigerian descent. In contrast, this work offers a different lens in its methodological

underpinning. The selection of participants is diverse, including individuals from different backgrounds, different countries of origin, cross-generational experiences, age groups, and at different stages in life.

The diversity of participants in this study emerged as an unexpected strength, despite not being an initial design consideration. It was primarily a consequence of participants' availability during the fieldwork process. However, it enriched the study by introducing a nuanced perspective through the experiences of people with a migrant background in Botswana. Their narratives illuminated the complexities and ambiguities inherent in discussions of postcolonial citizenship, identity, and belonging.

Fourthly, using the case of Botswana helped with gaining an in-depth understanding of the experiences of migrant descendants in the country's context. As Runganan (2016:104) puts it, "knowledge is subjective, constructed within a social context, wherein the researcher attempts to make sense of and understand the embedded context of the lived world of the participants". Thus, although inferences from this study are based on the Botswana context, the findings still present an opportunity to expand these discussions within the broader postcolonial experience and discourses.

This thesis is therefore motivated by a desire to explore the experiences of people with a migrant background. In doing so, it highlights how recent citizenship studies often emphasise the connection between citizenship and national identity or define nations in binary terms (ethnic or civic). While acknowledging this link, the study also departs from it in some ways. For instance, Chapter Three draws on William's (2010) work on second-generation migrants in Europe, highlighting the influence of nationhood and citizenship on identity and belonging.

Scholars such as Liu and Hilton (2005) in Moffit, Juang, and Syed (2018), associate this framing of nationhood with master narratives which they define as stable, but not static, and shifting because of historical, demographic, and social changes, creating a perceived naturalness for some while marginalising others. Thus, by working in spaces where nation and civic identity are often visible fictions and myths that capture a few people's imagination, exploring Botswana implores scholars to reconsider the basic tenets of this discussion.

1.1.5 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is arranged into seven chapters that trace how notions of national identity have informed and continue to inform the current context in both national and local spaces for people with a migrant background. Part A of **Chapter One** has introduced the general background of the thesis, outlined the gap in the literature and the thesis' main contribution based on the main research question posed. In part B, below I offer a contextual definition of concepts and associated discourses (identity, belonging citizenship and people with a migrant background).

Chapter Two describes the methodological approach, and the research methods I adopted to conduct the research. I opted for a qualitative approach through conducting a historiography of the Botswana nation-building project and conducting in-depth narrative interviews with my research participants and key informants. I selected these methods to assist with understanding the experiences of participants within a contextual framing of a national project and its impact on their lived realities in postcolonial Botswana.

Chapter Three discusses the construction of the postcolonial state and citizenship from archival and secondary data. In the chapter, I present the historical evolution of the Botswana nation-state and provide a contextual understanding of the research site. I do this through tracing the evolution of postcolonial Botswana and the creation of a *Tswana* identity that dates back to the pre-colonial era but continues to influence national identity and belonging in the modern nation-state. In the chapter, I further underscore the development of citizenship policies in Botswana. The impetus for this chapter is that it locates the evolution of the Citizenship Act in Botswana and draws attention to the changes or revisions that have ensued over time. This helps to locate the source of ambivalence that people with a migrant background present in the empirical chapters that follow.

Chapter Four constitutes the first empirical analysis of the study. In this chapter, I explain that, while social constructs have a significant influence on how people with a migrant background self-identify, the research participants also demonstrate a level of self-awareness and agency in how they perceive these factors and experiences to shape their identities. Additionally, I argue that the multiple and hyphenated identities of these groups challenge traditional nation-state ideologies, particularly the standardisation of culture as a

means of fostering collective consciousness. Finally, through these diverse identities, I highlight what the experiences of people with a migrant background reveal about life on the margins, contributing to literature that positions this space as a site of expression and creativity, rather than simply oppression and marginalisation.

In **Chapter Five**, I use the notion of tactical citizenship to explain some of the approaches that people with a migrant background have adopted to address issues of the limits to citizenship they experience through the socially constructed tropes of "*Motswana wa pampiri*[20] - a term used to refer to naturalised or in a few cases non-*Tswana* ethnic groups and the concept *Motswana wa Sekei*. In this chapter, I further reveal the racialised and ethnic undertones that are socially constructed to understand citizenship in Botswana. Moreover, I demonstrate the ways in which rights-claiming strategies emerge and reshape citizenship daily at the local level through decision-making processes that govern or inform the rights individuals can access and those they cannot.

In **Chapter Six,** I demonstrate that individuals with a migrant background exhibit a form of ambivalent belonging, marked by their ambivalence towards the Botswana nation-state. These mixed sentiments are reflected in their contradictory conceptions of belonging. On the one hand, they perceive themselves as belonging to Botswana, viewing it as home – the place where they were raised, where their familial ties are rooted, and the place they know best. On the other hand, due to their migratory histories and transnational backgrounds, they recognise that they cannot fully belong to any one place. The chapter argues that, in the case of people with a migrant background, not fully belonging constitutes a form of belonging in itself – what might be termed "belonging by other means". The chapter also demonstrates that this ambivalence, shaped by personal history and context, illustrates how ambivalence and agency can coexist in the construction of belonging.

In **Chapter Seven**, I discuss the empirical, methodological, and theoretical implications of the thesis, drawing on the contributions of the three empirical chapters. I also examine the implications for the identity and belonging of people with a migrant background, particularly in relation to their interactions with the Botswana nation-state and the communities in which they reside. I reflect on the central thesis argument which is that these groups embody a form of ambivalent citizenship, characterised by a fluid, in-and-out

[20] The literal translation for this term means a citizen on paper.

approach and the adoption of alternative strategies they employ to self-identify, belong, and claim rights within Botswana. I conclude the chapter with a reflection on the thesis' contribution to the fields of postcolonial citizenship, national identity, and belonging, as well as suggestions for future research avenues in these areas.

1.2 Part B: Key Concepts and Definitions

1.2.1 Conceptual and Operational Definitions

This section explores the key concepts used in this thesis to understand the research participants' identity construction and belonging. The concepts discussed here include, people with a migrant background/migrant descendants, citizenship, identity and belonging which will be further operationalised in the ensuing empirical chapters. This section helps to unpack how I will be using these key terms in this study. It also shows how my study relates to existing scholarship as I identify areas of similarities or differences in how I operationalise the terms or in cases where I expand on the existing concepts to align with my study. This helps to set the boundaries for my inquiry and to focus on specific aspects that are related to the topic.

1.2.2 People with a Migrant Background/ Migrant Descendants

As already alluded to and will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, there are currently no studies in Botswana that focus on a mixed group of people with a history of migration. In this thesis I adopt the term/s people with a migrant background or migrant descendants (used interchangeably) to conceptualise the category of research participants that participated in this study. Some of the participants include people that can be described as second-generation migrants while others have different migratory backgrounds and are from different generational cohorts in terms of the time they arrived in the country. As such, I draw from second-generation migrant studies as they are the closest to understanding a group like my research participants and also taking into consideration the scant literature on this group in the global south at present.

Even though I draw from the term "second-generation migrants" to frame the experiences of my research participants, I acknowledge that there is no explicit framework that captures people with a migrant backgrounds' specific positioning within Botswana's national narrative. This is because much of the existing literature on generational identity originates from settler or migration contexts in the Global North, and does not fully take into account the dynamics of postcolonial African nation-building. At the same time, looking to South African literature on settler-colonial generations and racialised belonging (Norval, 1996) can offer useful comparative insights, particularly in relation to nationhood and citizenship that this study also draws from.

As such, my use and understanding of "second-generation" borrows conceptually from these broader debates especially from scholars that explore the tension between autochthony and inclusion while recognising that the Botswana context requires a particular analytical lens. This conceptual choice reflects both a gap in the literature and the need to articulate how postcolonial nationhood constructs (or denies) identity and belonging for people with a migrant background.

In terms of second-generation migrant studies drawn from the global north, scholarship shows that there is no definitive conception of what constitutes a second-generation migrant despite the prevalent studies on the subject matter. Hence, scholars have noted the contestations and varied definitions that make it difficult to define the term (Jayasinha, 2015; Schneider, 2016; Rumbaut, 2004; Oropesa and Landale, 1997; and Vathi, 2015). Portes and Rumbaut (2005) posit that due to the lack of consensus in definition, scholars have loosely used the term "second-generation migrants" to refer to locally born children of one or two immigrant parents.

Schneider (2016), on the other hand, argues that the concept of second-generation in the context of migration studies is aimed at addressing the offspring of parents who migrated to the place where their children were then born and/or raised. While Jayasinha (2015) contends that the diversity among second-generation migrants and the various ways they have been labelled and categorised in literature contribute to the complexity and difficulty of defining such groups. The author further specifies that this difficulty is due to a propensity for research to focus on the degree to which immigrants enter the 'mainstream' based on the success of previous generations (Jayasinha, 2015:31).

Following this evolution, the term "second-generation migrant" has become more widely accepted and used when discussing the children of the most recent wave of immigrants in the USA (Jayasinha, 2015). However, as mentioned, the use of the term is not as straightforward as it is defined. For scholars such as Oropesa and Landale (1997), Rumbaut (2004), Jayasinha (2015), Schneider (2016), and many others, several factors add to the complexity of defining all children of first-generation immigrants into one group. For example, Mannerheim, cited in Rambaut (2004), postulates that even though individuals of the same generation may be exposed to similar historical effects and develop a shared consciousness, they may still react differently to the common historical effects of their experiences, thus forming generational divisions within the same generation or cohort.

Rumbaut (2004), Jayasinha (2015), Schneider (2016), Foley (2017), and Oropesa and Landale (1997), to name a few are some of the scholars that have investigated factors that contribute to generational differences among such groups. Some of these differences include the time at which the person first migrated into the receiving country. Hence, Rumbaut (2004) reasons that the term first generation can also include the children of first-generation migrants who arrived at a young age.

Rambaut further argues that the term "second-generation migrants" can be broadened under the immigration framework to encompass not only individuals who were born and raised in the US to foreign-born parents but also those who immigrated as children, and to individuals with one US-born parent and one foreign parent. Rumbaut further elaborates that this expansion is propelled by the tendency of certain scholars to group such individuals into a single group or cohort (Rumbaut, 2004).

The concept of second-generation migrants, as shown above, has many layers to it, with varying definitions and accounts for various factors that affect such groups, hence it is not always easy to define the concept in a way that is applicable to all the children of immigrants. In addition, at times, the concept is used as an umbrella term to define all children of first-generation migrants, despite the different ages at which the children arrived in the country of immigration.

Other scholars have added refinements to account for factors such as the different ages of arrival, mixed-nationality parents, etc. However, Schneider argues that these factors are regarded as more rigid definitions of the term, as they only include individuals who

were born in the country. The author stresses that the justification for applying a rigid definition was for its usefulness in addressing methodological and sampling challenges in a survey that was conducted on second-generation descendants of various immigrant groups in Europe. This approach facilitated the use of well-defined categories such as the respondents' country of birth and their parents' country of birth when selecting samples from the register data or comparable sources (Schneider, 2016).

For less rigid definitions, Schneider states that the term is expanded to include children who migrated with their parents at a very young age, or those of school-going age, as the definitional boundary. The rationale for applying a less rigid term to the concept is that the younger the child is at the time of migration, the more they are considered to have limited memory of their country of origin and are more likely to fully assimilate into the social fabric of the new context, through the formal education system and learning the language of the host country (Schneider, 2016). Additionally, the reasoning behind this thinking is that such individuals are very young and are more malleable to assimilating quickly into the host society; therefore, their experiences will be almost akin to those of children born in the country of immigration (Jayasinha, 2015).

Rumbaut (2004) argues that the recognition of the limits of a one-size-fits-all approach to defining second-generation migrants has resulted in a list of numerical labels or categories to distinguish the group. Rambaut developed this list, which includes a generational cohort of migrants that are defined based on the age at which they arrived in the country of immigration. The generational cohort is distinguished according to different categories that include the following generations: 1st, 1.25, 1.5, 1.75, and 2nd.

I should point out that because Rumbaut focuses on arrival age, his generational cohort excludes the 2.5 generation. This is a generation that is usually distinguished by the origins of their parents – having one native parent versus two with a migrant background (Dusi et al, 2015). Nevertheless, a representation of Rumbaut's generational cohort is outlined with an explanation in Table 1.

In the case of this thesis, the research participants were not uniform and therefore the term second-generation migrants could not accommodate them, especially if we go by Rumbaut's definition outlined in Table 1 of a "true" second-generation migrant, it does not accommodate all the research participants in this study. As such, context-specific

conceptualisation of research participants is also an important factor when deciding how to categorise the individuals who fall into any of the listed generational cohorts.

For instance, Onukogu (2022) notes that the rigid definition of second-generation migrants adopted by Rumbaut did not fully apply to her research participants, who were part of both the 2.0 and 1.75 generational cohorts. These participants were either born in South Africa or were foreign-born but arrived with one or both parents before starting primary school. Despite this, she still refers to them collectively as second-generation migrants. In my research, the criteria for selecting participants was as follows: 1.) individuals between the ages of 18 and 55 years; 2.) born in Botswana or arrived before the age of 17; 3.) either Botswana citizens or residents in the process of obtaining citizenship; 4.) with both parents originally being immigrants from any African or Afro-Caribbean country other than Botswana; 5.) and currently living and working in Botswana or the diaspora.

As such, it was important to ensure that the participants are identified appropriately in this study. This is because the downside of misidentifying an individual's generational position, particularly in a context like Botswana where citizenship, ethnicity, and belonging are tightly intertwined carries significant conceptual and political risks. For example, labelling someone as "second-generation" may imply a linear, integrationist narrative that does not account for the persistent marginalisation or exclusion that many descendants of migrants face, even after decades of familial presence in the country.

Such framings risk reproducing the very logics of exclusion under examination, positioning individuals as perpetually "other" despite local birth and deep-rooted social ties. Furthermore, the term can obscure the historical and structural dynamics that shape identity formation in postcolonial contexts, especially where notions of autochthony and ethnic nativeness underpin national identity. Therefore, it was important to be reflexive about these labels - not only for analytical clarity, but to avoid reinscribing the same exclusions that the thesis seeks to interrogate.

Based on Rumbaut's definition in Table 1, my participants represent a variety of generational cohorts. As a result, my conceptualisation of the participants is broader than the typical definition used by the USA. demographers, which generally focuses on children born to immigrants (Onukogu, 2022). In this study, the term "research participants"

includes individuals from diverse backgrounds, categorised by factors such as their place of birth, age at migration to Botswana, and their immigration or citizenship status (both citizens and non-citizens). Thus, to avoid conceptual ambiguity, I refer to this group as "people with a migrant background" or "migrant descendants".

Table 1: Generational Cohort

Generational Cohort	**Age at Immigration**	**Experiences of the Life in the Host Country**
1st generation	Arrive in the majority society as adults	Interaction with the majority society depends on the nature of employment as not legally obliged to attend educational institutions.
1.25 generation	Arrive typically between the ages of 13 and 17. They may or may not arrive with their families	They may either attend secondary school in the host country or may enter the workforce directly. Their experiences are hypothesised to be closer to those of the 2nd generation.
1.5 generation	Arrive between the ages of 6 and 12	Preadolescent primary school aged children who have begun to read and to write in their native tongue before immigration but whose education is completed in the host country.
1.75 generation	Arrive between the ages of 0 and 5	Educational experience close to those of the 2nd generation immigrants.
2nd generation	Born in the host country but whose parents immigrated at a later stage of life	

Source: Rumbaut (2008: 349 -350)

1.2.3 Identity

The Scholarship on identity and belonging is not only vast but a main feature in the literature and studies on migration (Zevallos, 2004; Jayasinha, 2015; Sezgin, 2013 and Reyseck, 2014). In their discussion of identity, Jones and Krzyzanowski (2011) point to concerns regarding the limited theoretical rigour and precision that comes with the use of the concept. Consequently, it becomes least regarded as a way to conceptualise an individual's relation to a collective. In tracing its roots, Gleason (1983) states that the concept of identity stems from the Latin root idem and has been part of the English vocabulary since the sixteenth century.

As far as the definition of identity is concerned, there have been varied explanations as to how to define it. These explanations or definitions have changed over time. What has remained constant is the understanding by different scholars that identity as a term remains lucid and difficult to explain and theorise adequately. Hall (1996) concurs and argues that the concept of identity is rife with theoretical difficulties but in the same breath, he urges that a critique of identity should not aim to displace the concept. Hence, Isin and Wood (2009) stress that we should continue to use the concept of identity but instead use a reflexive approach, in a critical manner that is inclined to open possibilities with it rather than ascribing certainties to it.

In exploring the identity and belonging of people with a migrant background I also employed a reflexive approach that Isin and Wood encourage to understand how people with a migrant background make sense of their identities. Accordingly, Erikson, cited in Gleason (1983), agrees with the preceding assertions and states that identity is difficult to grasp because it involves a process that is located both within the core of the individual and within a common culture. Sticking with Erikson's point, I contend that this highlights the important role that both internal and external factors play in shaping one's identity.

It is this very complex and multifaceted nature of identity that propels Gleason to offer a friendly warning that scholars need to be careful when talking about identity. The same author also warns us not to be overly critical of how others talk about identity because the term can be legitimately used in a variety of ways and mean different things to different people. For example, Jones and Krzyzanowski (2011) are interested in studying identity at

the intersection of belonging and collective identities because this is the stage at which identity is contested and negotiated. The authors are convinced that looking at identity through this lens enables us to see how different patterns of belonging are constructed and helps us locate "where" an individual positions himself or herself in relation to the collectiveness of his or her community of origin and the society to which he or she has migrated to.

Other scholars, such as İnaç and Ünal (2013), take a different approach to identity, viewing it as a description or definition of the existence of belongingness. The authors argue that the two pillars of identity are the identifier and the identified. Furthermore, both authors show that, despite being distinct concepts, identity and belonging have an impact on how each is defined, as identity can influence belonging and vice versa. This is because where a person is from can also connote their identity. Thus, for people with a migrant background, their self-identification can be two-fold, how they self-identify, and how their communities identify them.

Jones and Krzyzanowski (2011) further urge us to conceptually unpack the notion of identity to allow the multiple and highly complex processes associated with identity construction to be revealed instead of concealed. For these reasons, in the context of my study, it was imperative for people with a migrant background to unpack the notion of identity for themselves. To particularly draw inferences from their experiences to define what these meant for their self-identification and identity construction, as well as to locate the term in relation to how they are perceived within the Botswana society.

I was particularly interested in understanding how these groups define their own identities, particularly in relation to collective expressions of self and self-assertion (Rustin, 2023). My focus was on how participants saw themselves, regardless of how they were perceived by their surroundings, and how they positioned themselves in relation to the Botswana national identity. Recognising that identity is fluid and situational, meaning individuals may identify differently depending on the people, places, and circumstances they encounter, I aimed to explore how my research participants navigate these processes of self-identification.

1.2.4 Belonging

In discussing the concept of belonging, it is essential to bear in mind that defining and conceptualising this concept is not an easy task (Antonsich, 2010). Besides the fact that it is under theorised, just as identity, there is no common understanding of what belonging means and why it is crucial (Mee and Wright, 2009:772). As such Antonsich asserts that it is common for some to equate belonging with the notion of identity, citizenship, or in some cases, both.

In other instances, scholars such as Bhimiji (2008) assert that belonging not only includes citizenship, but also encompasses nationhood, gender, ethnicity, and emotional aspects of status or attachment. For some individuals, it is linked to different forms of affiliation, serving to encompass the vast array of connections to locations, communities, cultures, and so on (Sicakkan and Lithman, 2005:27). With these differences briefly outlined, Antonsich opines that social science scholarship has the tendency to use the term belonging as a self-explanatory concept leading to challenges with its definition by many scholars.

There are debates within the literature that belonging depends on the context in which it is applied. Mee and Wright (2009) add that belonging is a concept that can be informally or formally implied. Wright (2015) refers to belonging as a puzzling term because of its ability to evoke a feeling, a sense and a set of practices all at once. Using the example of diasporic belonging, Wright further asserts that belonging can also refer to a place, meaning a place of belonging, despite the absence of any specific site.

Antonsich (2010) is of the view that belonging can be examined from two perspectives: the personal and intimate sense of feeling "at home" in a particular place (referred to as place-belongingness), and the use of belonging to construct, assert, justify, or challenge social and spatial inclusion or exclusion (known as the politics of belonging).

For Yuval-Davis (2006), belonging is a constantly changing process, not a fixed state that is only a naturalised creation of a specific dominant form of power dynamics. At the same time, Yuval-Davis (2006:199) also opines that belonging is “an act of self-identification by others in a stable, contested or transient way”. In her work on belonging and the politics of belonging, Yuval-Davis discusses three analytical levels of belonging

that include: 1.) social locations, 2.) constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments and 3.) ethical and political values.

In the first level of social locations, Yuval-Davis defines it as particular categories people are said to belong to, for example, gender, race, and class, nation, profession, etc. Yuval-Davis (2006) further asserts that these categories carry with them a particular positionality along an axis of power that can be higher or lower than other categories.

Still, on social locations, Yuval-Davis (2006) further argues for the importance of the intersectionality approach in analysing social locations as these categories are not constructed along one power axis of difference. For example, "white" women may experience acceptance within their community than "black" women, but still, be considered as inferior to their "white" male counterparts because of their gender.

The second analytical level relates to individuals' identifications and emotional attachments to various collectives and groupings. In this level, identities and narratives comprise stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are and who they are not. The author further argues that these stories may relate to self and or others' perceptions of what being a member in a grouping or collective (ethnic, racial, national, cultural, religious) means.

Lastly, Yuval-Davis argues that constructions of belonging should be seen as a reflection of emotional investments and a desire for attachment. She reasons that both individuals and groups are often in a dilemma of wanting to belong to and to become, a process fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state.

The third analytical level of belonging, according to Yuval-Davis (2006), is ethical and political values. At this level, she explains how the two previously discussed levels of belonging are assessed and judged. Closely related to this are the specific attitudes and ideologies about where and how identity and group boundaries are drawn, whether in more exclusionary or more permeable ways.

In a critique of Yuval-Davis's tripartite analytical frame of belonging, Antonsich (2010) argues that belonging as an emotional feeling of being home in a place is less frequently analysed in scholarship on belonging, as there is a tendency to define belonging as a synonym of collective identity or citizenship as already highlighted.

Antonsich further argues that although Yuval-Davis's (2006) framework attempts to outline belonging and the politics of belonging, her analysis leans more towards politics of belonging instead of belonging as an emotional feeling towards a place. Wright (2015) concurs with Antonsich using the weak theory to highlight the need to focus on emotion and affect when it comes to belonging by suggesting the need to attend to the in-depth ways belonging is composed by and through emotional attachments.

Another angle to this discussion on belonging is the politics of belonging that Yuval-Davis's (2006) approach has been criticised above for heavily relying upon in addition to her three analytical frameworks on belonging. According to Yuval-Davis, the politics of belonging is a way of ensuring boundary maintenance of a political community that separates individuals according to "us" and "them". The latter author further asserts that those who belong and do not belong is what dominates contemporary debates of belonging. Crowley (1993:10), as cited in Antonsich (2010), aligns with Yuval-Davis in defining this process as "the dirty work of boundary maintenance." Antonsich argues that Bhambra (2006) and Yuval-Davis (2006) consider these divisions, arising from boundary discourses and practices, to be fundamental to any politics of belonging.

Considering this discussion, the current study sought to understand how people with a migrant background define belonging and its meaning at a personal level and in connection to the broader narratives of being a *Motswana.* Further, to explore where these feelings of belonging emanate, and how such groups codify these feelings in their everyday experiences and social practices. Finally, to understand who has the power to define who can belong and the conditions for belonging?

Accordingly, Fenster (2005) states that the interconnected works of literature on belonging examine the tensions between what the author calls 'a sense of belonging', everyday practices of belonging, and formal structures of belonging (including in some cases citizenship rights). It is these very tensions that I unpack in this study. The notions of space and place are also explored to assess their impact on the everyday lives of specific groups positioned as outside national belonging (Mee and Wright, 2009:773).

Finally, the concept of belonging in this context is used to explore how the sense of belonging experienced by people with a migrant background influences their relationship with the Botswana nation-state and the communities they inhabit. By

unpacking belonging in this context, this thesis also aims to examine other forms of belonging, such as ambivalent belonging that is presented by the research participants.

1.2.5 Citizenship

Literature on citizenship highlights that, as a form of belonging, citizenship can serve as both an inclusionary and exclusionary mechanism, depending on how it is constructed and articulated (Aguillar, 1999). Nagel and Staeheli (2004) argue that while this remains true, migration is a key factor in reshaping the relationship between citizenship and identity. The authors further emphasise that it is possible to identify as a citizen of a country without necessarily feeling a sense of belonging to or being part of that country. This challenges the assumed alignment between citizenship, the state, and the nation (Nagel and Staeheli, 2004).

The idea of the universality of citizenship and its applicability to all citizens equally has been challenged. Evidence in scholarship shows that citizens can still be denied access to some benefits because of their racial, gender, cultural, and ethnic differences, and in some cases, there is political resistance to acknowledge inequality (Eisenberg and Lenard, 2020). This obviously has implications for how citizenship is defined, understood and practised in different contexts.

Earlier scholars of citizenship drew their discourse mainly from Marshall's rights-focused citizenship theory, which dominated liberal post-war sociology (Joppke, 2017). Marshall's articulation of citizenship followed a liberal approach that was influential in the modern-day welfare state's development of human rights frameworks localised in historical periods of British society. According to Liakos (2006), Marshall's theory was not based on defining the concept of citizenship but rather focused on how it works. For Marshall, there are three dimensions or rights that underpin the basis of citizenship: civil, political, and social rights (Liakos, 2006). Marshall argued that these three dimensions were not only interconnected but were necessary for the full realisation of citizenship.

While Marshall's work laid the foundation for the contemporary study of citizenship, it has not been exempted from criticism by other scholars. Critics of Marshall's rights-based model argue that his model assumes a formal understanding of citizenship that

has been challenged on the grounds that it excludes the possibility of active citizenship and lacks representation of all levels of citizenship (Delanty, 1997).

Recent debates on citizenship have contributed to the transformation of the concept of citizenship, especially among feminist and postcolonial scholars who have challenged this liberal approach for its failure to account for issues related to gender, race, and minority groups. According to Dietz (1987), the liberalisation approach to citizenship assumes equal membership for all in the economic, social, and political spheres of life.

Dietz draws inspiration from feminist scholarship that underscores the importance of understanding context to uncover the power relations that influence our day-to-day lives. In her article, Dietz (1987) begins by referencing the novel – The Handmaid's Tale, in which the heroine of the book thinks to herself that 'context is all'. For Dietz, this is an attempt at reminding us that 'the personal is political', as at each moment in our lives, our thoughts, actions, and values draw their meaning from a wider social reality that constitutes and conditions us.

Although this text was written over three decades ago, it is still applicable today. As the case of Botswana and the personal experiences of people with migrant backgrounds in my study reveal, context is indeed everything, especially in relation to their understanding and interpretation of citizenship. Power relations are also important for understanding who has access to rights and who does not, mainly in contexts where ethnicity and indigeneity form the foundation of the nation-state.

When it comes to postcolonial studies on citizenship, politics of identity and belonging dominate the discussions, particularly as it pertains to debates on ethnic minorities' equal participation and access to rights. Citizenship is frequently confused with racialised ethnicity, as is the case in certain Southeast Asian and African nations. Using the case of Japan to support this argument, Siddle (2003:448) states that while socio-political and economic rights are guaranteed in the Constitution to those with citizenship status, widely held myths of ethnic homogeneity and belonging continue to be at the centre of the marginalisation and exclusion of certain populations.

Despite the popularly held beliefs and various interpretations of race and ethnic minorities that have influenced the state's interpretation of citizenship in Southeast Asia, Aguillar (1993) argues that such states have managed to achieve better success at managing

postcolonial ethnic conflicts. Goh (2008) concurs and states that nations such as Malaysia and Singapore have been able to successfully transition from plural to postcolonial multicultural societies.

In the African context, academic writers such as Groves (2020), Daimon (2014), Keller (2014), Clark-Kazak (2011), and Jackson (2007) show the opposite, as issues of indigeneity and autochthony continue to exclude citizens with minority status as well as shape political agendas on the interpretations of citizenship. This basis for understanding citizenship embedded in indigeneity and autochthony is not only problematic but, as Nyamnjoh (2002) argues, exacerbates perceptions that groups outside of this framing are less authentic citizens and nationals.

Many African states continue to grapple with this issue, particularly in relation to the integration of ethnic minority communities. Jackson (2007) argues that laws concerning citizenship and nationality have become increasingly restrictive in several African countries in the last couple of decades particularly about minority or immigrant identity groups (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2004).

The Open Society Justice Initiative further argues that the cause of these restrictions and access to nationality and citizenship is largely a political phenomenon, rather than a philosophical or epistemological one. Hence Nyamnjoh (2002) further asserts that a major feature of the liberation struggle in Africa since the 1980s has been its increased interest in belonging and the questioning of conventional ideas of citizenship and nationality.

Based on findings from Southeast Asia, Aguillar (1999:314) argues that "under the weight of the histories of empire, nation, and race, the artificial constructs of indigeneity and alienness have pushed countless individuals, regardless of birthplace, length of residence, or even economic utility, into various positions of inferior citizenship." All of this is because such groups are considered "not really one of us", despite a common shared history and the mutual articulation of cultures (Aguillar, 1999:314). These dichotomies or binaries between us and them create second-class citizens, or what we see in the case of Botswana as *Motswana wa pampiri*, a concept I explore in detail in Chapter Five.

On this note, through conceptualisation of citizenship, this thesis aims to think about citizenship both through identity and in some ways as a form of belonging. Furthermore, the curiosity of this project has been to explore how people with a migrant

background interpret citizenship in Botswana which has taken a *Tswana* ethnic character and by virtue of this, how such groups construct their own meanings of citizenship. As the experiences of the research participants will demonstrate, their understanding of citizenship is much broader than the traditional definitions tied to rights and legal frameworks. It also includes alternative forms of citizenship, which involve tactics and strategies that the group uses to claim and negotiate their rights.

1.3 Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has been divided into two parts, namely part A which provided an overview of the research and thesis structure and part B which unpacked the study's key concepts in detail. The chapter highlights the background of the research, identifies the gap in the literature that the study sought to fill through the main research questions posed. It further foregrounds the main thesis contribution before contextualising the term and discourses on people with a migrant background, identity, belonging and citizenship in part B. I first located the discussions of migrant descendants in global north studies and then in the global south discourse, particularly within the context of Botswana where it is a new phenomenon that is under researched. I also argued for a postcolonial lens for this research to help understand issues of postcolonial citizenship and state building in the context of people with a migrant background's experiences with their identity and belonging. I also discussed the thesis structure and provided an outline of the thesis, providing a map of what each of the ensuing chapters discusses. Finally, I concluded the chapter with defining the key concepts and how they are used in this study. The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of the thesis's methodological framework and contribution.

2 Chapter Two: Capturing the Experiences of People with a Migrant Background – Methodological Reflections

2.1 Introduction

The research employed a qualitative methodological approach due to the need for an in – depth exploration of the experiences of people with a migrant background in Botswana. This included the use of in-depth narrative interviews to understand how a select group of people, with a migrant background, in Botswana identify and belong within the nation-state. The study augmented the narrative interviews with the use of archival records and other key documents accessed from the Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS) and other repositories online and offline such as the University of Witwatersrand's Cullen library to construct a historiography of Botswana starting with the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods.

The use of historical records and narrative interviews underscore the need to understand how the history of Botswana has been told and continues to be told. This approach does not only address the research questions of the current study but also provides lessons for a postcolonial and critical approach for studying marginalised groups generally. In essence, it provides a different method of engaging with issues of difference, identity and belonging in post-colonial states. In total, the fieldwork process (including archival research) was conducted between the periods of September 2018 – February 2021 in different phases.

The chapter starts by discussing the choice of the methodological approach and the design of the current study. This is followed by an explanation of the selected sampling methods which comprised non-probability sampling, including, purposive and snowball sampling techniques to gain access to research participants. An outline of the selected participants' demographic profiles is also provided. The chapter also discusses the data collection methods, which include in-depth narrative interviews with selected research

participants and the mapping of a historiography of Botswana through archival research to understand the nation-building process and the *Tswana* national identity. The chapter further outlines the data analysis methods employed by the study, which relied on thematic analysis to make sense of the different themes that emerged from the research. I conclude the chapter by discussing the ethical considerations and issues encountered during the study. This includes a personal reflection on my thoughts, the study limitations and my positionality as a third-generation immigrant researcher looking into issues of identity, belonging and the construction of the Botswana nation-state.

2.2 Qualitative Research and Research Paradigms

The subjective nature of this research informed the choice of a qualitative methodology, as the aim was to explore how people with a migrant background navigate their identities and sense of belonging in the context of Botswana. The overarching qualitative framework enabled the use of a variety of data collection methods including historical records, case study research, and in-depth narrative interviews (see for instance, Hennick, Hutter, and Bailey, 2014). Qualitative research is an important avenue for the exploration of the intricate lives and lived experiences of the research participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). It also facilitates an understanding of the unique experiences of the research participants and their interactions within specific contexts (Merriam, 2009). Thus, a qualitative orientation enabled the participants of this study to reflect on their experiences as both citizens and non-citizens of Botswana and how they negotiate their identities, belonging and claims to citizenship.

The epistemological and ontological orientations I used for this inquiry are social constructivism and interpretivism, respectively. As mentioned in earlier sections, since this study is interested in the experiences of people with a migrant background, using social constructivism, I was able to construct the knowledge of my participants through their social interactions and to recognise that their individual experiences and understanding of the world are shaped by their social and cultural contexts. For this reason, Boyland (2019)

views social constructivism as a way of looking at the world where individuals try to understand it in a way that makes sense to them.

Boyland further posits that from a social constructivist perspective, people see the world through a subjective view that is affected by and shaped by the epistemological, axiological, and ontological positions that shape their everyday lives. The choice of this epistemological approach was therefore informed by this deep interest in exploring how the daily lives of people with a migrant background intersected with their experiences and practices.

I was drawn to interpretivism as a means of exploring the subjective experiences of people with a migrant background and making sense of how their divergent experiences were shaped by their unique social, cultural and historical contexts. Chen, Shek and Bu (2011) are of the view that interpreting humans is the beginning point for developing knowledge about the social world. Therefore, the purpose of interpretivist research is to study how particular social groups or individuals formulate different realities and give them meaning, as well as to demonstrate how these norms explain their behaviour.

For this inquiry, the methodological approach relied on both primary and secondary documents to help understand how the construction of Botswana's national identity helped shape experiences of people with a migrant background. The study also looked at how a cogent national narrative conveys information about various events in collective memory or national history and how this influences national identity (Blakkisrud and Kuziev, 2019). Thus, conducting a historiography enabled me to interrogate the interrelation between history writing and the construction of nationalities and citizenship.

I was particularly interested in the political subjectivities of people with a migrant background, especially, focusing on how issues of identity and belonging are influenced by power dynamics that include both the imaginative aspects and the legal claims to citizenship (Krause and Schramm, 2011). To understand this fully, it was crucial to consider Botswana's historical context and to explore specific historical and current systems through which political subjectivities and citizenship are contested and challenged (Krause and Schramm, 2011).

Similarly, I was able to analyse how historical knowledge was shaped at specific times and places in Botswana and its development over time to form the current national

narratives and national identity (see Chapter Three for an in-depth discussion). Ultimately, I used historiography to reflect on whether historians in Botswana critically reflect and challenge the ideas presented on the construction of a Botswana national identity as informed by the past or whether there is a continued insistence on a singular history with no space for alternative voices (Blakkisrud and Kuziev, 2019).

2.3 Deconstruction and Discourse Analysis Approaches

The study employed interpretivism and constructivism paradigms using the deconstruction and discourse analysis approaches to unpack how meaning is created as well as how people with a migrant background experience their world (Creswell, 2009). Combining the deconstruction method with discourse analysis is useful because it connects a more textual and archival study of Botswana's nation-building with the stories of the research participants told in interviews. Furthermore, both approaches enabled a denaturalisation of the *Tswana* nationalism narrative and brought to light the forms of subjugation and silencing such a narrative is premised on. The following sections define both approaches and outline how they were applied in the study.

2.3.1 Deconstruction Approach

I draw from Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) *Do Zimbabweans exist*? and apply the deconstruction approach for this thesis to understand the construction of the Botswana nation-state. This approach enabled me to engage with deeper questions such as, how did the Botswana nation-state emerge as an idea and the discursive formation rooted in a particular historical and political context, as well as to understand if we can demarcate between ethnicity and nationalism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Additionally, I further follow Ndlovu-Gatsheni's example in the thesis by reading the nation and nationalism as a "highly sedimented phenomenon that has operated through privileging certain features of social life while suppressing or de-emphasising others that are considered repugnant to its chosen agenda" (2009:8).

As alluded to in Chapter One, the Botswana national project as articulated under the *Tswanadom* approach is no exception because Botswana nationalism is embedded with a conflation of ethnicity and civic ideals. These comprise of deeply rooted ideas of nationality and belonging grounded in the *Tswana* culture, language and to an extent patriarchy. As such, deconstruction was used in the thesis as a way of "revealing the incoherencies and instabilities" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:8) within the Botswana national project. In addition, deconstruction illuminates the power relations embedded in language, identity, and state narratives.

In the context of Botswana, deconstruction enables a critical reading of how the state constructs its monoethnic national identity not as a neutral or natural formation, but as a power-laden project that legitimises certain subjectivities while marginalising others. This approach exposes how legal classifications, constitutional silences, and cultural narratives around the Botswana identity function as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, deeply entwined with state power. Thus, deconstruction in this study is not merely about unpacking meaning, but about tracing how meaning is wielded to govern, discipline, and erase difference.

According to Sikirivwa (2015), the term deconstruction originates from the French verb déconstruire, and translated into English, the term means "to undo development" or "to dismantle." In the context of philosophy, however, deconstruction was introduced by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the late 1960s (Sikirivwa, 2015). Some scholars are of the view that Derrida's concept was developed as a response to Martin Heidegger's notion of Destruktion, a German term that translates to "destruction" or "de-building," which Heidegger used to describe as a critical form of analysis (Sikirivwa, 2015).

In terms of defining the theory of deconstruction, Sikirivwa posits that there are challenges because Derrida himself, who is its originator, has never given an authoritative definition of it. This was perhaps an intentional strategy on his part as his approach was to resist fixed interpretations of text. Derrida captures the idea of deconstruction as both a critique of binary oppositions for example in speech and writing and as a displacement of traditional structures of meaning. Thus, Schwab (2009) argues that Derrida's method of deconstruction reveals and reintroduces the elements that a discourse excludes to maintain its structure.

Here, Derrida was showing that by exposing these exclusions and inherent contradictions, deconstruction highlights the shortcomings and instability within the discourse itself. Moreover, in Wolfrey (1998) Derrida argues that the process of undoing was not necessarily a negative operation because rather than destroying, it was prudent to understand how something was constructed to reconstruct it. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:9) concurs and argues in this sense "deconstruction takes the term of reconstruction."

In the book, the Margins of Philosophy (1999), Derrida showed how this could be achieved and states the following, "deconstruction cannot limit itself or proceed immediately to a neutralisation, it must, by a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, practice an overturning of the classical opposition and a general displacement of the system" (Derrida 1999:329).

In earlier years, in a letter to a friend, Derrida attempted to provide further clarification of deconstruction. In this letter he states the following:

> All the same, and in spite of appearances, deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique and its translation would have to take that into consideration. It is not an analysis in particular because the dismantling of a structure is not a regression toward a simple element, toward an indissoluble origin. These values, like that of analysis, are themselves philosophemes subject to deconstruction. No more is it a critique, in a general sense or in Kantian sense. The instance of krinein or of krisis (decision, choice, judgment, discernment) is itself, as is all the apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential "themes" or 'objects" of deconstruction (1983:n.p).

Recent scholars such as Sakthivel (2023) have also attempted to define deconstruction. In their view, deconstruction is a philosophical approach and literary analysis derived from the work of Derrida that seeks to reveal the underlying assumptions and binary oppositions in language and thought, ultimately deconstructing and redefining our understanding of reality. Others, such as Acker (2021), are of the view that Derrida's definition of deconstruction was based on an interpretative approach that highlights the significance of difference and heterogeneity while seeking out differences within a unified system of thought. Woodward, Dixon, and Jones (2009) on the other hand, posit that the deconstruction approach draws from poststructuralism, an intellectual movement that

challenges the tenets of structuralism and develops non-essentialist approaches to difference and identity.

The identity constructions of people with a migrant background highlighted in Chapter Four further illuminate this, which is one of the key objectives of the research thesis. Acker (2021) also emphasises that Derrida's deconstruction is neither a method nor can it be turned into one. This assertion could be influenced by Derrida who himself was of the same view. For example, in reference to the letter cited above, Derrida also stated that "I would say the same about the method. Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one, especially if the technical and procedural significations of the word are stressed." (Derrida, 1988:n.p).

Kalugampitiya (2018) offers a different perspective and defines deconstruction as a methodological approach. Kalugampitiya further supports his claim and states that deconstruction in critical theory serves as a methodological approach that allows us to "see through" a text and recognise the dynamics of the broader context, which shapes the text into what it is. Furthermore, as an approach, deconstruction differs from conventional textual analysis as it looks at text, not only as an end, but also as a means to access a specific arrangement or structure of power dynamics within a larger society (Kalugampitiya, 2018). Additionally, Turner (2016) points out that deconstruction is not concerned with finding the "truth" or coming to the right conclusions, but rather with the process of questioning itself, which is a process characterised by uncertainty and indeterminacy. Hence, using the deconstruction approach offered the study a postcolonial lens to understand and explore the nation-building process and the position of people with a migrant background in post-colonial Botswana.

Through a critical examination of Botswana's nation-building historiography, combined with a postcolonial lens, I unpacked the construction of Botswana's national project following a timeline of the country's pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonisation periods. I interrogated the process of state formation and its influence on the creation of national identity and examined the state's inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minorities during the nation-building process as highlighted in Chapter Three.

I also used this space to unpack the ambiguities and contradictions within the text. In this case, the study's method, which Derrida compares to ambushing, meant reading the

text with suspicion to understand the underlying social and cultural events and to get a sense of reality from a distance by finding the gaps and contradictions in the text (Ulger, 2012), as cited in Acker (2021). The practice of looking at Botswana's process of identity and nation building through the lens of its discursive construction has been criticised as fostering an internalist view and descriptive interpretation of the nation-building process (Norval, 1996).

Norval further argues that discursive construction is viewed as too simplistic by its critics. However, he disagrees with this way of thinking and argues that it is missing the point because looking into how discourse shapes reality does not just assume that everyday language and rhetoric are neutral or innocent. Further, it also shows the many layers, subtleties, and truths that are present in a discourse. Norval emphasises his point by arguing that, without discourse itself as a clear and direct means of portraying reality, no discourse is completely successful in hiding its socially constructed and ultimately dependent nature (Norval, 1996). Therefore, a meticulous analysis of a specific discourse uncovers the processes by which the mechanisms of naturalisation took place and how the discourse was concealed (Norval, 1996).

My motive for conducting a historiography on Botswana was not to arrive at a definitive truth about how history should have been written from a moral judgement stance. Instead, this process allowed me to critically examine the socio-cultural context under which various sources of nation-building were produced, by whom, and for what purposes (Danto, 2008). Besides, achieving a conclusive truth was unattainable due to the deconstruction of text, which entails questioning the boundaries of representation by challenging the notions of stable and unchanging meanings in language and representation.

According to Sakthivel (2023), the deconstruction approach emphasises the existence of multiple interpretations, as a text can be read in various ways, and the process of deconstruction involves unpacking these varied layers to expose underlying contradictions and complexities. Norval agrees with this line of thought and states that it is neither possible nor necessary to compare a discourse with an assumed reality outside of the discourse. This is because if all reality is made up of symbols and up for debate, then there is no way to get back to a realm of discourse or objective standards that can be used to judge how well it works (Norval, 1996).

The undertaking of a deconstruction approach further helped to loosen some of the narratives and power dynamics that continue to inform postcolonial Botswana. Indeed, Falola (2006:173) states that a "critic is not the enemy of the nation or of national history, even if political dictators think otherwise." Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) concurs and adds that deconstruction is not a matter of dismantling or destroying but entails grappling with the conditions under which it was possible for certain events to occur the way they did and for the organisation of institutions to be the way they are.

As with all approaches and theories, deconstruction is not without its criticisms, nor is it immune to them. Accordingly, one of the arguments advanced by deconstruction critics is that the approach rejects a fixed meaning, which can lead to relativism and the undermining of objective truths (Sakthivel, 2023). Despite such criticism, proponents of deconstruction argue that it does not dismiss meaning altogether but rather highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of interpretation (Sakthivel, 2023).

In a nutshell, deconstruction focuses on the relationship between what is said (explicit content) and what is unsaid (implicit assumptions) (Sakthivel, 2023). Through this, deconstructionists examine how language often relies on hierarchical structures and binary oppositions, which may marginalise certain viewpoints or reinforce power dynamics that deconstruction exposes. It also challenges prevailing norms to invite a more inclusive and nuanced approach (Sakthivel, 2023).

Another value of applying the deconstruction approach is the ability to apply it to research of this nature that investigates state narratives and uncovers the nuances and power dynamics in state formation that can otherwise be potentially overlooked. Moreover, through this process, I was able to contribute to discussions that deconstruct the idea that Botswana is an ethnic monolith.

2.3.2 Discourse Analysis

The second approach adopted in this thesis is discourse analysis. Building upon Jayasinha's (2015) work, I employed discourse analysis as a framework to examine the identity discourses of people with a migrant background in Botswana. Thus, discourse analysis is important for this study because it considers the historical backdrop of social divisions and promotes the exploration of personal encounters against various forms of oppression and

across different power dynamics (Jayasinha, 2015). This approach further aims to comprehend the interdependence between systems that generate and perpetuate discrimination, as well as the individual experiences of such discrimination across multiple dimensions of oppression (Jayasinha, 2015).

According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), discourse theory is aimed at understanding the social as a discursive construction. Jayasinha (2015:108) opines that discourse analysis provides a comprehensive ontology of how knowledge and the material world are constructed through discursive practices that are inherently political and historically contingent. Additionally, Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) posit that discourse is used as a framework for the analysis of national identity by providing a lens through which we look at how we can understand national identities and the consequences of the division of the world into nation-states.

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), discourse analysis is a valuable tool in research that investigates national identity because it utilises the interpretive method of inquiry, which focuses on comprehending and examining the development and reasoning behind discourses and the socially constructed identities they attribute to individuals in society. The same author argues that using discourse analysis enables one to delve deeper into the historical and social practices that are instrumental in articulating and contesting the discourse that constitutes the social realities of nationalism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

For the reasons above, I use this method to explore how people with a migrant background in Botswana construct their identities and sense of belonging in relation to their national identity. I also investigate the "hegemonic articulation of historically contingent discourses" which means figuring out how certain identities and meanings are made to be "reality" and, more importantly, what the "social" effects of these constructions are (Jayasinha, 2015:118).

Expanding on the work of Krause and Schramm, discourse analysis aids the analysis of citizenship through political subjectivities and provides the framework for unpacking the processes through which the participants of this research and people with a migrant background negotiate their positions vis-à-vis that of authorities (Krause and Schramm, 2011). Furthermore, Isin (2009) argues that viewing citizenship as a form of political subjectivity shifts our focus from rigid categories that define citizenship to the

struggles that have shaped these categories themselves. Finally, Isin states that, rather than asking questions such as "who is the citizen", the question then becomes, "what makes the citizen" (Isin 2009: 383). This question of what makes a citizen, particularly in the context of Botswana is detailed in Chapter Five, especially in relation to societal definitions or understandings of who can claim to be a "true" citizen in Botswana.

For these reasons and following the approach taken by Krause and Schramm (2011), I have explored political subjectivity more closely, particularly in relation to citizenship. In this context, political subjectivity is evident in how individuals engage with issues that they consider significant, thereby showcasing their political agency (Häkli and Kallio, 2018). This engagement further occurs within the complex political landscape shaped by power dynamics in the politics of identity and belonging (Krause and Schramm, 2011).

Again, drawing from another example from Jayasinha (2015), I employed discourse analysis for this study through analysing specific qualitative textual data to identify key signifiers. Identifying these key signifiers in empirical data helped with unpacking how discourses and subject positions are discursively organised (Jayasinha, 2015). In addition, I used thick descriptions from participants to stress a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study (Henning et al, 2004:21).

Discourse analysis was also used to understand the nuanced experiences of people with migrant backgrounds based on their narratives and using an interpretative framework consisting of three topics. The first topic dealt with tactical citizenship employed by people with migrant backgrounds to claim rights and their self-alienation from accessing other rights. The second dealt with the multiple identity constructions of people with migrant backgrounds in Botswana. The third focused on their ambiguous/ambivalent belonging, which influences their ambivalence towards the Botswana nation-state.

2.4 Research Design and Participant Recruitment

Conducting research with what can be considered an underrepresented or "hidden population" required that I approach the selection of participants with flexibility and a plan

on how to access them. Relying on a standard probability sampling procedure would have been a challenge and potentially produced low response rates that lack candour (Heckathorn, 1997). This low information on people with a migrant background is because of Botswana's non-racial policy, which prohibits the collection of ethnicity data in the national census.

As such, people with a migrant background are not a visible group in the public domain. This lack of visibility combined with my inability to travel to Botswana to physically recruit the research participants, meant that a non-probability sampling method became ideal. In addition to this, Botswana's lack of information on the diverse composition of its citizens meant that the research participants I was looking to engage were not easily visible or accessible.

2.4.1 Pilot Interviews

Before starting the fieldwork, I conducted a pilot study to test the research instruments and the efficacy of the sampling procedure to determine the availability of participants matching the criteria of the study. Hence, I concur with In (2017), who argues that a pilot study is important for asking or testing whether something can be done and how the researcher can proceed with it. The author further states that the specific design of a pilot study is that it is conducted on a smaller scale and is important for improving the quality and efficiency of the main study (In, 2017).

In line with this thinking, I interviewed four individuals with a migrant background to test out my interview schedule and to find out if the participants I was looking to engage were available. The pilot interviews were conducted in May 2020 via WhatsApp call. The initial plan had been to conduct the interviews face-to-face, but at the time, the South African government had put the country on lock down alert level 1 as a preventative measure against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This meant the closure of borders, resulting in my inability to travel to Botswana.

The pilot interviews proved useful as I was able to test my research instrument and check if I was asking the relevant questions and if they were applicable to my overall research objectives. I also used this phase to gain a better understanding of other questions I could have overlooked and individuals I could consider adding to my study. One of the

participants who took part in the pilot interviews suggested adding key informants to the research study.

This suggestion was crucial because of the limited information I had found from conducting archival research back in September 2018 and I realised that key informants would be important in helping to augment the information gap. Thus, I decided to interview key informants within the government, civil society, and international organisations dealing with migration issues in Botswana.

Including key informants in the study was also important as it provided a broader picture of the migration landscape in Botswana and its developments over time. For instance, speaking with a senior official at the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration, and Gender Affairs was crucial to enhancing or providing context to some of the citizenship-related issues raised by research participants and unpacking some contextual understandings of the citizenship laws and their applicability to research participants.

In the end, key informants comprised officials from the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration, and Gender Affairs, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Academics at the University of Botswana working in the field of migration, and two senior retired government officials. I also interviewed three *Dikgosi* (Chiefs) based in the North East region of Botswana. The aim of interviewing *Dikgosi,* or Chiefs, was to gain a better understanding of how they previously and currently deal with diversity and inclusion among their people.

2.4.2 Research Sampling Method

After the pilot interviews and having incorporated a few changes to my interview schedule, I began the recruitment process. As stated, non-probability sampling was relevant for a qualitative study of this nature because it involves sampling techniques in which the researcher selects the sample size based on their subjective and expert judgement as opposed to random selection (Fleetwood, 2024). Additionally, the non-probability sampling method was appropriate for this study because it is a method employed or used when conducting exploratory studies where not all population members have an equal

chance of participating and in studies where it is not possible to draw random probability sampling due to travel restrictions, time, and cost considerations (Fleetwood, 2024).

The non-probability sampling method I relied on for this study is purposive sampling using snowballing and convenience techniques. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling is a technique broadly used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases while maximising the most effective use of limited resources. To identify participants who would represent the criteria I was looking for in the target population, I wrote to my network of friends, colleagues, and the social groups I was a part of, requesting assistance with the recruitment of participants.

The snowballing technique was appropriate for this study as it enabled me to access participants that I could not have been able to reach through a probability sampling procedure. I requested the few participants I was able to identify to refer me or recommend individuals in their social networks who met the research criteria and could potentially be interested in participating in the research. This was an effective process in terms of widening my reach though, Jacobsen and Landau (2003) offer caution about the limitations of this approach due to its potential to result in a biased sample.

To address this concern, I used the convenience strategy. This strategy is used to collect information from participants who are easily accessible to the researcher (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, 2015). I designed a call for participants that outlined the objectives of my research and the criteria of the participants I was looking to engage. I shared this call with my network, colleagues, family, and friends and requested their assistance with sharing the call for participants widely.

2.4.3 Research Participant Sample Size

One method I had hoped to use to help with the diversification of participants was the multiple entry points into communities and to include participants located in the periphery (Clark-Kazak, 2011) of Gaborone and Francistown. I selected these sites because of convenience, as I had lived in both cities before and understood both contexts. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions imposed, I could not physically conduct interviews or collect data on site which meant the elimination of context-based, fixed or specific criteria selection of participants.

Despite the unpredictability of the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic, online platforms proved to be a viable alternative solution. The online interview format helped to overcome geographical challenges and ensured that interviewees could be drawn from a diverse pool of participants from different parts of the country. Initially, my goal was to interview up to 30 participants to gather diverse insights and achieve a deep understanding of the research phenomenon. However, I ultimately conducted interviews with 22 participants. The original target of 30 was chosen as a reasonable number to ensure a broad range of perspectives while maintaining feasibility. Although I ended up with a smaller sample size than my initial goal, I concur with Cameron's (2001) view cited in Chiyangwa (2022) that working with a small sample size affords research participants the opportunity and time to relay their life stories based on their perspective for discourse analysis.

Crouch and McKenzie (2006) also point out that qualitative research based on interviews is aimed at understanding social life beyond appearance and manifesting meaning. The latter authors also argue that a small number of fewer than 20 participants can help facilitate the researcher's close association with the respondents and enhance the validity of the in-depth inquiry in a naturalistic setting.

McKenzie and Crouch further state that a small number of respondents encourages fruitful relationships with respondents and thorough theoretical contemplation to address the research problem in depth. While my participants were 22, this number still afforded me the in-depth inquiry I was aiming for. In the end, the total number of all participants, including key informants, was 32. This number includes 22 research participants as outlined above and 10 key informants.

2.4.4 Research Participant Recruitment/Selection Process

As mentioned previously, people with a migrant background are currently under researched in Botswana and there is currently not enough data available on this group. Thus, I had to engage with the participants I was able to access on the ground to determine the composition of my sample. This resulted in a more diverse group of participants in terms of their experiences, period of residence and age of migration to Botswana.

In designing the inclusion criteria, the initial focus was strictly on Botswana citizens who are second-generation migrants, meaning individuals who were born in the country or

arrived before the age of two. However, I soon found out that there were a significant number of people with a migrant background who had been living in the country from a young age. Some were even born in Botswana but were still struggling to obtain citizenship for various reasons that will be discussed in subsequent sections.

I had to readjust my criteria to include those participants who, on paper, did not have Botswana citizenship yet they still identified themselves or felt like *Batswana.* Furthermore, although I was also interested in interviewing participants who grew up in Botswana and were living and working in the country at the time, I soon discovered that, due to ambitious career pursuits, some of the individuals in my target group were living and working abroad.

This discovery meant that I had to be flexible about the inclusion criteria of research participants, and eventually included participants who were living outside Botswana at the time of the study. In addition to this, I also expanded the age at which the participant arrived in Botswana. Initially, my goal was to interview individuals who were either born in Botswana or arrived before the age of 2. However, this was not feasible because the participants I could access had arrived in Botswana at various ages and stages of life. Maintaining a rigid criterion would have significantly limited my study, so I decided to expand the age of arrival criteria beyond birth and age 2.

Despite the challenges outlined or diversion from my initial plan, the participants involved in the study at the end allowed for diversity and offered a diasporic and transnational lens to the study of people with migrant backgrounds. This helped to demonstrate a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of such groups. Lastly, I had to also review my initial interest in second-generation migrants, as it became difficult to categorise this group of people who had come to Botswana in different ways and at different ages.

As reflected in the table below, some of the research participants can be categorised as second-generation migrants as they were born in Botswana, while others came as children or as teenagers and do not fit into this category. Moreover, coming up with a definitive category was challenging because the literature currently does not allow or have a category for such groups. Hence, given some of these factors and the diversity of the participants' experiences, as well as the need for a defined category for the research, it

made methodological and conceptual sense in this specific context to group the participants under the umbrella term - people with a migrant background or migrant descendants to capture the broad criteria that the research participants fall under as discussed at length in Chapter One.

Another challenge I encountered while selecting participants was that, due to relying on word of mouth or recommendations, individuals suggested participants within their networks. This resulted in limited diversity in terms of socio-economic status and class, as most participants were from middle and upper-middle-income households, well-travelled, attended private schools, and, at one point or another, studied abroad. This nature of similarity within networks meant that potential participants outside these bounds were not included (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Nevertheless, the participants selected still added value to the study by bringing a mobility and class lens to the study and its influence on understanding identity construction and belonging.

As mentioned, due to the flexibility in my selection criteria to accommodate participants that were available and willing to be a part of my study, my research participants were not a homogenous group. Hence, there was an in-group difference among the participants interviewed, as shown below. This resulted in their varied experiences, which have shaped how they relate to Botswana as a country. Likewise, the diaspora element of participants living outside Botswana brought another nuanced element to my study. Thus, when analysing the data, I brought all these nuanced and diverse experiences together to understand and unpack the experiences of my research participants.

In the end, the participants involved in the study included individuals who were between the ages of 24 and 53. Additionally, participants originated from seven African countries, namely, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and one came from Guyana, South America.

In terms of their socio-economic status, research participants were well educated, with qualifications ranging from Bachelor to Masters' degrees. Twelve participants studied in Botswana for their first degrees, and of the twelve, only one went abroad to further their studies. The rest of the participants studied outside Botswana in countries such as Australia, China, Russia, South Africa, Zambia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. Due to their diverse experiences and mobility, most of the participants were multilingual and

spoke two or more languages, except for two, who were only conversant in English. Of the participants, only eight were born in Botswana. The rest arrived in Botswana between the ages of 6 months and 17 years. Most of the participants, except for one, spent their formative years in Botswana.

Table 2: Demographic Composition of the 22 Research Participants

Age	**Sex**	**Name[21]& Occupation/ Education[22]**	**Parent's Country of Origin**	**Languages Spoken**	**Citizenship Status**
29	Male	*Button* - Unemployed/Electrical Engineer	Tanzania	Swahili and English	Tanzanian
38	Female	*Leonore* - Freelancer and Youtuber	Ghana	English	Motswana and British
28	Female	*Gift* - Chartered Accountant	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele, and Setswana	Zimbabwean
29	Male	*Senior* - Medical Doctor	Nigeria	Ibibio and English	Nigerian
26	Male	*Harvey* - Finance	Nigeria	English	Nigerian
30	Male	*Anderson* - Business/Professional Development Coach	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele, and Setswana	Zimbabwean
37	Female	*Tasha* - Chartered Account	Zambia	Bemba, English, and Setswana	Motswana
24	Female	*Clarke* - Branding and Communications	Namibia	English, Setswana and Russian	Congolese & Namibian[23]

[21] The real names of the research participants have been replaced by Pseudonyms indicted in Italics.

[22] Please note that ages and professional occupations or employment statuses reflected are from the time of the interviews.

[23] The participant previously held Botswana citizenship. At the time of the interview, this participant's citizenship had been revoked without her prior knowledge. The revocation occurred because she had not renounced her Congolese citizenship (her stepfather's country of citizenship) upon turning 21, as required by law. She only discovered her loss of citizenship when she attempted to replace her stolen Omang (identity card). At the time of the interview, she was involved in a court case to challenge and overturn this decision.

49[24]	Male	*Sean* - Businessman	Guyana	English and Pidgin English	Motswana
42	Female	*Queen* - University lecturer	Kenya	English, Kikuyu and Setswana	Motswana
25	Male	*Hunter* - Medical Doctor	Nigeria	Igbo, English, and Setswana	Motswana
25	Female	*Monroe* - Salesperson	Tanzania	English and Swahili	Motswana
31	Male	*Lyon* - Business and Accounting	Zimbabwe and South Africa	English, Setswana, and Shona	Motswana
27	Female	*Bella* - Unemployed/Lawyer	Tanzania	English, Swahili, and Pedi	Motswana
49	Male	*Falcon* - Business/Engineering	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele, and Setswana	Motswana
33	Female	*Louvre* - Lawyer	Tanzania	English, Swahili, and Setswana	Motswana
41	Male	*Paul* - Career Coaching	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele, and Setswana	Motswana
43	Male	*Zinhle*- Researcher/Medical Doctor	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele and	Motswana
53	Male	*Michae*l - Diplomat	Zimbabwe	English, Setswana, Ndebele, and Kalanga	Motswana
47	Female	*Samantha* - University Administrator	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele, Setswana, and French	Motswana
46	Female	*Blessings* - Health Care	Zimbabwe	English, Ndebele, and Setswana	Motswana
31	Female	*Ruva* - Social Impact and Human Rights	Zimbabwe	English and Shona	Motswana

Source: Author's own formulation

[24] Sadly, this participant lost his life due to COVID-19 related complications a few months after participating in the study. Their contribution was greatly appreciated and invaluable to leave out. May his departed soul rest in peace.

In terms of the key informants, the targeted participants largely remained the same. I was able to interview participants from most of the organisations I had identified. Gaining access to some participants took longer than others due to bureaucratic processes within the organisations. Nevertheless, I was able to conduct the interviews. Recruitment of key informants in academia and international organisations was done through introductions initiated by former colleagues I had worked with in the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector while I was based in Botswana.

In the case of government officials and the Chiefs, family members who had worked in government positions assisted with recommendations and made formal introductions to the key participants. In most cases, it still took a lengthy time to get an affirmative response, especially from government officials and international organisations. I had to send follow-up emails that were not responded to for several months. After months of persistence, I received confirmation from the participants. Table 3 reflects the key informants involved in this study.

Table 3:List of Key Informants

Organisation	**Position**
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	Officer in Charge of Mission
United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Assistant Associate Protection Officer
Migration Right Group International	Project Coordinator
University of Botswana	Senior Lecturer
Non-Affiliated	2 Senior Retired Government Officials
Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs	Senior Official
Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	3 *Dikgosi* (Chiefs)

Source: Author's own formulation

2.5 Data Collection Process

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection process required creativity, flexibility, and adaptability owing to the uncertainty of the situation and the fact that I had to collect most of the data remotely. The data collection process happened in different phases at different times and was guided by several factors that determined 1.) the feasibility and suitability of when it was appropriate to collect data (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, which will be discussed at length in the following sections) and 2.) the context and research environment of the participants.

Given that my study aimed to explore the experiences of people with a migrant background vis-à-vis their experiences of the nation-state, a qualitative research framework and its data collection methods were used, as discussed in the introduction. This included archival research to develop a historiography of the nation-state and in-depth narrative interviews to understand the experiences of the research participants.

2.5.1 Historiography

In the interest of examining national cosmology and the role of origin, the study aimed to examine the state's inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minorities during the nation-building process. To achieve this, a historiography of Botswana was conducted. I engaged in a historiography to highlight the place of Botswana's assimilationist national identity construction in the literature on nation-building, particularly the role of ethnicity in shaping postcolonial discourses. According to McCormick (2014:303), historiography is a compilation of methods to recapture a comprehensive representation of the past, often concerning the needs of the present.

Klaes (2003:491) is of the view that the term historiography literally means "the writing of history" and carries two different meanings. On the one hand, it is used to think about how historians understand the past. While on the other, it refers to specific methods historians use or their overall approach to research (Klaes, 2003). In the case of this thesis, I was interested in analysing the way history is being told in Botswana; to portray the story of modern Botswana and to show what the state did to construct an identity based on *Tswananess.*

My perspective is shaped by Wilson-Tagoe's (1999:164) idea, cited in Chigumadzi (2017), that "all history is a struggle for the definition of reality through narrative and involves practices of selection." This process of selection is still important because it is useful for an analysis of how history is utilised to order the course of events in the present (Chigumadze, 2017).

While this study does not seek to refute or affirm mainstream nationalist histories, it recognises that these dominant accounts are not neutral. Rather, their centrality actively contributes to the marginalisation of alternative narratives and reinforces the state's homogenising project. By deconstructing these histories, I aim to uncover what they obscure, specifically, the lived experiences and subjectivities of those excluded from the national imagination such as people with a migrant background.

The first phase of the historiography process happened simultaneously with the research proposal write-up. In September 2018, I spent two weeks at the BNARS in Gaborone, going through the archival material. Like McEwan (2003), I made use of archival research to demonstrate the significance of creating postcolonial, colonial, and pre-colonial national memory of Botswana in at least two ways. Firstly, memorialising the past by adding on to the multiple versions of history and highlighting the privileging of master narratives that offer a sense of unity at the expense of ignoring the fracture and dissonance. Secondly, by bringing in various voices that have been silenced in the historical narratives, I resisted different kinds of amnesia common in postcolonial national narratives to highlight the creation of a shared past and shared sense of national and communal belonging.

During these two weeks, I went through material I could access relating to nation-building in Botswana. I use the phrase "material I could access" here to show that having access to the archive facilities is one thing, but having access to the material is another. Accessing the relevant material proved to be a challenge due to a lack of digitisation of material and, at times, material being incorrectly filed.

Reflecting on the experience of doing archival research in Botswana, Spiropoulos' (2014) notes that, the index book with keywords used to search for material in the archives did not make it easy to find documents. According to Spiropoulos, the current archive was moved from Mafikeng, where the colonial government had been located, to Gaborone at

independence in 1966. The author further states that in the process, the new government archivists decided to scrap the colonial cataloguing system and produce a new one which made it impossible to corroborate references of research done in the pre-independence era (Spiropoulos, 2014).

These are some of the limitations that I encountered when engaging the archives. It was not easy to find information on the pre – and colonial era due to the nature of cataloguing the material. While searching for documents relevant to my research study, I had to comb through several pages of the archive reference list or index books, which were outdated[25]. This process took almost 2 days, as I had to ensure that I had gone through all the index books provided and correctly written the title and code of each document identified. This information was important to pass on to an archivist, who would then assist with obtaining the documents from storage or from the filing room which I was not allowed to enter.

Relying on the archivists also came with its challenges because access to documents was dependent on how helpful the individual was and how seriously they took their job. In my experience, where the documents were not available for whatever reason (lost, damaged, or misfiled), there was not much effort made to search for them thoroughly in other shelves to check for misfiling. Moreover, as I could not access the filing room where the archived documents are kept, I resolved to focus on the material I could find. Even when some of the material I sought was found, the information was vague and not always detailed or elaborate.

I did not let this deter me and I was able to put together the information I could gather and then supplement it with articles and books that had been written on nation-building in Botswana, which were available online or from other libraries. In addition, I also used key informants to fill in the information gaps, particularly government officials who had worked in different administrative capacities since the independence of Botswana.

I went through material or documents such as political speeches, manifestos, articles on nation-building, and books on the formation of *Tswana* tribes and nation-

[25] Here I am referring to the fact that the index books that contain a list of references to archival material have not been updated in years to reflect the current material available or to flag where there is material that has been lost over time. Moreover, the process of searching is conducted manually, which can be time-consuming when one is searching for a specific topic among hundreds of references.

building. Some of the books were sourced from the University of Botswana's library, which also had limited books on the specific issue. I further augmented this material with books and a few PHD thesis reports on Botswana that I could find at the University of the Witwatersrand's Cullen library and, in a few instances, made use of the inter – library loan service. I also relied on academic articles written about issues affecting ethnic minorities in Botswana. These articles provided some historical context on the nation-building process in Botswana, including the pre-colonial and colonial periods which was helpful to fill in knowledge gaps.

Ochuno's (2015) paper on postcolonial archives outlines some of the challenges of African archives in storing information. Although not directly related to my experience but with similar inferences, the same author discusses a concept they refer to as fragmentation. In this article, Ochuno (2015) contends that Africa's bureaucratic dysfunction is evident in the disorder found in its archives. Fragmentation can occur intentionally, with contemporary actors deliberately keeping sources and documents separate, scattered, and sometimes unidentifiable.

This, in turn, results in fragmented, truncated, and distorted data and information (Ochuno, 2015). Although there may be some truth to these assertions based on my experience, I would argue that it is difficult to generalise this as an African archival problem that is a deliberate act, as there could be other factors contributing to some of these challenges. For these reasons, Ochuno (2015) further reflects that in the context of post-colonial African history, fragmentation carries a complex connotation as it encompasses more than just the literal meaning of dispersed sources. This is because all sources and archives, despite the diligent efforts of archivists and historical figures attempting to organise them, consist of various scattered entities and materials that are the result of specific political and epistemological anxieties (Ochuno, 2015).

In January 2019, I spent another week at BNARS in Francistown. To my disappointment, there was not much information or material I could find on the nation-building period in Botswana. At best, I found a short document on the history of Francistown, which outlined a few of the ethnic groups that were present in the region during the colonial period. Upon investigating further, the archivist informed me that BNARS in Gaborone housed the majority, if not all, of the country's historical documents.

This was an unfortunate realisation as it limited access to information to those who were not able to travel to or did not reside in Gaborone.

My last visit to the archives was in January 2020, when I spent a week at the BNARS Gaborone branch. I found the same documents I had come across back in September 2018. I used this opportunity to refresh my memory on the documents I had previously read and to search for new information I might have missed. Although I came across other documents on colonial Botswana, there was not much I could relate to or use that shed light on the specific topic I was investigating.

During this period, I also took the opportunity to investigate the symbols of nation-building I could observe in the archives and the city of Gaborone. In January 2021, I explored more landmarks and museums in both Gaborone and Francistown. According to Blakkisrud and Kuziev (2019), museums and national monuments form a part of the standardised toolkits of symbols and practices where the uniqueness of the nation is highlighted and defined. Furthermore, I wanted to investigate and observe how these spaces depict and validate a specific ethnicised interpretation of the nation through historical recounting and commemoration. Museums are crucial in shaping overarching narratives that encompass national legends about origins and the past, and how these narratives connect to the present national community as a unified entity (Blakkisrud and Kuziev, 2019).

In the Gaborone BNARS building, there are pictures and information (see Chapter Three) on the walls detailing Botswana's nation-building process leading up to independence. The symbolic figures represented are those of the three *Dikgosi* and Botswana's first democratic president, Sir Seretse Khama, and his then vice president, Sir Ketumile Masire. Additionally, the government commemorated the three Dikgosi, who were Sebele I, Bathoen I, and Khama III, in 2005 despite the controversy surrounding their significance in Botswana's history (Grundhauser, 2015). A regal bronze statue, 18 feet tall, that depicts each leader was erected in the heart of Gaborone's Central Business District (CBD) as shown in the images in Chapter Three.

The images and pictures portrayed in the walls of the archive support a long-standing and widely held narrative of Botswana's first leading figures towards nation-building and independence. The discourses and debates around this will be discussed

further in Chapter Three. Drawing on McCormick's (2014) analysis of Burma's work, they argue that the absence of alternate history, even among ethnic minorities, is surprising. Instead, these minorities express concern about their history being incorporated into the national narrative, seeking inclusion and recognition for the advantages it brings. This is similarly reflected in the literature on Botswana, where scholars often address the lack of inclusion of ethnic minorities within the nation-state and broader discourses on the exclusion of African women in history.

One of the central tasks of this thesis has been to track the genealogy of the construction of a national identity of Botswana. Through the process of deconstructing the major imaginings of Botswana, I have been able to reveal the limits of the nation-state when it came to making the nation as a people (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). In a nutshell, the archival exercise, although with not as much documentation as I had anticipated, brought forth the importance of critically exploring what was being said about nation-building in Botswana. This extended to how it has been said or written, presented to people, and in turn entrenched in society as a symbol of what the country aspires to. Most importantly, this exercise also revealed the importance of observing the silencing of certain voices and figures within the imagined state and what this means for the identity and belonging of those excluded.

2.5.2 In-depth Narrative Interviews

The initial intention of the study was to conduct in-depth narrative face-to-face interviews with the research participants. This included travelling to Botswana in May 2020 to conduct interviews with the identified research participants and the key informants in Francistown and Gaborone. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of borders in March 2020, international travel was banned and face to face contact was not allowed. I then decided to replace face-to-face interviews with the option of video interviews. I conducted most of the interviews using the Zoom platform, except for one interview on MS Teams and another on WhatsApp.

According to some studies, Zoom is a viable tool for qualitative data collection because it is simple to use, inexpensive, has data management features, and includes a security option (Archibald et al., 2019). Using Zoom to conduct interviews was not without

its challenges, especially in South Africa where there were problems of rolling electricity outages (loadshedding) which affected internet connectivity and the ability to use gadgets that depend on electricity such as laptops and mobile phones.[26] Fortunately, most participants were familiar with Zoom, and I made sure I conducted the interviews when load shedding was not anticipated in my area.

For the key informants, five of the interviews were socially distanced face-to-face interviews, as they were conducted in January 2021, when travel restrictions had been eased and I was able to travel to Botswana. A research interview guide (see Appendix H**)** was developed to collect information from the research participants. The guide was later adjusted after the pilot interviews to accommodate the different groups reflected in Table 2 above. The questions on the interview schedule were open-ended to elicit more detailed narratives from participants and to view the intersections between personal narratives and a wider state narrative.

Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016) state that by not putting out a fixed agenda, researchers using narrative interview techniques tend to let the interviewee control the direction, content, and pace of the interview. Hence, I used my interview schedule as a guide and not a tool I needed to strictly adhere to. My goal was to allow the participants to tell their own stories and to interpret the questions based on their life experiences and understanding of the questions posed.

Narrative interviews are about stories, and I was interested in the stories of my research participants and the meanings they inferred or construed from their life experiences. During the interviews, I provided participants with the space to speak openly about their life experiences while I listened and jotted down notes or key questions to follow up on or to seek clarity after they had finished speaking. I did not want to interrupt the participants mid-sentence in case I interfered with their flow of thinking or thought process. As Søderberg (2006) posits, narrating is part of participants' identity construction. The author further asserts that narrative interviews can be treated as a place for the narrator's identification processes rather than a textual object for the study of identities as

[26]Load shedding in South Africa entails deliberate power outages, during which citizens and residents experience a lack of electricity for a duration of six to twelve hours per day to alleviate strain on an unstable power grid (Garrison, 2023).

products. Hence, based on this theoretical understanding, the same author argues that the narrators' reflections on past events and actions are closely tied to their evolving perceptions of themselves and their affiliations with various groups, including “the other” (Søderberg, 2006:400).

Narrative interviews with my research participants were conducted between 29 June 2020 and 21 February 2021. All interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes. The interview time frame depended on each participant’s engagement. All interviews were recorded, and permission to record was sought from the participants. The advantage of using Zoom was its recording function. This enabled me to conduct interviews without having to worry about capturing everything in writing because I had the option to play back the saved recordings.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis began during the interviews when I started transcribing and organising information after each interview. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and stored securely in a Microsoft Word zip file that was password protected. This process helped to familiarise me with the data, as I had the chance to re-listen to each interview and take down more notes for interesting themes or patterns that were emerging from the data. Moreover, it provided me with a different viewpoint on the discussions. It also facilitated my introspection on overlooked aspects of the interview and enabled me to identify statements that lacked clarity, allowing me to follow up with participants promptly to seek further clarification while the interview was still recent.

Due to the sensitivity of the research subject matter, I could not outsource transcription services and had to do it myself. The transcription process was very long and tedious as I opted to transcribe manually. This meant that transcribing took between six to eight hours, depending on the length of each interview. McMullin (2021) agrees and states that transcription is commonly known for being tedious and time-consuming. However, as mentioned, re-listening to recordings helped me gain an in-depth understanding of the data.

Since I transcribed the interviews verbatim, I employed a method McMullin (2021) refers to as naturalised transcription or intelligent verbatim, where the transcriber adapts the oral written norms when transcribing. This involves taking the decision to correct and edit grammatical mistakes and repetitions. Following this method helped with clarity when reading the transcripts during the data analysis phase. It is important to note that the errors edited out were very few and minor, and as such, the editing process had no significant impact on the information or meaning conferred by participants during the interview.

The data analysis process of the interviews enabled me to examine, categorise, organise, and test evidence to address the initial propositions of the study (Yin, 2003). For the historiography, I provided a genealogy of the development of nation-building from the pre-colonial period to the postcolonial Botswana. The aim was to not only provide a detailed description but to go beyond this and question the historical and discursive conditions while considering how they operate in current discursive constructions of identity and meaning (Howarth, 2002). According to Jayasinha (2015), the purpose of the genealogical approach is not only to describe the rules governing discursive formations but also to question how they became objects of thought accepted as the master narrative, a task I aimed to achieve with this process.

I then used thematic and narrative analysis to interrogate the data from the narrative interviews with research participants. Thematic analysis is a systematic approach used to identify, analyse, and categorise emerging themes in the process of collecting data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), this process includes several phases that involve both inductive and deductive coding. For this phase of the analysis, I went through an iterative process of reading the transcribed data sets, field notes, and compiled observations. I read and re-read the transcribed interviews several times, noting ideas and thoughts and searching for meaning and themes (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013). This iterative process helped identify and group the data sets into two categories that consist of relevant and non-relevant data, a process called data reduction (Krysik and Finn, 2010).

In the next phase of the data analysis, I identified emerging concepts and themes, categorised them, and summarised them under a set of thematic headings (Irvine, 2011). These coded themes were initially presented in a table format. I then reviewed and refined

the codes, checking whether they were clearly labelled, textually grounded, and relevant. Codes that did not fit with the existing framework were either reorganised under different categories or assigned as new codes altogether (Jayasinha, 2015).

Following this, the data were parsed into broader thematic categories based on conceptual similarity and their relevance to the research questions. For instance, codes such as "feeling excluded," "language barriers," and "not seen as *Motswana*" were grouped under the overarching theme of "Belonging and Otherness." This process of parsing the codes enabled a shift from descriptive coding to more abstract, analytical insights, ultimately helping to shape the interpretation of the findings (Jayasinha, 2015).

Finally, I used thick descriptions to provide a detailed description of key issues that emerged from the analysed data. Where necessary, quotations derived from participants' responses were included to provide a more nuanced description of the themes. Lastly, I ensured that the final analysis and reporting remained embedded in the experiences and language of the study participants as much as possible (Irvine, 2011).

2.7 Reflexivity and Positionality

The invitation or prelude of this thesis highlights my positionality, emphasising its significance in providing context beyond just the theoretical and empirical aspects of the study. It was important for me to share my personal experiences, as they inform and shape the research in meaningful ways. In sharing my story, this research aimed to transition from the individual to the universal (Berger, 2015). Moreover, by combining my personal story with empirical findings and scholarly literature sources, I was able to better reflect on the very subjective nature, complex and rich understanding of what it means to be a person with a migrant background in postcolonial Botswana.

A big part of acknowledging one's positionality is constantly reflecting on how the personal influences or impacts research. According to Berger (2015), researchers need to continuously focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity to better understand their role in the creation of knowledge and to prudently monitor the impact of their biases and personal experiences on their research. As such, positionality also entails a reflexive approach to it.

Bukamal (2022) considers positionality as the context that shapes the researcher's identity, which in turn influences how they perceive and interpret their social world. In addition, Bukamal further contextualises the history of positionality and underscores that while it was first used in the context of gender identity, it now broadly refers to research pertaining to the much broader range of contextual factors that shape the researcher's identity and the role such factors may play in interpretative research. Hence, being aware of my identity as a person with a migrant background made me cognisant of how this informs my worldview and the influence it has on my interpretation of the research participants' experiences.

As a novice researcher with limited experience conducting research as an "insider", this is something I was initially concerned about. It was important for me to ensure that my shared experiences with the research participants did not influence or shape how I understood and interpreted the data, both during and after the interview phase. This required constant reflection of the self and how to merge or separate my roles as an insider and researcher to ensure objectivity and rigour in the study.

Holmes (2020) posits that the researchers' positionality and personal experiences can shape their approach to research encounters, their chosen methods, and their interpretation of results. Hence, prior to conducting the research interviews, I had to think about the implications of my positionality on the research method selected and on how I would analyse or interpret the findings gathered to ascertain objectivity of the processes.

This decision stemmed from my recognition that my positionality as a person with a migrant background would impact the entire research process, as I am also part of the social world I was studying, and which has already been shaped by existing social actors (Holmes, 2020). Thus, in an attempt to avoid bias, I made a conscious effort to balance both roles (researcher and insider) during the research project by employing a reflexive approach where I constantly reflected on my research questions, methods, and understanding of the literature to gain a broader appreciation of the topic beyond my personal experiences.

The use of journaling and note-taking before and after the interviews as a reflective process enabled me to constantly think about my advantageous position of knowing the context while being open to new and conflicting information that differed from my own

experiences. It was also important for me to clarify to participants that while there were some similarities in our experiences, they were free and encouraged to share from their own perspectives and not simply what they thought I would agree with.

I emphasised that every experience mattered and that their personal truths were valid and significant. In addition, I did my best to be aware of my own biases or potential misrepresentation of their responses as mentioned. This required continuous reinforcement throughout our discussions, a process that can be linked to bracketing. According to Delve, Ho and Limpaecher (2022) bracketing is a process that involves putting aside personal beliefs and preconceived notions to prevent misrepresenting a subject's intended meaning, perception, or experience (Delve, Ho and Limpaecher, 2022).

One of the ways I did this was through writing analytical memos both before and during the research process to engage with my research (Delve et al, 2022). This was also a way to reflect on any biases or misconstructions or contradictory information I came across or may have had. Using bracketing further helped me reflect on my positionality and how it shaped my worldview and potential biases. This process allowed me to consider how my background influenced my understanding of the world, my choice of language, the questions I asked, and, crucially, how I filtered the information I collected and the meanings I derived from it to inform my findings (Kacen and Chaitin, 2006).

As such, while transcribing my data, I would also refer to participants to clarify if I understood their position and interpretation of an experience or to verify if they still felt the same way about a topic. I also checked if their immigration status had changed (in the case of those who were awaiting feedback on their citizenship application), months after the research interviews had been concluded. This was to ascertain that I kept the voice of the participant in mind and not what I assumed the participant meant.

Rigour, objectivity, and validity in research have been central to the literature on reflexivity and acknowledgement of a researcher's positionality. The aim is not only to detail the processes or steps taken by the researcher but also to show evidence that the study concerned is able to pass the scrutiny and rigour of objective, valid, and theoretically sound findings. Thus, despite every attempt to ensure objectivity in this study, I drew from Fujii's (2017) reasoning that research can never be truly neutral or objective, as knowledge is

always co-produced through the relational dynamics between researcher and participant, shaped by context, power, and positionality as was the case for this research.

For ‘outsider’ researchers, this type of scrutiny that requires objectivity and rigour is usually not seen as much of a concern in comparison to the ‘insider’ because, as Chawla-Duggan (2007) and Gasman & Payton-Steward (2006) in Berger (2015) point out, ‘outsider’ researchers are frequently valued for their objectivity and emotional distance from a situation. However, ‘outsiders’ also have a disadvantage in that they may not understand the context and at times miss out on some details or have biases that may exaggerate or obfuscate the research. As such, outsiders’ research must also meet the same standards of rigour, objectivity, and validity as that of any other researcher, including those considered ‘insiders’.

For ‘insider’ researchers, they may have advantages that are beneficial to a research project that ‘outsider’ researchers do not have. For example, in this research, I was able to use my experience as a third-generation migrant to my advantage. For one, having lived in Botswana made me familiar with the context and processes I needed to navigate to collect my data. Additionally, I was aware of the sensitivity of the topic in certain political and government spaces and the importance of language and framing to avoid misinterpretations of the study’s objectives and my intentions as a researcher, given my positionality.

Secondly, my social networks were crucial and helpful in assisting with identifying research participants that may not have been easily accessible to an ‘outsider’ or, in some cases, that required a lengthy process to gain access due to the long and tedious bureaucratic systems that were in place. Finally, my experience as a third-generation migrant positioned me to navigate the political context and nuanced meanings of the experiences of my participants that might have been missed by a researcher who is an ‘outsider’ and does not possess an in-depth understanding of the context under study.

In this case, my positionality worked to my advantage by allowing greater access and rapport with participants. However, I had to remain mindful that familiarity could blur boundaries, so I made a conscious effort to maintain my role as a researcher first. I ensured the integrity of the research process by upholding ethical standards and staying reflexive throughout. Thus, while my position offered unique advantages, it was equally important

to demonstrate methodological rigour, critical self-awareness, and a commitment to producing meaningful insight.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Conducting research with vulnerable groups, or humans, for that matter, requires careful consideration of the implications of the research for the participants. Consideration of the research context is equally important, as it can make a topic sensitive beyond its apparent influence, or the people involved. Various factors, including the physical location, political and economic context, and broad media agenda, can contribute to making research controversial (Becker, Bryman, Ferguson and Ferguson, 2012:72).

Despite the politicised nature of issues related to ethnic minorities in Botswana, I was able to enter the research field. My application for a research permit from the government of Botswana to collect data was approved in December 2019 and a subsequent extension in December 2020 (see Appendices C and D[27]). This is a certificate or document that all researchers conducting research in Botswana with humans must obtain before collecting data. Prior to this, I had already obtained ethical clearance from the University of Witwatersrand's human and ethics committee which was approved in October 2019 (See Appendix A[28]).

Owing to the pandemic, travel restrictions, and COVID-19 health protocols such as social distancing, I was unable to travel to Botswana to conduct face-to-face interviews as initially anticipated. As such, I resorted to online video conferencing tools as my second-best option. Even with these alternative methods of data collection, I had to ensure that all research ethical considerations as far as this study was concerned were observed to the best of my abilities. According to Lobe, Morgan, and Hoffman (2020), most primary ethical

[27] Please note that the title of the PHD research written on the research permits slightly differs from the current topic. This is because I made a slight adjustment and replaced communities with states in the title. This change in the title happened long after I had completed my data collection hence it is not reflected in both research permits.

[28] The research ethics certificate reflects the most current title as I was able to apply or request for an adjustment to the research title. The request was approved by the ethics committee and I was subsequently issued a new certificate reflecting the revised title.

issues are the same for both online and face-to-face interviews. The authors further assert that researchers with already-approved ethical clearance will need to submit an amendment to their original ethics application to shift from in-person to online data collection.

I followed the suggestion by Lobe, Morgan and Hoffman (2020) and submitted a letter to the University of the Witwatersrand's ethics committee to request amendments to my original ethics application and to add online interviews as part of my data collection process. This request was granted, and I was able to incorporate the changes and proceed with conducting online interviews. See confirmation email in Appendix B.

Online interviews also require ethical adherence during the interviews as already mentioned. Some of the ethical considerations observed during this study include respecting the research participants, anonymising them using pseudonyms, informed consent, weighing the risk and benefits for participants, confidentiality and privacy, and presenting participants with an opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were provided with a research participant information sheet (see Appendix F) outlining the research process and providing an overview of the research. A consent form was also provided before each interview commenced (see Appendix G). I went through the consent form with the participants to ensure that they understood their rights during and after the interview process.

Adhering to some of these ethical considerations required flexibility from my end. For example, under normal circumstances, I would have provided the research participants with hard copies of the informed consent form to sign, discuss it with them in person, and receive a signature once consent was granted. However, in this case, I had to resort to emails and electronic signatures to receive the signed consent forms. For participants without an electronic signature or those who were not comfortable sending their consent forms via email or did not have access to a scanner due to lockdown restrictions, I accommodated verbal consent before the interview since it was recorded.

Even with signed consent forms, I still ensured that before each interview started, I explained to my research participants the aims and objectives of the study, ensured that they understood their rights, offered them an opportunity to ask any questions or seek clarity. I also emphasised their right to withdraw from the study at any point during or after the interview, taking with them whatever information they had provided at any point in the

research process. I also assured them that withdrawing from the study would not have any adverse consequences for them.

To ensure the privacy of the research participants, I sent them a Zoom meeting link that could only be accessed through a password that I provided to them. I also enabled the "waiting room" function. This was a way to prevent outsiders from entering the meeting, a phenomenon known as Zoom bombing (Lobe et al., 2020). In addition, I was careful with the storage of the data after each interview, given that Zoom provided the audio, video, and chat files of each interview. Fortunately, one of the advantages of using Zoom is that it can record and store sessions without third-party software (Archibald Ambagtsheer, Casey, and Lawless, 2019), and only the meeting host has access to the meeting recording that is saved directly to the laptop used for the interview (Lobe, Morgan, and Hoffman, 2020).

All recordings, with the consent of the participants, were saved on my password-protected laptop and backed up on my Google Drive. Concerning participant anonymity, I used pseudonyms in place of their identifying information (See above table). This was to safeguard their personal data and ensure that it could not be linked back to the participants' responses, especially those whose interview extracts are included in this research report (Dyer, 2001).

2.9 Study Limitations and Conducting Fieldwork During a Pandemic

The data collection process in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be a challenge for me as already stated. Despite several months of preparation and thinking through my research plan, nothing fully prepared me for what I would encounter when I entered the "research field". I found that my ability to be flexible and adaptable were crucial skills during this period. Besides the issue of travel which I have mentioned and will detail below, there was the challenge of physical contact which prevented face to face interviews. Moreover, the situation with the pandemic was unpredictable, regulations at the time were constantly changing to align with the emerging and unpredictable situation on the ground. As a result, it was difficult to plan. I had to make decisions based on what was available

and presented to me while ensuring that I adhered to COVID-19 regulations as well as research ethics.

At the inception of the fieldwork, the borders were closed, and movement was completely restricted. Moreover, the COVID-19 regulations and guidelines were constantly adjusted to respond to the demands of new and emerging information that kept evolving. I had to think on my feet and make decisions that were not part of my original plan to accommodate and navigate the changes as they unfolded. This included re-considering the selection criteria of the research participants, the strategies I used to gain access to participants, and their eligibility in the study, while overcoming feelings of self-doubt and second-guessing the decisions I was making.

Despite the assistance I received when recruiting research participants, the process was not as straightforward. The lack of face-to-face contact contributed to the skepticism or suspicion I encountered from some participants, who eventually declined to participate and pulled out at the last minute. These individuals had expressed interest in participating in my study. However, due to their ongoing process of applying for citizenship or resolving their documentation status with immigration offices at the time, they were concerned that participating in the study might jeopardise their situation and negatively impact their chances of a favourable outcome.

Even with my attempts to assure them of their anonymity and my responsibility to uphold confidentiality, it did not alleviate their fears. Hence, I had to respect their decision and work with the participants who were willing to participate without any reservations. This resulted in limited access to research participants who were willing to openly speak on a sensitive topic with an unknown stranger over Zoom.

Secondly, participants' concerns were understandable, particularly those awaiting decisions on their citizenship or permanent residency. At the time, Zoom was a relatively new tool for data collection, and some participants lacked confidence in its ability to securely protect their data. Another disadvantage of collecting data on Zoom was that it limited participation because some participants did not have access to reliable and fast internet connections. In one or two cases, I had to purchase data bundles for a research participant. In addition, where the internet connection was a challenge, WhatsApp calling

was the better option for conducting the interview as it did not consume a lot of data compared to Zoom.

Another limitation in addition to the challenges with recruiting individual participants was that I was not able to conduct focus group discussions. As shown, this study relied on individual interviews due to the constraints of remote fieldwork and to ensure participants' confidentiality when discussing sensitive aspects of identity. Although the focus group discussions would have provided additional insight into collective identity construction, the focus on individual narratives allowed for a deeper exploration of the research participants' personal experiences of marginality and belonging.

Another limitation of this study was the similarity of the research participants in terms of their socioeconomic status and class as I have highlighted in Chapter Two. Majority of the respondents selected were from urban areas, relatively educated, with professional backgrounds. This shaped the findings because it highlights narratives of hyphenated identity and urban cosmopolitan belonging. Moreover, I am cognisant of the fact that I had the study included more respondents from rural areas, informal settlements, or lower-income groups, it is likely that different experiences of identity, belonging, and exclusion would have emerged. Thus, future research would benefit from a more deliberate stratification of respondents by class and spatial location to better capture the full spectrum of migrant descendants' experiences in Botswana.

Another challenge was that, even though I had originally planned to conduct ethnographic research, this was not possible for this study due to the COVID-19 restrictions implemented to prevent the spread of the virus. Furthermore, because in the end, the research participants were drawn from different parts of Botswana, with some based outside the country at the time of the interviews, it would have been impossible to conduct ethnographic research. Otherwise, such an approach would have been beneficial in contributing to a deeper understanding of how people with a migrant background engage and relate with the state, as well as with questions of identity and belonging which are contested from the bottom up.

Lastly, I would have had the advantage of observing participants in their natural settings, which can be especially valuable because it allows the researcher to see how people perform and negotiate identity, belonging, or marginality in real time. Such methods

or approaches offer access to forms of meaning-making such as body language, social interactions, routines, or silences that often go unspoken in interviews but are crucial for understanding lived experience.

Despite the limitations mentioned here, this study remains significant as it contributes to scholarship on postcolonial citizenship, national identity, and belonging. It provides empirical evidence from individuals with a migrant background and incorporates emerging research that encourages us to explore alternative approaches to studying these groups and the forms of belonging that arise from on the ground experiences, independent of state practices and policies.

2.10 Reflecting on the Meaning of Producing Knowledge for People with a Migrant Background

As mentioned in one of the sections of this chapter, there is limited information or knowledge on people with a migrant background in Botswana and in Africa more broadly. No studies of this group have been conducted in Botswana and very few have been done in other African contexts. This is what is missing from the discussions on identity, belonging and citizenship and my inclusion of such groups helps us to gain further insights or an understanding of this phenomena. At the same time, while migration and ethnic diversity are widespread across the African continent, Botswana presents a distinctive case in that it has actively constructed itself as a monoethnic nation through its state discourse, legal structures, and national symbols.

This is despite the fact that it is home to multiple ethnic and migrant-descended groups, the state still promotes a *Tswana*-centric narrative of nationhood that collapses ethnic and national identity into a singular "*Motswana*" identity. This monoethnic imaginary is not just symbolic but it is codified in Botswana's Constitution, language policies, and citizenship practices, making it a compelling site for exploring how identity and belonging are negotiated in contexts of institutionalised ethnonationalism.

Methodologically, there are limited examples to draw from in this context. As such, I employed an inductive process as I had to work with a category of research participants

that had not been conceptualised before in the literature. As stated, this is a group that historically, not much has been written about their existence and experiences. It is a population of people with ambiguous migrant backgrounds, shaped in part by the drawing of colonial borders that represents an entirely new way of understanding not only Botswana, but African studies in general. In fact, African studies rarely engage deeply with these kinds of people – those who do not fit into classical categories of migration, like second-generation migrants, but who instead occupy this ambiguous and complex migratory position and history.

For this thesis, I did not use some of the categories that have been employed by others because of the diversity of my participants. Moreover, I was of the view that this group of research participants present a different kind of phenomenon that does not necessarily fit into those languages as mentioned. For example, as I have stated in Chapter One, this group of research participants had people who are second-generation migrants and some that resembled second-generation migrants but were not, especially if we go with the classic definition by Rumbaut (2004) and others. Thus, conceptually, they cannot be classified as such and I had to adopt the umbrella conceptualisation of people with a migrant background or migrant descendants to encapsulate their diverse migratory experiences.

Reflecting on conducting research with a group of individuals with a migrant background in all their diverse forms offered an opportunity to methodologically contribute lessons and knowledge. For one, employing a postcolonial lens to the study meant that the research was interdisciplinary and located at the intersection of history, political science, sociology, migration and cultural studies. This further enabled me to employ different methodological approaches hence the use of a case study of Botswana using a combination of historiography and in-depth narrative interviews.

A postcolonial lens further offered a framework to build on studies that critique Eurocentric narratives embedded in historiography and national identity formation. Thus, this methodological approach contributes to demonstrating how postcolonial subjectivities emerge in monoethnic states like Botswana through examining how the colonial legacy of the country shapes the identity, citizenship and belonging for people with a migrant background. Lastly, a postcolonial methodological reflection helps to highlight how

historiography assists with deconstructing legacies in Botswana's nation-building process, where exclusionary narratives around identity have been reinforced.

Historiography as a methodology to examine how Botswana's national identity was constructed, particularly in relation to ethnicity and exclusion of people with a migrant background elicited lessons on the silencing of migrant voices in national narratives through this approach. In addition, in depth narratives not only allowed for the lived experiences of the participants but contributed to bottom-up knowledge production which centres the voices of those considered as outsiders or "marginalised" groups rather than solely relying on state narratives. Moreover, the in-depth narrative interviews with migrants helped with challenging dominant understandings of belonging and citizenship in Botswana.

A reflection of research participants' experiences of identity and belonging moved beyond the personal experience to show that they are a product of broader socio-political processes in postcolonial Botswana. Furthermore, these experiences contribute to broader understandings of how national identity is contested and renegotiated by people with a migrant background in Botswana. Beyond this, the methodology employed was relevant for exploring how those considered as "outsiders" navigate their citizenship in postcolonial states oftentimes, outside of formal legal structures.

This group is also important because it demonstrated that we cannot have a complete or nuanced understanding of African national identity and postcolonial states without recognising and including people with a migrant background in these discussions. They are present in all African countries, even if they are not officially recognised or acknowledged in many cases. However, through this research they are now acknowledged and their presence recognised which helps us to begin to see how they shape state structures, influence notions of citizenship, and challenge the very ideas of identity and belonging that many postcolonial states were built on.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework and design of the study. I adopted a qualitative method guided by the deconstruction and discourse analysis approaches aimed at unpacking the experiences of people with a migrant background. This chapter aimed to understand the processes of nation-building that informed research participants' subjective views on identity and belonging. The chapter also highlighted the use of historiography and in-depth narrative interviews as the main methodological approaches used to explore a category of participants that has not received much attention in the African studies literature.

Despite the limitations of conducting this research as outlined in the preceding sections, this study demonstrated the need for flexible approaches to participant recruitment and data collection methods. The chapter underscored the contribution of people with a migrant background to postcolonial studies, especially on issues of identity, citizenship and belonging. Beyond the focus on ethnic conflicts or issues of autochthony in African studies, academic scholars often miss the fluidity of ethnicities, nationalities, and mobility across borders that contribute to how we understand national identity and postcolonial states.

The next chapter presents the historical background and provides a discussion on the development of the nation-building process in Botswana and, subsequently, its adoption of its current *Tswana* national identity. Here, I show how I employed the historiography approach to construct postcolonial Botswana's nation building process and national identity following a timeline of pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods.

3 Chapter Three: The Making of a Nation: Constructing Botswana's Post-Colonial State and Citizenship

We were taught, in a very positive way, to despise ourselves and our way of life. We were made to believe that we had no past to speak of and no history to boast of. The past, so far as we were concerned, was just a blank and nothing more. Only the present mattered, and we had very little control over it. It seemed we were in for a definite period of foreign tutelage, without any hope of ever again becoming our own masters. The end result of all this was that our self-pride and our self-confidence were badly undermined. It should now be our intention to try to retrieve what we can of our past. We should write our history books to prove that we did have a past and that it was a past that was just as worth writing and learning about as any other. We must do this for the simple reason that a nation without a past is a lost nation, and a people without a past are a people without a soul. - Sir Seretse Khama [29]

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the specific history of Botswana's process of nation building, national identity and citizenship against the broad history of Botswana's democratic transition. It focuses on the political organisation and settlement patterns of groups found in present-day Botswana over time and their influence on national identity, belonging, and postcolonial citizenship. Much has been written about nation-states and nationalism. For example, some scholars have argued that all nationalisms depend on essential traits like a shared past, language, and location to build political groups in imagined communities (Chigumadzi, 2017).

Meanwhile, scholars such as Anderson (1991) examine nationalism through different times and places. Anderson notes that for imperialists and settler nationalists, racist ideas were crucial for creating a sense of superiority. This helped colonists justify their control and increase their national pride (Anderson, 1991). In the context of Africa, Chigumadzi (2017) notes that Africa's history is often told in two main ways: one that

[29] Sir Seretse Khama, Daily News, 19 May 1970, supplement in Mwale 2017.

focuses on European views that portray Africa as having no history, as portrayed in the example from President Sir Seretse Khama's quotation at the beginning of this chapter. The other perspective presents Africa as having a history that remains in the past (Chigumadzi, 2017).

In this thesis, I use case material from Botswana to analyse how its history has been portrayed and to rethink debates on post-colonial identity and citizenship. Through mapping the country's historiography, I show how deeply entrenched notions of identity and belonging have superimposed the *Tswana* ethnic identity on the identity of the country. This creation of a *Tswana* ethnic identity as coterminous with the national identity of Botswana owes its origins to the colonial period, yet it continues to shape the present-day society and experiences of those considered "outsiders."

Drawing from the literature reviewed and archival research, I show in this chapter that the official story of Botswana's nation-building has been largely presented in ways that inadvertently assert the *Tswana* dominance in the national imaginary of the nation. Moreover, I also show that where prominent scholars have pushed back, their focus has been on the exclusion and marginalisation of ethnic minority groups in the country. Yet groups such as people with migrant backgrounds have been excluded from these debates thus far, and this is one of the gaps this chapter and the study more broadly aims to fill.

The second section of this chapter discusses the development of citizenship in Botswana which is inextricably linked with the formation of the state and national identity. Here, I show that citizenship in Botswana and the challenges of claiming rights by some individuals and groups are not abstract. They are woven into a complex history and policy decisions that continue to influence modern-day society. I begin by tracing the origins and subsequent development of the institution of citizenship in Africa broadly before discussing the case of Botswana. I then discuss how differing citizenships have been shaped and sustained by distinctive and deeply rooted understandings of nationhood (Brubaker, 1992).

I further discuss how Botswana's citizenship is rooted in the *Tswana* ethnic identity and in the politics of autochthony and indigeneity that continue to foster the exclusion and inequalities currently experienced by non-*Tswana* ethnic groups and citizens with a migrant background. However, I also show that even with this exclusion, through the

country's adoption of bureaucratic rationalisation highlighted by Solway (2002) in Chapter One, Botswana has managed to advance civic ideals that ensure equality for all citizens through its policies. As this study shows, these ideals are contested at the social level due to the limitations in the understanding of who constitutes a "real" *Motswana*. A reality that some people with a migrant background in the country experience when accessing opportunities or claiming rights.

I also build on previous scholarship from Africa, Southeast Asia, and other postcolonial communities that highlight the ethnicisation of citizenship and its influence on exclusive understandings of citizenship and belonging (Siddle, 2003 and Rhoads, 2022). At the local level, I contribute to debates by scholars such as Nyamnjoh (2002), Werbner (2002, 2004), Nyati-Ramahobo (2000, 2008), and Solway (2002, 2004, 2011) who note that Botswana has both elements of a state-centred and assimilationist understanding of nationhood.

Considering this, the chapter traces the historical development of Botswana's Post-colonial state and citizenship laws. It shows how the evolution of these developments over time have played a key role in framing postcolonial citizenship in Botswana. More specifically, as it relates to how it is understood officially and at the social level, and ultimately, its influence on people with a migration heritage.

This chapter further contextualises the emergence of this ambivalence and contributes to nation building discourses through a postcolonial lens. It also highlights the fault lines in some academic literature that naturalise nations and it further demonstrates how modern nationalism typically silences and denaturalises minority status.

Finally, while most postcolonial scholars focus on the legacies of colonisation in nation-building as it pertains to creating a common national identity for culturally and ethnically diverse groups, my focus is on how states have continuously sustained some of these practices in the modern state. Thus, the chapter assesses the political challenges of governing multicultural societies and how addressing these challenges has often meant creating a homogenising narrative. Following this line of thought, the chapter entreats a nuanced study of nations and the different ways in which diverse groups, such as migrant descendants or people with a migrant background, are not only included in national narratives but also how this shapes their relationship with the nation-state.

3.2 A Reading of Botswana's History

In examining the history of Botswana with a primary focus on historical accounts, my research took an interest in how these historical narratives serve as a literary form through which contemporary conceptions of the past are articulated (Becker, 1938). I borrow from Becker's articulation to show what influenced my process in conducting a historiography of Botswana and I quote:

> In short, the "facts" that would concern the historiographer, the "what actually happened" that he/she would look for and find relevant to his/her purpose, would be, not the truth, but the existence and pressure of the ideas about the past which men have entertained and acted upon. His/her object would be to reconstruct, and by imaginative insight and aesthetic understanding make life again, that pattern of events occurring in distant places and times past which, in successive periods, men have been able to form a picture of when contemplating themselves; and their activities in relation to the world in which they live. Whether the events composing the pattern are true or false, objectively considered, need not concern him - Becker (1938:27).

The above quotation resonates with the aim of this study in developing a historiography of Botswana which paints a picture of the nation-building process. Rather than critiquing the state-building process or validating contested or strongly held myths, I sought to understand how the nation developed and reached its current state. In this sense, I draw from Becker's assertion that while a historiographer may write about myths that are widely accepted as true, the key point to understand is that, regardless of whether the myth itself is true, its existence is real.

Becker goes on to state that the fact that people believe in it is also true, and that belief holds significant importance. For example, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, one of the common narratives in Botswana is that of the three Chiefs travelling to England to request protection from the Queen. This is a widespread narrative that has dominated mainstream discourse and shaped the myths surrounding the nation building narrative.

Much has been written about the history of Botswana as will be shown in the following sections of this chapter. The existing scholarship on Botswana's history can be divided into two main perspectives. On one side, Botswana is portrayed as a model democracy or a successful "developmental state" (Leftwich, 1995; Edge, 1998; Tsie, 1998;

Samatar, 1999; Fawcus and Tilbury 2000; Maundeni, 2001; Taylor, 2003; Sebudubudu, 2005; Sebudubudu & Molutsi, 2011). On the other, recent criticisms raise concern about Botswana's democratic practices, especially concerning women's rights (Sechele, 2015; Dow, 2001) and the rights of ethnic minority groups (Moeti, 2023; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2000, , 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006 and 2008; Solway, 2002, 2004; Boikhutso, 2009).

Molosiwa (2023) contributes to these discussions and asserts that the debates on Botswana have exclusively focused on elite politics and ethnicity. As a result, they have produced a historical narrative of an inherent *Tswana* character of growth, progress and development that has entirely overlooked how male elites developed policy, nationalism and citizenship according to specifically gendered intentions. Furthermore, while anthropologists have examined the complex meanings of ethnic identities in Botswana's liberalist regime, Molosiwa is of the view that the formation of citizenship in the early post-colonial period also had a distinctly masculine dimension.

It is through this lens that Molosiwa also postulates that the first President - Sir Seretse Khama's policies and national discourse focused on creating a "nation of farmers," emphasising masculine rural citizens where gender was prioritised over status and ethnic identity. This process which he defines as masculine citizenship or masculine national identity will be unpacked in the subsequent sections, especially how it contributed to shaping the constructions of citizenship in postcolonial Botswana and its impact and exclusion of women.

This exclusion is further highlighted below when discussing the symbols that represent the imaged nation-state of Botswana which largely excludes women. These imaginings both symbolic and otherwise of the Botswana nation-state have accumulated to what it is now. Hence, Anderson (1991:145) states that the nation is imagined because it is both "inherently limited and sovereign." Additionally, in thinking about the national identity as a construction, Anderson pins this down to the people in the nation in terms of how their collective imagination is underpinned by a deep comradeship with an external history that can be told in linear time.

Anderson's point above is pertinent, but it is equally important to note that, at the time of forging nationalism, not all information and alternative voices were well represented and documented. Furthermore, the representation of history in modern society

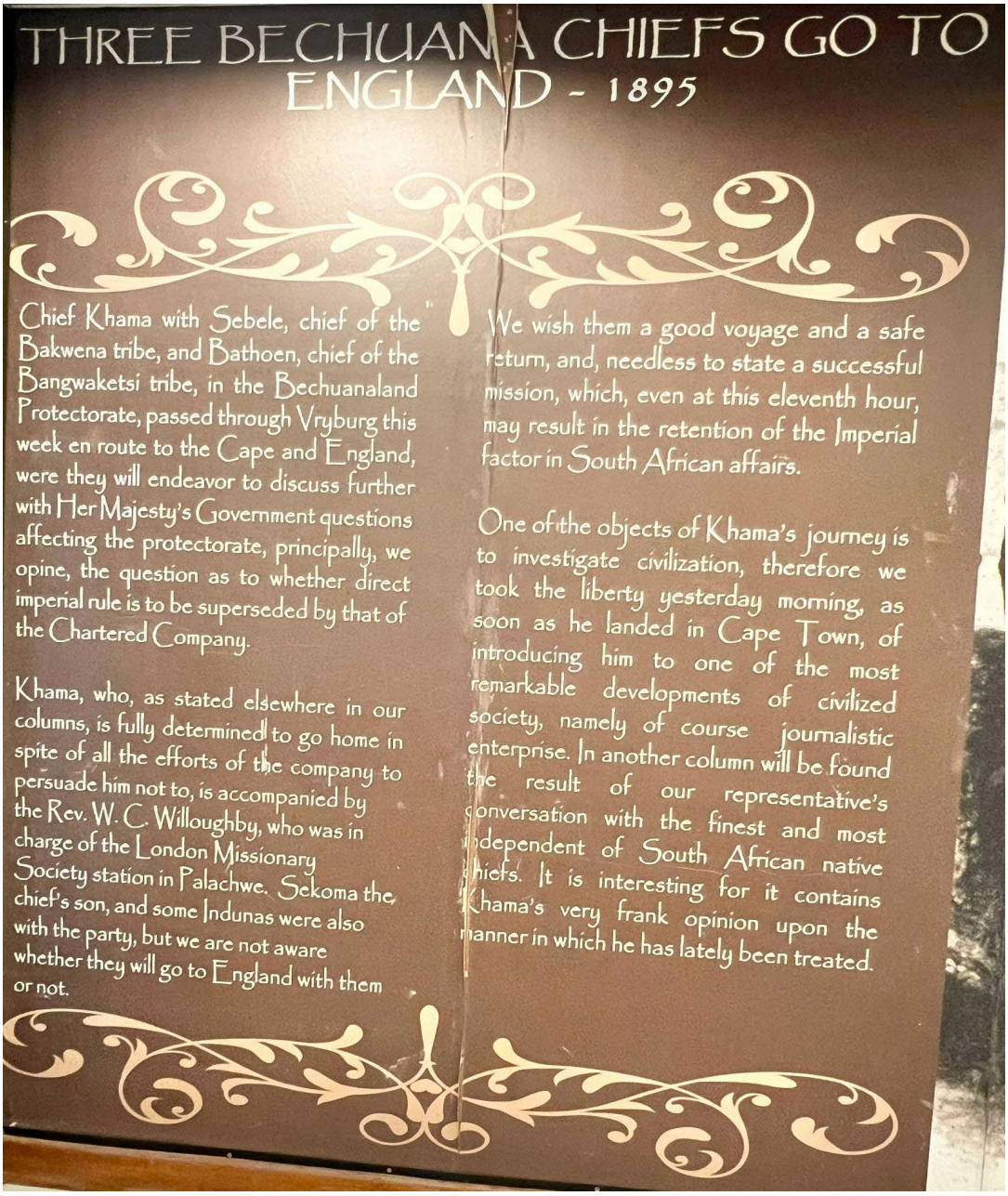
has more to do with the narrative of those in power. Aminzade (2013) highlights that historians of nation-building and citizenship in Africa have typically ignored or softened the voices of those who offer alternative visions of the nation. In so doing, they have relied on the master narratives of nationalist movements, which have provided histories that have ignored conflicts amongst nationalist leaders and have silenced the voices of those who imagined different communities (Aminzade 2013).

The case of Botswana is not peculiar in this regard, as argued in subsequent sections of this chapter. The voice of authority in the nation-state has been largely presented in the official discourse of the country as a singular narrative centred around the three *Dikgosi* (Chiefs) and the founding president, Sir Seretse Khama. The three *Dikgosi* (chiefs)—*Kgosi Bathoen* I of *Bangwaket*se, *Kgosi Khama* III of *Bangwato*, and *Kgosi Sebele of Bakwena*—are believed to have travelled to England in 1895 accompanied by Reverend W.C Willoughby to protest against the possible transfer of their land to the British South Africa Company (BSAC) (Mogalakwe, 2006).

The three *Dikgosi* are highly respected in the country and are considered heroes and the founding fathers of the nation for their negotiation against Bechuanaland's (Botswana) incorporation into the BSAC, which is sometimes based on the distorted narrative that they went to England to ask for independence from the Queen (Mogalakwe, 2003). Furthermore, a monument to commemorate the three *Dikgosi* has been set up in the Central Business District of the Capital City, Gaborone (Setlhabi, 2018, Parson, 2006). Although the three Chiefs and the founding president of Botswana played a pivotal role in nation-building, other voices and role players have been silenced throughout history.

These include key figures such as opposition leaders, ethnic minorities, and women who have been omitted from the literature and official narrative or discourse on nation-building in Botswana. The exclusion of groups such as women, for example, is not unique to Botswana, as will be shown by the case of Unity Dow in the discussions below, which deal with the historical background of Botswana's citizenship. In support, Abioye and Nyawo (2020:46) are of the view that the role of women as leaders in nation-building has historically been restricted because women have generally not been considered to play a role in determining the path a nation takes.

Figure 2: Image with details of the Three Chiefs Voyage to England



Source: Photographed by author in the BNARS walls, January 2020

Figure 3: Picture of the Three Chiefs in England



Bechuana Chiefs In England

RECEPTION AT PLYMOUTH

There this morning on board the Castle line Steamer Tantallon Castle, accompanied by seven native attendants. It is understood that the object of their visit is to seek an audience of the Queen, and a conference with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, regarding the future of their country, their desire being to remainunder British rule, and to avoid absorption by the Chartered Company.

All the Chief are in good health, and seemed much pleased with their reception, shaking hands cordially with Mr. Wardlaw Thompson, foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society, and the other gentlemen who came to meet them. Khama and his companies, who all wore European costume, have with them Mr. W. C. Willoughby, of the London Missionary Society, who acts as interpreter.

During their stay in England, which would extend over five weeks, the chiefs hope to see Mr Chamberlain, and it may be stated that they are thoroughly unanimous in their views with regard to their connection with the Imperial Government.

Source: Photographed by author on the walls of BNARS, January 2020

Figure 4: Picture of the three Chiefs and Reverend Willoughby



Source: Photographed by author on the walls of BNARS, January 2020

Figure 5: Picture of the three Chiefs in England



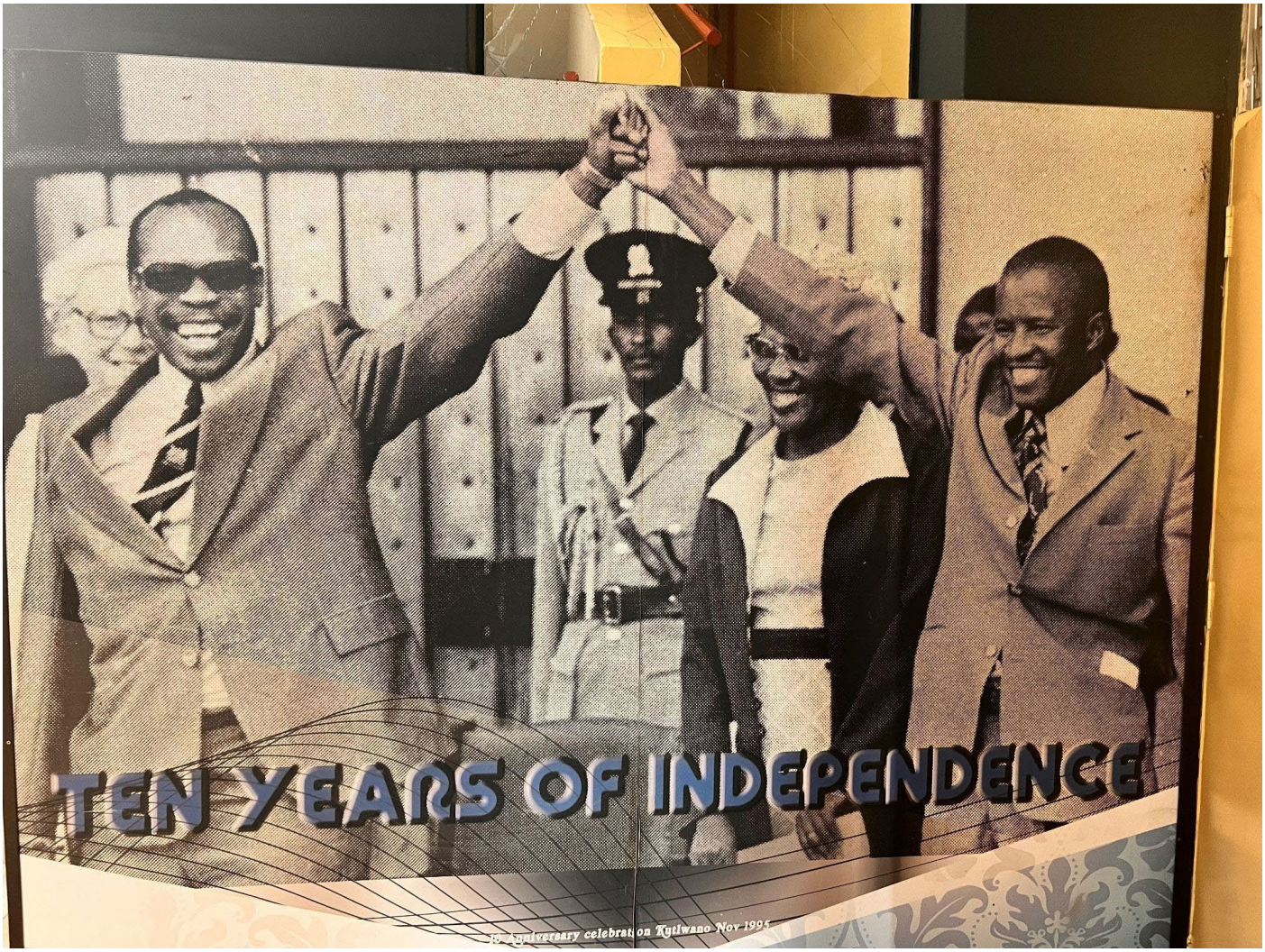
Source: Photographed by author on the walls of BNARS, January 2020

Figure 6: The three Dikgosi Monument in Gaborone's CBD



Source: Photographed by author on the walls of BNARS, January 2020

Figure 7: President Sir Seretse Khama and then Vice-President Sir Ketumile Masire



Source: Photographed by author on the walls of BNARS, January 2020

I present the images above to further augment and support debates regarding the exclusion of certain voices and the dominance of others in the national narrative of the Botswana nation-state. The images presented above not only symbolise nation building but are evidence of the dominance of male figures that represent Botswana's historically rooted patriarchal and gender regime which has influenced the country's re-fashioning of citizenship (Molosiwa and Bolaane, 2021) and the dominant narrative of the fore-founders of the nation building that essentially excludes women and ethnic minority groups. The goal of this chapter, however, is not only to highlight these dominant narratives but to also set the stage for discussions on the ambivalence and ambiguity presented by research

participants in the empirical chapters that follow. In so doing, the chapter shows how the imagined community of modern Botswana, shaped by both intentional actions and historical accidents, has resulted in the kind of ambivalence experienced by people with a migrant background in the postcolonial nation-state. Furthermore, while previous scholarship has its merits, this chapter emphasises the myths of nation-building by presenting a narrative of how an imagined community was created - sometimes intentionally, and other times as a result of historical accidents. This perspective further helps contextualise the issues discussed in the following sections, including ethnic minority issues and the understandings of citizenship, identity, and belonging in postcolonial Botswana.

3.3 Postcolonial Nationalism and Nation Building

Some scholars argue that the nation-state developed because of the social and political crises in Europe owing to the increase in the national territorial spread of capitalist social relations and productive forces during the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries (Olukoshi and Laakso, 1996). Anderson (1994) contends that the sense of nation originated in South America, whereas Smith (1998) argues that nationalism as a modern movement and ideology emerged in the latter half of the 18th century in Western Europe and America.

Reaching a consensus on the beginning of nations, or nationalism, has been the subject of a long-standing debate among nationalism scholars. Hutchinson and Smith in Barrington (2006:5) view the difficulty in the scholarship of nations and nationalism as the problem of finding consensus on an acceptable definition of both concepts. Various explanations of nationhood and theories of nationalism have emerged to provide a well-defined description of what both concepts mean and represent.

According to Barrington (2006:5), the significant conflict between subjective and objective notions of national identity is the cause of this challenge. To elaborate, Barrington outlines a distinction between the two and argues that the subjective meaning of nation is embedded in a belief by the people that they are indeed a nation, and this serves as a vital

ingredient to national identity (Barrington, 2006:5). He further notes that the objective view concerns itself more with a list of observable and concrete characteristics that are subject to, but not limited to, a common language, territory, economic life, and a cultivated common culture (Barrington, 2006).

Anderson (1986) agrees with Barrington's assertion regarding the objective factors but cautions that these tell us very little about the distinctive qualities and character of the national community that eventually emerges. Hence, Anderson encourages a focus on the permanent cultural attributes of memory, value, myth, and symbolism, as these are often recorded and immortalised within the fabric of society and are bound to leave an imprint on the perceptions of subsequent generations (Anderson, 1986) as shown in the section above.

When it comes to Africa, Sithole (2016) posits that nationalism in this context represents the struggle for independence or self-determination against foreign rule, while in Europe, it symbolises the struggle for national unification. In the same vein, Ryseck (2014:16) contends that nationalism in Africa is considered an "anti-colonial" movement because foreign concepts of nation and national sentiment were "imparted by colonial powers and conveyed to the colonised people through various means."

This is supported by Birch's (1989) earlier work which argues that the difficulties in understanding nationalism are due to its European indoctrination, which does not necessarily apply in other contexts. African states illustrate this point as the nationalism doctrine remains largely incompatible and far removed from the realities of the context. Hence, critics of modern nation-states frequently point to their tendency to foster narratives of cultural homogeneity. This practice stands in contrast to the reality that most states were multicultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious (Olukoshi and Laakso, 1996) before the formation of nations.

Kymlicka (2004) agrees with this observation arguing that the default perception of Western liberalism is the myth of ethnocultural neutrality. However, liberal democratic states are far from being ethno-culturally neutral, as perceived neutrality is a consequence of what Kymlicka refers to as 'societal culture". By this, the author refers to measures that were adopted to primarily integrate people into a territorially concentrated culture, common language, and social institutions. In a similar fashion Anderson (1991)

underscores the importance of language and argues that from its inception, the nation was conceived in language and not in blood and as such, one could be "invited into" the imagined community.

To foster nation-building, most states in Africa adopted policies aimed at creating a strong national identity and a single societal culture. This resulted in a shared official language, the development of a core education curriculum, and requirements for obtaining citizenship (Kymlicka, 2004). To some extent, these similar strategies were largely implemented in some Western countries, such as France, Italy, England, Germany, and Portugal, to build shared languages and a sense of national identity that each of the countries has come to be known for.

Authors such as Neville, Oyama, and Huggins (2014) and Bollen and Medrano (1998) show that not all Western countries had similar processes in building their nations. The authors argue that some of these "developed" countries are also still dealing with unfinished business related to settler-colony issues and ethnicity seen in some post-colonial African states. To contextualise their point, examples such as the Quebec province in Canada, aborigines in Australia, and Catalonia in Spain serve as evidence of this unfinished business related to nation building.

Given the above, Fadakinte and Amolegbe (2017:61) argue that, despite the spread and influence of nationalism across the globe, the major challenge facing postcolonial Africa today is that of citizenship and nationhood. The diversity on the continent means that states developed into nations of non-homogenous people. As such, Kymlicka (2004) underscores the importance of examining minority rights in the context of and in response to state nation-building. This is a goal this chapter aims to accomplish in the context of Botswana.

While the challenge of managing ethnic diversity is common to all nation-states, in the African postcolonial context it takes on a distinct form shaped by specific colonial legacies, particularly arbitrary borders, the fragmentation or merging of pre-colonial polities, and the imposition of external state structures (Wu, 2024). The inherited state form, combined with the urgency of post-independence state consolidation, has often led to efforts at ethnic homogenisation or assimilation in the name of national unity. At the same time, as the preceding examples demonstrate, challenges to nationalism and nation-

building are not unique to Africa or postcolonial contexts; Western liberal democracies have also had to contend with similar tensions. However, rather than claiming that the challenge is greater in Africa, this study argues that it is qualitatively different, requiring an analysis rooted in the historical and geopolitical specificities of postcolonial state formation.

In the African context, unlike most western democracies, post-colonial states have been problematised in the literature that discusses nation-building, especially the prevalence of ethnic conflicts and autochthony discourses that characterise the "new nationalism" that has spread across much of Africa (Zambakari, 2012). Perhaps it is for these reasons that authors such as Davidson (1992) and Zartman (1995) in (Olukoshi and Laakso, 1996) conclude that the crisis of the nation-state project has been more prominent in Africa than elsewhere.

As such, it is not surprising that most of the African literature on nation-building speaks to the challenges faced by African leaders when seeking to amalgamate largely fragmented ethnic groups into a single nation (Aguilar, 1999; Adejumobil, 2001; Mukwedeya, 2016; Olukoshi and Laakso, (1996) and Mlambo, 2013). This scholarship further highlights the adverse effects of these efforts on ethnic minorities. These discussions, although important in highlighting the challenges of nationalism, tribalism and ethnic conflicts that postcolonial states have had to contend with, they however, overlook what Landau and Bakewell (2018:11) refer to as the different forms of "conviviality and exclusion that occur among the citizenry and between citizens and those from elsewhere."

These discussions are important for understanding the interactions and relations forged in communities that inform and influence an individual's sense of identity and belonging. Contributing to the discussion on postcolonial African challenges, Sithole (2016), argues that in Africa, the aim of colonisation was never to create "a sense of nationhood" among the colonised but rather to undermine their ethnic and regional allegiances. Before colonisation, people associated more or thought of themselves as belonging to a particular ethnic group or region before the idea of a nation was conceived in these contexts.

The above is a clear illustration that the concepts of nation and nationalism were imported from the developed global north, imparted by the colonial powers and conveyed

to the colonised through various means (Ryseck, 2014:16). For this reason, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) posits that identifying who belongs to the nation, coupled with defining the criteria for citizenship, is at the heart of the postcolonial African national project. Hence, to strengthen the postcolonial nation-building project, socio-economic development was used as a vehicle to achieve this objective.

African states invested in the socio-economic development of their states in efforts to "catch up" with developed countries and build states of comparable material development, political cohesion, and modern political institutions (Rivkin, 1969). The assumption was that socio-economic development would foster a stronger national identity that superseded sub-national identities and affiliations (Godefroidt, Langer, and Meuleman, 2016). Attempts to address challenges that came with the vision of creating inclusive states during and after the nation-building process were never fully realised as ethnic conflicts emerged in individual African states. These have been well documented in countries such as Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Burundi, and Cameroon, Ethiopia, to mention a few (Venkatasawmy, 2015; Yap, 2022; Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007; Mwakikagile, 2012; Agashe, 2022; Osakwe, 2017; Bamidele, 2020; Assefa, 2022; Bayu, 2021; Fonchingong, 2005; Amungwa, 2011; Toyi, 2016).

The continued salience of ethnic identity has been a factor in the challenge of nation-building in Africa. Hence, issues of the conceptualisation of citizenship and identity politics have emerged (Godefroidt, Langer & Meuleman (2016). Despite these challenges, most of the scholarship on nation-building continues to focus on ethnic tensions between indigenes and those considered as "others" (Adejumobil, 2001). Limited research has contextualised these issues in the context of people with a migrant background. It is for this reason that I sought to address this gap by understanding their experiences and situating this study in the context of Botswana. Moreover, by merging nation-building processes with experiences of people with migrant backgrounds, I aimed to show the role of postcolonial states' practices and ideologies in the construction of an exclusionary or inclusionary national identity (Khalema, Magadimisha, Chipungu, Chirimambowa and Chimedza, 2018).

Finally, to fully understand the experiences of people with a migrant background, it is imperative to foreground their issues or challenges from a global and continental

perspective, as well as from within the context in which their experiences emanate. Thus, to understand modern Botswana, one has to trace the historical developments of the nation-state and how its past policies and practices continue to affect the lives of the present society in different ways. The following sections will provide an account of the development of the nation-state and the national identity of Botswana, which begins with the inception of the *Tswana* identity.

3.4 Building a Nation: The Development of Botswana's Nation-State and National Identity

3.4.1 The Evolution of the Tswana Identity

> We call them Becwana, and we call their language *Secwana*, and these terms are now in common use among the people. But they say they learnt these names from us and have merely adopted the white man's terminology. But however that may be, the word is now in general use and is definite enough for all ordinary purposes. -Willoughby, 1905: 295[30]

I begin this section with the above excerpt from Volz's (2003) article on European missionaries and *Tswana* identity in the nineteenth century. The article's discussions are timely because they help to trace the evolution of *Tswana* identity from the nineteenth century to the current times. The nineteenth century is the starting point for this thesis because this is the time when the *Tswana* are believed to have had their first contact with

[30] Quote extracted from Volz, S. (2003:3), European Missionaries and Tswana Identity in the 19th Century, Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies, 17 (10), 3 -19. The author begins his article with this apt quote by Willoughby (1905) to underscore the evolution of the *Tswana* identity from the time the European missionaries arrived in 1801 and the role they played in the evolution, meaning, and adoption of the term by both Europeans and *Batswana*. Whereas in the 19th century the term 'Becwana' was used as a collective term about the various *Tswana* groups inhabiting Southern Africa, the word has since evolved over the years and is now widely termed *Batswana.* Volz notes that even though the missionaries did not coin the latter term, they still played a significant role in the evolution of the word. Moreover, although Batswana ethnic groups are found in various Southern African countries, such as South Africa and Zimbabwe, in modern postcolonial society, the term 'Batswana' has come to be synonymous with the national identity of Botswana. It is now commonly used by the global community, the Botswana state, and its citizens to refer to all citizens of Botswana.

the Europeans (Mogalakwe, 2006). In fact, Sillery (1965) cited in Mogalakwe puts this meeting to around 1801. After this, further documentation of the *Tswana's* interaction with the Europeans was recorded until the arrival of the missionaries from the London Missionary Society in the 1840s which is said to have brought about sustained and continuous contact between the *Tswana* and Europeans (Mogalakwe, 2006:69).

To some extent, in tracing the history of the *Tswana*, this section also outlines the development of Botswana's national identity. As Volz notes that although, in a sense, the *Tswana* identity was invented, its development has involved different layers of construction due to changing circumstances. These include the extent of European knowledge about *Tswana* societies, the purposes served by this knowledge, and the changing circumstances of the *Tswana* concerning the Europeans and others they interacted with (Volz, 2003:3).

Volz further argues that the identity of the *Tswana* did not exist in one form, nor was it imposed on the Africans by the Europeans. Instead, it evolved concurrently with European attempts to define *Tswana-ness* and *Batswana's* understanding and meaning of the *Tswana* identity because of their mutual categorisation and understanding of one another (Volz, 2003). Moreover, although the *Batswana* adopted the *Tswana* label to set themselves apart from other African groups, Volz is of the view that Europeans were the ones who first used it, and it was through their continued interaction with Europeans that it developed into an identity.

Volz further highlights how resident missionaries such as Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, and John Mackenzie identified the *Tswana* groups by the names and locations that the *Batswana* identified themselves with at the time: *Batlhaping*, *Barolong*, *Bangwaketse*, *Bakwena,* etc. The author further states that the term *Batswana* was only used when generalisations were made about them in comparison to Europeans and other Africans. J.T Brown's (1926:25) experience cited in Volz (2003:10) of interacting with the *Tswana* underscores this point as he states,

> I have spoken to these people as Bechuana, but when any of them alludes to himself or refers to another member of the group, the name Mochuna, which is very singular, is never used. It is always the tribal name that is used, and no native ever calls himself by any but the tribal name.

This demonstrates that even though the various *Tswana* groups shared similar linguistics and cultures, they also asserted their individuality by recognising the morafe (ethnic group) as the primary means of distinguishing themselves (Volz, 2003). To illustrate Volz's point, I draw from the same author's direct quote of Willoughby (1905:295), who stated that, "these tribes speak the same language with certain minor differences of dialect and have substantially the same customs and folklore, but they speak of themselves only by their tribal names and have no one name for their language."

I make an inference to this quote and Volz's point to show that, ironically, the same *Tswana* groups that insisted on their cultural and ethnic recognition by resisting to assimilate into a singular identity have since used the very same method to assimilate other groups, at least insofar as the case of post-colonial Botswana is concerned. In the end, Volz (2003) shows that during the 19th century, the term *Batswana* was used to label large numbers of people inhabiting the interior of Southern Africa.

Over time, divisions emerged among the various *Tswana* groups, and individuals began identifying with the specific splinter groups to which they belonged. For example, the *Sotho* kingdom, located west of the *Tswana*, adopted the term "*Sotho*" to define their culture. Similarly, the *Pedi* kingdom became recognised as a distinct group. The British colonial separation of Bechuanaland and other *Sotho-Tswana* regions in Southern Africa in 1885 finalised this categorisation process (Volz, 2003). These splinter groups were also the genesis of some of the *Sotho-Tswana* groups that later migrated and inhabited present-day Botswana.

According to Mogalakwe (2006) among at least three of Botswana's main ethnic groups - the *Bakwena*, *Bangwato* and *Bangwaketse* can trace their descent from one ancestry, namely Masilo who is thought to have lived between 1460 and 1560. Tlou (1974) in Mogalakwe (2006) further posits that Masilo had two sons, Mohurutshe and Malope. From Malope, three sons, namely Kwena, Ngwato and Ngwaketse were born, these are from whom the names of the three *Tswana* groups originate.

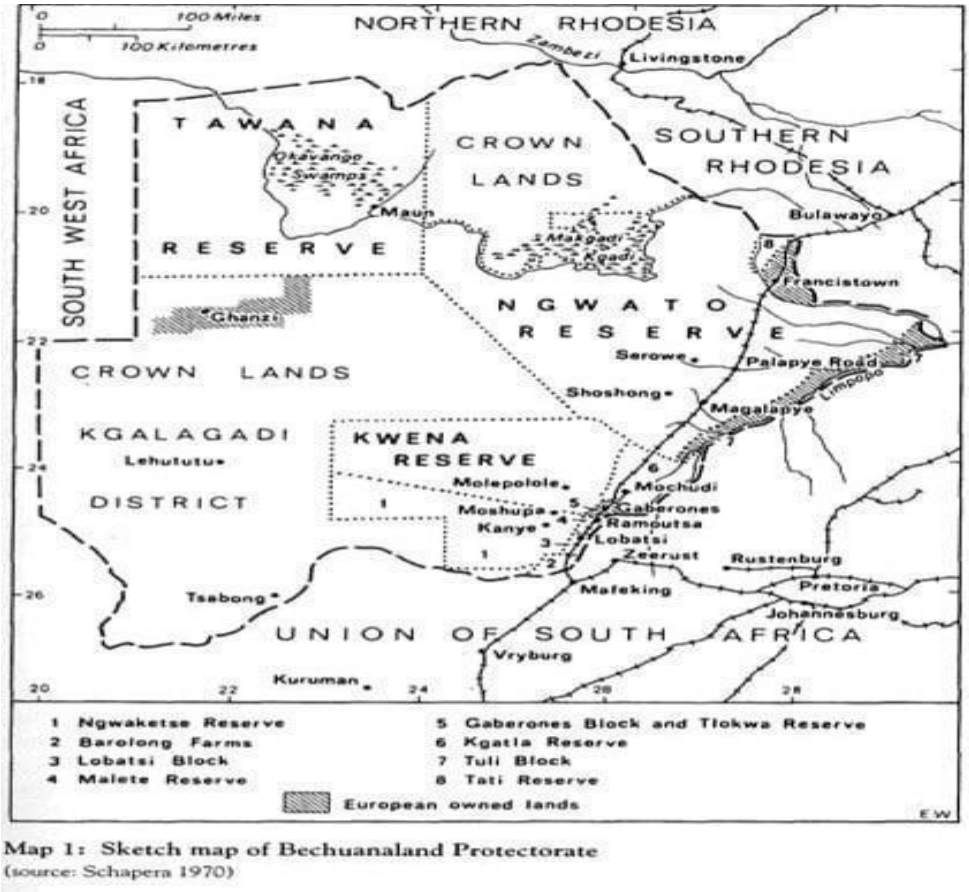
After the death of Masilo, Malope's sons separated from Mohurutshe to form their own chiefdom, the *Bakwena* in South Eastern Botswana in 1650 (Mogalakwe, 2006). This began the advent of periodic fissions among the *Sotho-Tswana* whereby a brother or son or a faction of the royal family would challenge the political position of another for control

of the state. The tendency became that the unsuccessful leaders would become disgruntled and move away with followers to start a new chiefdom (Mogalakwe, 2006).

Mogalakwe (2006) provides several examples of chiefdom splits in Botswana's history. He postulates that in 1730, the *Ngwaketse* split from the Kwena to form their own chiefdom, followed by the *Ngwato* in 1750, who also separated from the *Kwena* and established a chiefdom in the Central District. In 1795, the *Tawana* split from the *Ngwato*, forming the *Batawana* chiefdom in the northwest of present-day Botswana.

Despite these separations, it is important to note that the lineage clusters of these chiefdoms maintained equal status with one another, a dynamic that largely persists in postcolonial Botswana. The map below shows the different areas where the eight *Tswana* ethnic groups settled. These areas were subsequently named after them by the British as will be discussed at length in the ensuing sections.

Figure 8: Sketch Map of Bechuanaland Protectorate



Source: Schapera (1970) in Gulbrandsen (2022)

3.4.2 Historical Migratory Patterns and Ethnic Minority Groups in Botswana

The written history documenting settlement patterns in Botswana includes historical and contemporary sources, with evidence found in earlier records of European explorers and missionaries who recorded their interactions with the various ethnic groups found in the region. Sillery (1952; 1965), Munger (1965), Young (1966), Ramsay, Morton, and Mgadla (1996), and Tlou and Campbell (1984) are just a few of the authors who have extensively documented Botswana's history. The written evidence available suggests that a combination of historical, cultural, and economic factors have shaped settlement patterns in Botswana, and these factors continue to evolve in response to changing circumstances and developments in the country.

When it comes to documenting the history of nation-building, most available evidence begins in the years 1885–1964. According to Ramsay, Morton, and Mgadla (1996), evidence about Botswana goes back to the start of the nineteenth century, with oral evidence going no further than the seventh century. As a result, to understand the country's history as it relates to the material used for this chapter, I note that most of the available written evidence includes information on the *Sotho-Tswana* historical settlement.[31]

There is also material written about minority groups in the Northeast, West, and Central regions of Botswana (see Tlou, 1972; Van Waarden, 1991; Kebonang, 1989; Vivelo, 1976, and others). However, there is little documentation about the migration and settlement patterns of minorities and African settler communities (formerly "alien natives") that settled pre- and post-independence. If mentioned, it is often in passing, with not much detail, except for examples such as Gwatiwa (2014) and Makgala (2006) that provide a

[31] The Sotho-Tswana in this research refers to those who moved into Botswana and are known officially as the eight Tswana ethnic groups: Barolong, Balete, Bangwato, Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Batlokwa, Batawana, and Bakgatla. However, the term is broadly used to encompass an ethnicity of four cluster groups in Southern Africa that live predominantly in Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, and, to some extent, Zimbabwe. The group mainly consists of four clusters: Southern Sotho (Sotho), Northern Sotho (which consists of the Pedi, the Lobedu, and others), Lozi, and Tswana peoples. The Sotho-Tswana people have since diversified into their current arrangement during the second millennium, but they continue to retain several linguistic and cultural characteristics that distinguish them from other Bantu speakers of southern Africa. See https://dbpedia.org/page/Sotho-Tswana_peoples

brief contextual background on the migration of one of the "alien natives" – the *Zezuru* or "*Amapostori*"—into the North-East region of Botswana in the 1950s.

The accounts of the migratory patterns of current groups inhabiting what is now Botswana vary. There have been different opinions outlined on the order in which the current inhabitants settled in the territory. In recounting these migratory patterns, I am not trying to reconstruct the actual history but rather, I am trying to identify as well as unsettle the official historiography of Botswana and to unpack how it is understood. According to Schapera (1952), available evidence indicates that the native people inhabiting present-day Botswana come from elsewhere, and the author further observes that migration patterns took place at different times.

Much of the literature on the history of Botswana states that the Bushmen, or San (Ba*sarwa*), were the first people to settle in the territory (Ramsey, Morton, and Mgadla, 1996). However, Moeti (2023) argues that there are contestations and politics when it comes to indigeneity in Botswana and the nature of indigenous people. The official narrative completely rejects this language and hence these discussions are more extensively explored in scholarly discussions as opposed to practice.

The next people to arrive were the *Kgalagadi*. They were followed by numerous Bantu groups, including the *Tswana*, who migrated from other parts of the continent and settled in various regions of Botswana. Since then, migration patterns have resulted in the current diverse inhabitants of the country (Schapera, 1952). In her paper on the language situation in Botswana, Nyati-Ramahobo (2000) further outlines the migratory patterns of some Bantu-speaking groups in Botswana.

These groups include the *Bakalanga* or *Bakalaka* group that migrated from Zimbabwe and parts of South Africa into the North-Eastern area of Botswana in the 1600s (Tlou & Campbell, 1984). The next group to arrive were the *Wayeyi* (also known as *Bayei* or *Yei*). This group is presumed to have come to modern-day Botswana from Central Africa through Malawi and Zambia and then settled in *DiYei* in the Caprivi Strip (Namibia) before moving to Botswana (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2000). The *Tswana* tribes, currently recognised as the eight major tribes in Botswana and the majority, are known to have originated from South Africa and migrated during the Difaqane wars in the 1820s and 1830s (Tlou & Campbell, 1984) in Nyati-Ramahobo (2000).

Migration patterns continued long after the country became a Protectorate of the British in 1885, owing to the conflict between natives and Europeans (Schapera, 1952). Several groups from politically unstable countries continued to settle in Botswana after its incorporation into British rule. The *Herero* and *Mbandieru* were other groups that fled into the Protectorate during the 1904 wars between the Germans and other tribes of German Southwest Africa (currently Namibia).

During this migratory period, "Botswana was not yet an independent state, and no group could claim territorial jurisdiction since, at the very least, such a concept was non-existent." (Gwatiwa, 2014:73). Hence, this brings to question the cultural hegemony of the *Tswana* groups, which inadvertently gives them more territorial claim to the country than other ethnic groups as a result of colonial and postcolonial policies. The groups discussed are just a fraction of the many that migrated and now form part of the various ethnic groups found in present-day Botswana. It is also important to note that the dates by which these groups immigrated into the territory vary between authors.

During the post-independence period, as the country was forging forward with a new identity and beginning to work towards national development, it became more open to receiving skilled migrants from elsewhere in the continent and globally. The immigration policy was flexible to accommodate a large force of temporary skilled labourers to help develop the country. Labour migration increased the population, with Crush and William (2005) highlighting that between 1981 and 1991, the legal foreign African population grew from 8,733 to 18,339 while the Asian population increased from 946 to 4,193. Some of these people have subsequently settled into the country, obtained citizenship status, and become Botswana nationals.

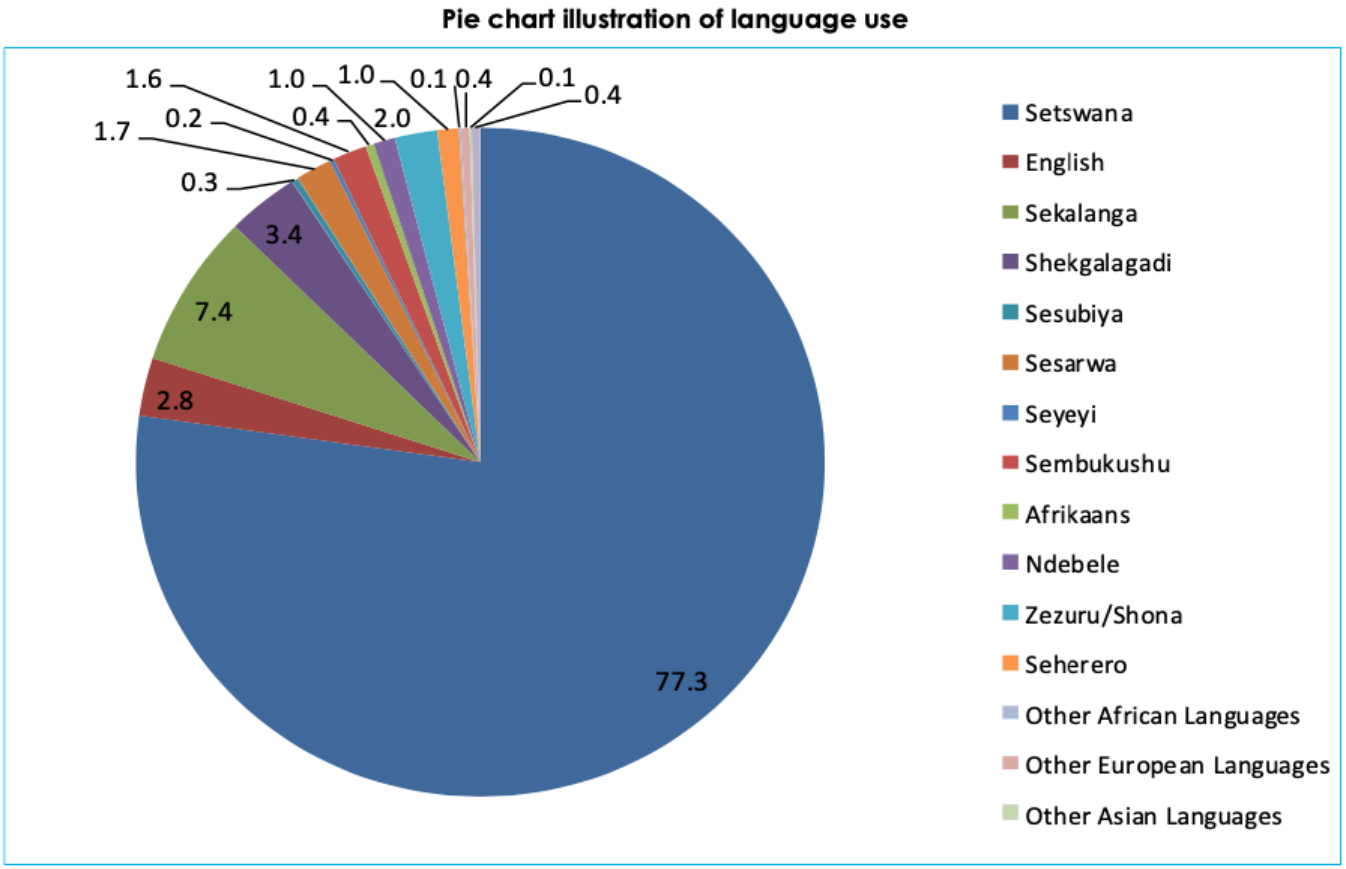
As mentioned in Chapter Two, Botswana no longer collects census data on the ethnic composition of its citizens, with the last census of this nature conducted in 1946 (Schapera, 1952). In this regard, Botswana is not unique, as countries such as Rwanda, France, and Germany, for example, also do not collect data on ethnic and racial groupings in their respective countries. Although the merits of this approach have been widely debated; by adopting it, the Botswana state effectively renders certain groups invisible. Furthermore, whether by design or default, this approach shapes legal and cultural concepts

of equality and ethnicity (Oppenheimer, 2008). Thus, the case of Botswana feeds into the broader discussions on 'invisibilising difference' in postcolonial states.

To provide a picture of the different ethnic group representations in Botswana, Table 4 and Figure 7 below, derived from the 2001 and 2011 Botswana Population and Housing Census results show the languages spoken in Botswana. The author of the presentation detailing the statistics cautions that the question regarding language use during the census was vague and that the data collected through the questionnaire cannot be relied upon to determine ethnic representation (Dick, 2013). Furthermore, the results were vague in the sense that they did not provide more detail to derive a comprehensive analysis of the situation. For example, it was not clear if the language spoken was a first language or if consideration had been made for people who speak multiple languages, or if it was the language individuals used daily or were fluent in it.

Chebanne and Nyati-Ramahobo also raise a similar concern regarding their 2003 analysis of the 2001 national population and housing census results. The authors note that the survey did not ask questions about the languages spoken by the respondents and the data on the linguistic identities and statistics of the speakers presented were not conclusive (Chebanne, 2016). Despite the criticism of the accuracy of the surveys, the results remain useful in providing a picture of languages spoken in Botswana and the country's ethnic diversity. The diversity of languages in Botswana reflects a diverse, multilingual, and multicultural society as opposed to the monoethnic and singular identity that has been adopted. This is also important because it helps to understand how repeating the official national narrative shapes the social reality everyone lives in.

Figure 9: Languages Spoken in Botswana



Source: Dick's (2013) presentation on Languages in Botswana: Growth or Decline, Statistics Botswana

Table 4: Languages spoken in the home in Botswana, 2001 and 2011 Results

5. COMPARISON OF 2001 AND 2011 RESULTS

2001 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS			2011 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS			
LANGUAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	LANGUAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	% VARIANCE
SETSWANA	1,253,080	78.4	SETSWANA	1,484,598	77.3	**1.0**
ENGLISH	34,433	2.2	ENGLISH	52,921	2.8	**0.6**
KALANGA	126,952	7.9	KALANGA	141,616	7.4	**0.6**
SEKGALAGADI/SENGOLOGA	44,706	2.8	SEKGALAGADI/SENGOLOGA	65,375	3.4	**0.6**
SEYEI	4,801	0.3	SEYEI	4,181	0.2	**0.1**
HERERO	10,998	0.7	HERERO	18,710	1.0	**0.3**
SETSWAPONG	5,382	0.3	SETSWAPONG	-	0.0	**0.3**
SEBIRWA	11,633	0.7	SEBIRWA	-	0.0	**0.7**
SEMBUKUSHU	27,653	1.7	SEMBUKUSHU	31,229	1.6	**0.1**
SESUBIYA	6,477	0.4	SESUBIYA	6,515	0.3	**0.1**
SEKGOTHU	690	0.0	SEKGOTHU	-	0.0	**0.0**
SESARWA	30,037	1.9	SESARWA	31,778	1.7	**0.2**
AFRIKAANS	6,750	0.4	AFRIKAANS	8,082	0.4	**0.0**
NDEBELE	8,174	0.5	NDEBELE	18,959	1.0	**0.5**
ZEZURU/SHONA	11,308	0.7	ZEZURU/SHONA	38,489	2.0	**1.3**
INDIAN	1,848	0.1	INDIAN	-	0.0	**0.1**
OTHER AFRICAN	10,036	0.6	OTHER AFRICAN	1,348	0.1	**0.6**
OTHER EUROPEAN	804	0.1	OTHER EUROPEAN	7,010	0.4	**0.3**
OTHER ASIAN	1,891	0.1	OTHER ASIAN	7,337	0.4	**0.3**
OTHER	864	0.1	OTHER	1,202	0.1	**0.01**
TOTAL	**1,598,517**	**100**	**TOTAL**	**1,919,350**	**100**	**-**

Source: Dick's (2013) presentation on Languages in Botswana: Growth or Decline, Statistics Botswana

This overview of the migratory patterns in Botswana outlined above shows that Botswana has a history of migration that has largely shaped the current groups and populations residing in present-day Botswana. This history is often not widely represented in the historiography of the country or the collective memory of the narrative of Botswana's identity and nationality. Additionally, this account shows that the nation is not as homogeneous as official accounts of its national identity suggest and as such, contributes to discourses aimed at deconstructing the idea of Botswana as an ethnic monolith.

The following section shows that issues of autochthony and indigeneity are much more complex than accounts of who arrived or settled in the country first. The section highlights several factors that have influenced the current distinction between those who

can claim rights versus those who cannot do so due to past factors that continue to shape modern society.

3.4.3 Botswana's Model of Nationalism and Nation-building Process

> In establishing a democratic state, we needed to create new and democratic forms of authority that would substitute old autocratic ones at every level and for virtually every function in society. We needed to move carefully in making changes so that the average person retained the security that came from knowing the source of order and authority. We had to achieve the objective of having people identify themselves as Batswana not as Bangwato or Bakalanga or Bangweketsi or white or Asian[32]

The history of nationalism in Botswana along with other former High Commission Territories of Lesotho and Swaziland is said to be fundamentally different from other African states (Ramsay, 1989). In the case of Botswana, historians trace the emergence of modern Botswana nationalism to the 1908 -1910 campaign aimed at keeping the then Bechuanaland Protectorate out of the proposed Union of South Africa (Holm and Molutsi, 1989). Ironically, Ramsay (1989) notes that for many decades, nationalist minded *Batswana* were seen as stronger advocates of imperial control than the imperialists themselves.

Formerly known as Bechuanaland under British rule, Botswana gained its independence in 1966. Before this, Botswana was a British protectorate from the year 1885.[33] The country has been generally lauded by the international community and observers for its impressive record of prioritising democratic governance and successful post-independence development. However, in tracing the history and development of nation-building in Botswana, a common feature has been the resistance of minority groups

[32] Masire (2006) in his memoir "Very Brave or Very Foolish? Memoirs of An African Democrat.

[33] According to Masire (2006), as a Protectorate, overall administration was left to the British through a resident commissioner located in Mafikeng. Subsequent administrations in the Protectorate followed the British system of indirect rule. Chiefs would retain the law of their people in all civil and most criminal matters. As is the case of classic indirect rule, the district commissioner ruled all Africans through the chiefs, and they governed non-Africans directly under the stature of common law. Furthermore, the eight designated Paramount chiefs not only ruled their own tribesmen but all Africans living within particular geographical areas. This led to many disputes of Chiefs with other tribesmen under their authority. Despite Botswana's democratic reforms and history, these tribal differences still persist and are still the source of discontent in modern Botswana (Masire, 2006:30).

to assimilation and their advocacy for the recognition of their cultural and linguistic diversity.

As already alluded to in Chapter One, the elite founding fathers used assimilationist policies to bring together the ethnically diverse groups that were residing in the territory at the time as part of their deliberate nation-building strategies. These strategies resulted in the absorption of various ethnic groups spread across the country under one *Tswana* identity and the adoption of *Setswana* as the national language, an attempt that aimed to create a singular national identity (Werbner, 2004). The One-Nation Consensus: We Are All *Tswana* Approach, as Werbner (2002) called it. As also mentioned, Parsons (1981) referred to this strategy as *Tswanadom*, a philosophical and territorial procedure that has led many, including some citizens to assume Botswana is a mono-ethnic state.

Nyati-Ramahobo (2000) argues that this strategy has been achieved because the *Tswana,* who she considers a minority, have successfully imposed their culture on the majority of the population. However, as this study will show through the experiences of people with a migrant background and the changes in citizenship laws to allow for dual citizenship, this imposition of the *Tswana* culture has not been completely successful.

What emerges from the literature on African nation-building is that Botswana is not an exception in its desire to cultivate ethnonationalism which generates notions of "otherness" and suspicions of natives (Khalema, et al, 2018). As a result, Olayode (2016) contends that Botswana is an example of a country that inherited some of its former colonisers' unequal systems regarding ethnic groups. Mamdani (1996) calls this the bifurcation of the state into "citizens" and "subjects," a process designed to create inequalities among different groups based on their manner and degree of involvement in the colonial political economy. Thus, although Botswana demonstrates that ethnic domination is not an unusual phenomenon in postcolonial states, it also demonstrates that ethnic domination can be done under the cover of nationalism. However, the case of Botswana is relatively unique because of its overt focus on a singular national and ethnic identity.

As far as the literature on pre-colonial and colonial Botswana shows, this is nothing new – the *Tswana* groups were known to absorb non-*Tswana* groups and make them their subjects. Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) illustrate this in their article on *Batswana'*s perception

of one another by stating that in historic times, non-*Tswana* groups and immigrants from other countries were referred to as *Bafaladi* (those who have fled) or *Batswakwa* (foreigners). The authors further argue that in *Tswana* traditional societies, immigrants from non-*Tswana* groups or countries living amongst *Batswana* seldom attained full membership or became recognised as "real" *Batswana*. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the *Tswana* groups present in Botswana, their authority, strength, structure, and practices, are not a result of colonialism but rather were in many ways already established by the time the British arrived (Gulbrandsen, 2022).

3.4.4 Institutionalisation of Mono-Ethnicity in Pre and Post-Colonial Botswana

The association between ethnic identity and territorial belonging in Botswana has deep colonial roots. As will be discussed, British colonial administration, through a series of proclamations, reinforced the link between village, land, and ethnicity, often privileging *Tswana*-speaking groups by working through their chiefs under indirect rule. This was not necessarily due to their demographic majority but because *Tswana* chieftaincies provided an institutional structure that colonial authorities could use to govern. These colonial practices laid the groundwork for a post-independence land tenure system that continues to privilege *Tswana* groups, notably through the structure and functioning of Land Boards.

While Botswana has experienced relatively low levels of ethnic violence, this does not mean that ethnic hierarchies and exclusion are absent (Floven, 2001). On the contrary, the ability of dominant *Tswana* groups to absorb or assimilate other ethnic identities has contributed to a more subtle but enduring form of cultural and political domination. As such, contemporary ethnic dynamics in Botswana must be understood not only through visible conflict but also through these long-standing structural mechanisms of inclusion, exclusion, and erasure.

The British colonial administration's cementation of the dominance of the *Tswana* Chiefs through various proclamations inadvertently resulted in their status as superior to other ethnic groups and their status as Paramount Chiefs meant that non-*Tswana* ethnic groups automatically fell under their authority. Picard (1985) called this practice the parallel rule, whereby the European administration existed to regulate the affairs of the traders, missionaries, and other Europeans in the district, leaving the administration of the *Tswana* societies entirely in the hands of the Paramount Chiefs.

In practice, colonial authorities did not always follow this system because they repeatedly interfered with the Chiefs' affairs. However, the power structures bestowed upon the *Tswana* groups gave them more political power over other ethnic groups, and the name Bechuanaland by default insinuated or recognised the *Tswana* as the custodians of the land (Gwatiwa, 2014). A direct consequence of this is that the meaning of minority and majority became grounded in *Tswanadom*, a process supported by the colonial state under British rule and now sustained by the postcolonial state (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002).

Nyati-Ramahobo goes on to argue that in Botswana, the numerical value of groupings is irrelevant because of the meaning accorded to "majority'' and "minority". Instead, *Tswana* ethnicity has become a representation of the state's identity, with *Tswana* ethnic groups serving as a symbol of state power and national values. Monaka and Chebanne (2019) concur and add that the terms minor and major ethnic groups in Botswana are not assigned by numerical value but by the recognised ethnicity. Datta and Murray (1989) also support this argument and highlight that even in postcolonial Botswana, the minority groups are in fact the majority especially in the Central district and Ngamiland.

The power and authority of the *Tswana* Chiefs were further supported by several proclamations made by the British colonial administrators. For example, the division of the lands into Crown Reserve, Native, and freehold land is another approach that further cemented their authority. In 1899, a proclamation was issued because of an agreement that was reached between the Chiefs and colonial administrators in 1895 (Parsons, 1979). This proclamation culminated in the defining of the eight Native Reserves based on the groupings of the *Tswana*, which included the *Ngwato* Reserve, *Tawana* Reserve, *Kwena* Reserve, *Ngwaketse* Reserve, *Kgatla* Reserve, *Malete* Reserve, *Rolong* Farms, and *Tlokwa* Reserve (Gulbrandsen, 2022).

Parsons (1979) observes that the agreement between the Chiefs and the British colonial administrators included ensuring that the Native lands remained communal and under the control and supervision of the Chiefs, who would continue to rule. According to Gulbrandsen, the process of dividing the country into Reserves based on the *Tswana-speaking* groups was the first attempt at defining a homogenous nation. The author further argues that Volz's (2003) earlier findings show that the cultural assimilation of the major *Tswana* groups during the colonial period led to the formation of the Bechuanaland nation-state. This also marked the first attempt to define Botswana as a unified nation.

Another argument that is made about the creation of the Reserves is that, in addition to contributing to cultural assimilation, it created a new meaning for the notion of ethnic identity and citizenship that was territorially defined (Gulbrandsen, 2012). Mwale (2017) agrees and argues that traditional villages became a source of ethnic cultural identity that tied identification with ethnic cultural ties, homeland, and ancestral origin. This point will be further discussed in Chapter Four, where the experiences of the research participants reveal that their lack of a village of origin becomes a barrier to claiming Botswana identity because it is an identity tied to physical origin in one or more of the country's villages.

In modern Botswana, this state of being is legitimised and sustained by the country's national policies such as the Chieftainship Act (now *Bogosi* Act), the Tribal Territory Act, the Constitution of Botswana, and various government policies (Monaka and Chebanne, 2019). With regards to the Chieftainship Act, the definition of tribes was through the eight *Tswana* groups (the *Bamangwato, Batawana, Bakgatla, Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bamalete, Barolong,* and the *Batlokwa*). The Act does not recognise non-*Tswana*-speaking ethnic groups due to their presumed assimilation into the officially recognised groups and, as a result, invisibilised the 'ethnic minorities' in Botswana (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002a).

One such example includes the *Bamangwato* and *Tawana* groups, who have absorbed various ethnic groups but are far from being considered a homogenous group as largely presented. Schapera (1952) proves this in an example of how heterogeneous in composition the latter groups are, arguing that the 1946 census showed that languages spoken in the *Ngwato* reserve, apart from *Setswana,* included *Kalanga*, *Kgalagadi, Koba*, *Ndebele*, *Pedi, Rotse*, *Sarwa*, *Subia*, Southern *Sotho*, *Herero*, and isi*Xhosa*.

The 1966 Constitution of Botswana is another piece of legislation that has regulated and perpetuated this state of being. Sections 77 to 79 of the Constitution recognised only the Chiefs from the eight *Tswana* ethnic groups as the Paramount Chiefs. A continuation of an approach that was adopted during the colonial period. The role of paramount Chiefs has now shifted to that of advisory to the Parliament on issues of culture and they also represent unity in the country.

A lack of adequate representation denies ethnic minority groups the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process on cultural matters of the nation that also affect them. Following the concerns raised by minority and rights groups to the Balopi Commission[34] Sections 77 to 79 of the Constitution were amended to accommodate an additional four Chiefs from major minority groups, giving them a seat in the House of Chiefs (Morima, 2020). Further amendments included the adoption of *Tswana* names for "Chiefs" and "House of Chiefs," which became *Dikgosi* and *Ntlo ya dikgosi*, respectively (Morima, 2020). However, it is important to note that while the Chiefs representing other geographical locations have since been included as members of *Ntlo ya dikgosi*, their status is on a rotational basis in comparison to the Paramount Chiefs, who have *ex-officio* or permanent status. This furthers the dominance and assertion of the *Tswana* authority in postcolonial Botswana.

The Tribal Territories Act and the Tribal Land Act in Botswana are other policy documents that contributed to the assertion of *Tswana* dominance and the non-recognition of other ethnic groups.[35] For instance, the Tribal Act of 1933 divided the land into territories and named them after the eight *Tswana* groups. Furthermore, in 1970, through the Tribal Land Act of 1970, land boards were created. The land board is an organ at the

[34] The Balopi Commission of 2000 was sanctioned by President Festus Mogae in 1999 to consult the nation on the issues raised regarding the discriminatory Sections of the Constitution. According to Nyati-Ramahobo (2002b), a commission of inquiry was appointed in July 2000 to look into Sections 77–79 of the Constitution. The commission started in August 2000 and, by November of the same year, had submitted a report to the President. The Commission recommended a revision of the Sections to reflect the plurality of ethnic groups in the country and made it evident that there was a lot of agitation in the country about the Sections. Not all recommendations to revise the Constitution were followed through due to the pushback by the majority of *Tswana* tribes, which was significant in enabling the status quo to remain the same (Monaka and Chebanne, 2019).

[35] See Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo (2008:3–4) for a detailed discussion on both acts and how they resulted in the discrimination of non-*Tswana* ethnic groups in the country.

local government level that is responsible for the regulation, management, and allocation of land in the country. The land boards were also named after the eight *Tswana* groups.

This has led scholars and minority groups to criticise this status quo as it privileges *Tswana* groups over others, especially in a country where territory, land, and identity are at the centre of recognition and non-recognition (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008). Moreover, I argue that this contradicts the ideals of nation-building discussed above. Solway (2011) argues that this approach not only reinforces *Tswana* identity and its presumed connection to the land but also leads to non-*Tswana* tribes living within a land board territory being subclassified under the territory their ethnic group is associated with. For example, it could lead to a *Zezuru* person from the North-East district living in the *Tlokwa* territory struggling to access land because they are not considered as being part of that territory.

More recently, the continued discriminatory nature of the Tribal Territories Act was brought to the fore through the submissions made in the Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Review of the Constitution of Botswana.[36] A key suggestion was for the Act to be repealed because it discriminated against certain groups while protecting others. The naming of the land board based on the eight *Tswana* groups was another issue highlighted in the report that is seen to perpetuate discrimination; hence, a proposal to rename the land boards to neutral names was put forward (Commission Report, 2022). After the report, the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Review of the Constitution released a recommendation for the new names to help maintain tribal neutrality and address tribalism (Mathala, 2022)[37]. The state had not yet adopted or officially used the suggested names at the time of writing this thesis.

[36] On the 17th of December 2021, the President of Botswana, Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, appointed members of the Commission of Inquiry into the Review of the Constitution of Botswana. From the 12th of February to the 28th of July 2022, the Commission travelled across the country to consult with Batswana civil society organisations, private and public organisations, and the result culminated in this report, which was released in September 2022. Please see https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Final%20Commission%20Report%2028%20Sep%202022.pdf for more details on the findings and recommendations of the Commission.

[37] See Mathala (2022) for a full list of recommended names: https://www.mmegi.bw/news/proposed-new-names-of-districts-land-board-and-councils-side-bar/news

3.4.5 Cracks and Concerns: Progress as Marginalisation

As the foregoing section shows, the dominance of one group's culture and language, or what Werbner (2002) refers to as the majoritarian project of cultural nationalism, has left no room in the public sphere for the country's non-*Tswana* cultures, unless recast in a *Tswana* image. It is one of the reasons Botswana has come to be known as an ethnically and linguistically homogeneous country within Africa (Solway, 2002). Moreover, as will be reflected in the following chapters, this approach has left no room for some minorities and people with a migrant background in the national project.

Countries like France, England, Germany, and others demonstrate that the ethnic hegemony on which Botswana decided to base its nation on is not unusual. However, as shown in this chapter, this approach excludes ethnic minorities in the national project. Consequently, Nyati-Ramahobo (2002a) argues that this was a deliberate strategy used by the government of Botswana to achieve homogeneity, in which ethnic identities would cease to exist or become insignificant. Mwakikagile (2009) concurs and notes that homogeneity and the suppression of diversity were the goals of building a proud and united nation in Botswana at independence. Nyati-Ramahobo (2002a) further argues that this process has resulted in the *Tswana* tribes becoming symbols of state power and nationalistic values.

Proponents of the assimilationist approach have justified using this approach for nation-building. For example, Gapa (2017) notes that given the ethnic conflicts in other African countries, the national leaders believed that their assimilationist approach was the best way to create an inclusive nation free from ethnic divisions and conflict. However, Werbner (2002) disagrees with this view and argues that postcolonial minoritisation in Botswana, compared to other postcolonial countries in Africa, has remained mostly non-violent. Mulimbi and Dryden-Petersen (2018) also concur with Werbner and argue that the fear of ethnic-based conflicts by the founding fathers of the nation was unfounded. The ethnic conflicts that were taking place in neighbouring postcolonial communities were a result of internal inequalities and geopolitical conditions that started way before independence.

Datta and Murray (1989) agree with Mulimbi and Dryden-Petersen and argue that the reason for the absence of violence or conflict in Botswana has been the openness of the *Tswanadom* approach in its capacity to absorb outside influences without losing its own identity in the process. The authors further postulate that part of the reason why conflicts have not manifested in Botswana is because, even though previously minority groups were not accorded the same rights or privileges as that of the *Tswana* origin, these privileges and rights were eventually granted over time. Hence, even if there was exploitation and political domination, the injustice was never perceived to be so great as to justify or fuel rebellion. On the other hand, Solway (2002) notes that Botswana, in its current state, presents a paradox. Solway elucidates on this point by contrasting Botswana's economic and development success which is matched with its promotion of liberal democratic values, with the increase and rise of ethnically based consciousness that lays claim to the right to reintegration and inclusion in the nation-state by non-*Tswana* ethnic groups.

During the post-90s period, the country also witnessed a rise in ethnic consciousness through national cultural festivals that reflect the diversity of the groups in the country seeking to preserve their sense of identity (Mwale, 2017). Moreover, if the recent findings from the Constitutional Review Report are anything to go by, then there is ample evidence to show that ethnic minority groups are still very much agitating towards cultural recognition and representation within the nation-state. Datta and Holm (1989) argue that while nationalism has challenged the legitimacy of communal politics by promoting the idea that all *Batswana* are equal citizens with loyalty to the nation, a conflict has emerged between the traditional concept of *morafe* citizenship and the modern definition of citizenship. The next section will explore this friction and examine how it has manifested in postcolonial Botswana.

3.4.6 Framing Botswana Citizenship: Autochthony and Indigeneity vs. Rights

In post-colonial Africa, contentions over the meaning of citizenship are not a new phenomenon (Groves, 2020). In fact, Keller (2014) argues that at the core of socio-political conflicts in Africa are issues of citizenship and citizenship rights. While Ng'weno and Aloo (2019:145) posit that citizenship in postcolonial states is "structured by a history of colonial

rule and the inherent power differentials and social control implicit in European imperial projects." The authors further argue that colonialism has had a profound and lasting impact on the understanding and construction of citizenship. They further note that citizenship remains a contested space where legal status, rights, entitlements, and forms of identity are shaped by both pre-independence and post-independence dynamics (Ng'weno and Aloo, 2019:145).

Manby (2009), in her comprehensive discussion on the struggles for citizenship in Africa contends that in many new African states, citizenship laws were written and rewritten to exclude those considered to lack a connection with the territory concerned or who failed to prove their indigeneity or autochthony. Geschiere and Jackson (2006) concur and state that these struggles over belonging are expressed through the language of autochthony. The authors define autochthony as the French term *autochthonie*, which literally means an 'origin of the soil' and, by reference, a direct claim to a territory (2006:1) that distinguishes such groups from those with roots from elsewhere.

Balaton-Chimes (2016:100) argues, an autochthonous community refers to one in which all members are direct descendants of an original forefather who was born where the community currently resides, and the bond or connection is built on blood (descent) and soil (territory). However, the term is not always used in reference to its original intended definition. For example, autochthony and indigeneity carry notions of belonging based on being first and are associated with special rights (Balaton-Chimes, 2016). Yet, insofar as the case of Botswana is concerned, this is not always the case because as mentioned previously, the *Basarwa*, originally regarded by historians as the indigenes of the land have been side lined in mainstream society by the state. Hence, the term indigenous has become synonymous with the eight *Tswana* ethnic groups.

Based on these notions, Botswana's citizenship has taken an ethnic approach that conflates ethnicity with nationality centred on the *Tswana* identity. Spano (2015) suggests that citizenship in Botswana has become ethnically oriented due to the *Tswanification* process that happened post its nation-state formation. Despite promoting legal citizenship and an equal rights rhetoric, ethnic identity plays a significant role in its framing of citizenship (Spano, 2015). This has resulted in the reconfiguration of the *Tswana* status to

indigenes both in policy and practice as reflected in the Constitution and the country's postcolonial citizenship approach.

Botswana is not an exception as even in other African states, citizenship was re-imagined by political figures at the time of nation-building to include a certain section of the population that was considered indigenous. These laws and policies failed to consider the migratory patterns that took place during the colonial period due to labour migration, conflicts, and other reasons which resulted in the settlement of large groups of people in the respective territories. Even after years of settlement, such groups were still left out at the turn of democracy and excluded from the states' imagination of defining citizenship. This phenomenon is not unique to Africa as Aguillar (1999) shows that East Asian countries such as Thailand followed a similar path, resulting in the conflation of ethnic identity with nationality as well as citizenship. For example, those considered "pure Thai" citizens occupied elevated legal and social positions that entitled their access to all the rights, whereas native-born citizens of foreign heritage have not yet been entitled to all rights.

Authors such as Groves (2020) and Daimon (2014), using the case of Zimbabwe, have also demonstrated that migrants that have settled across Africa have struggled to "shake" off their immigrant label and to access the full rights of citizenship granted by nation-states. And as the case of Botswana shows, post-colonial Botswana continues to grapple with issues of citizenship that lack inclusivity for all its citizens. These challenges stem from Botswana's historically rooted, patriarchal, and gendered regime, which continues to inform and shape citizenship laws in the country to date.

A common conclusion is that postcolonial citizenship has been characterised by the exclusion of immigrants and women from political participation and in the silencing of those with dissenting voices. As will be discussed in the subsequent sections, the construction of nationhood in Botswana, as in many postcolonial African states, is not only ethnic based but also gendered and shaped through dominant ideas of *Tswana* masculinity (Molosiwa and Bolaane, 2021). In the past, the archetype of the citizen-subject was frequently imagined as the land-owning, lineage-bearing Tswana man who is deeply tied to patriarchal structures such as Bogosi (chieftainship), land inheritance, and authority in public space. This gendered conception of citizenship excluded not only migrants and non-

Tswana ethnic groups but also women, whose access to full political subjectivity has historically been mediated through male kin.

In their paper, Molosiwa and Bolaane (2021) deal with these questions of citizenship. They argue that Botswana's national leadership feared that the "radical masculinities"[38] and the resistance to authority of political refugees and asylum seekers would influence its citizens and therefore sought to avoid this by defining citizenship through peaceful lines. This decision to define citizenship along these peaceful lines, greatly discriminated against a faction of the population which included women, as citizenship became gendered through the adoption of parochial and patriarchal norms.

According to Molosiwa and Bolaane, at the time, women had no claim to land rights in a country that tied the citizenship of its people to their rural roots. Furthermore, discrimination was sustained through the denying of women the right to pass on their citizenship to their foreign husbands and children in the now repealed Citizenship Act of 1982. This was not the case for *Batswana* men who were married to foreign women or had children with one.

In addition to the ethnic approach, the masculine approach to defining citizenship in accordance with rural ties has continued to manifest over the years and has contributed to some extent, to the distinguishing of naturalised citizens from "native" *Tswana* citizens. Moreover, it has resulted in not only the exclusion of such groups but has led to the creation of a hierarchy of citizenship driven by political, social, economic, and cultural inequalities where some individuals and groups can claim and articulate more rights than others. As such, the intersection of masculinity and national identity contributes to the marginalisation of those who fall outside this ideal, underscoring the need to integrate gender more centrally into analyses of citizenship and belonging and exclusion in Botswana.

[38] According to Molosiwa and Bolaane (2021:52) "radical masculinities", were thought to be embodied by men characterised by anger and resistance to the Botswana patriarchy or male Tswana elites and their hegemonic authority. Despite such groups' gender, they were considered by the male elites as demonstrating a certain type of toxic masculinity that had the potential to disrupt the prevailing conservative patriarchal power in the country. Furthermore, the authors state that this masculinity was radical because of the radical views of the refugees' which were perceived to be eroding male elites' entitlements to the maintenance of domestic and political order and peace. Hence, it can be argued that this maintenance of peace or approach to defining the citizenship of Botswana along those lines meant the suppression of dissenting voices that opposed the male patriarchal authority of the male elite leaders.

3.4.7 From Second-Class Citizens to Citizens: Botswana's Citizenship Development

> It is time that the Acts which are in place be reviewed and amended if need be. The constitution has been in place since independence in 1966, and we took it as it was from the protectorate government, but after so many years of independence it's time to change it. It has passed its time and it makes certain decisions difficult to make and even its application, it has become harder over the years.[39] - Mr Magang (1980)

Under the current Botswana Citizenship Act of 1998, there are six provisions stipulated to acquire citizenship in Botswana, namely, citizenship by birth, descent, settlement, adoption, the President's power to register citizens and naturalisation. The Act has provisions for the registration of citizenship for children over three years as outlined in Section 8 of the Act. In the case of the president's power, citizenship can be granted to persons that the president may have reason to honour in that way. Naturalisation can be granted to persons of full age deemed qualified in relation to the terms outlined in Section 13 of the Act and having taken an oath of allegiance to be a citizen of Botswana by naturalisation and fulfilling other conditions for Botswana citizenship.

The 1998 Act which previously guaranteed dual citizenship until the age of 21 years has been revised as will be discussed in subsequent sections below. However, in its former state, the Act stipulated that at the age of 21, the affected person had to decide whether they continued with Botswana citizenship or renounced it in favour of another citizenship/s they had or vice versa. If an individual did not decide by the time they reached the age of 21 years the citizenship they wanted to keep, Botswana would automatically revoke its citizenship without any notice.

The citizenship Act of 1998 as will be shown, has undergone several changes to reach its current form. According to Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) the two major issues of contention that necessitated the review of the Act were the apparent discrimination against women (this will be detailed in the sections below) and the issue of dual or multiple

[39] Mr Magang, a member of parliament (MP) for Kweneng East Constituency, debating the promulgation of the Citizenship Act during parliamentary proceedings in February/March 1980. Cited from Government of Botswana, Hansard 67; 25th Feb - 25th March 1980 (Gaborone: Government Printers, 1980), p. 277. in Sechele (2015)

citizenships which was cancelled to guard against split loyalty. This was sustained in the 1998 Act which formerly prohibited dual citizenship as mentioned.

At the time of conducting fieldwork in December 2020, a government official interviewed[40] at the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration & Gender Affairs confirmed that the Citizenship Act of 1998 was being reviewed to accommodate dual citizenship. However, the official highlighted that there had been delays as the Ministry still had to determine the best approach of formulating the provisions and circumstances for dual citizenship. The official further stated that dual citizenship had socio-economic implications for the country and for its citizens. Hence, the process needed to take these implications into account before it was officially brought into law.

During the period of writing this thesis, the 1998 Citizenship Act as it pertains to dual citizenship was revised. A landmark case on dual citizenship rights between Sithabile. P Mathe and others v. The Attorney General[41] challenged the state for its denial of dual citizenship for some *Batswana*. The plaintiff argued that the law in its past form was discriminatory as it allowed some people to hold dual citizenship, especially those that qualified under the repealed Section 25(1) and Section 15(4) of the Citizenship Act of 1998 (Ontebetse, 2021). Further arguments made were that Section 15 of the Citizenship Act violated the rights of the affected children insofar as their rights to dignity, non-discrimination, and freedom of movement guaranteed in the Constitution of Botswana were concerned.

In April 2022, the High Court of Botswana ruled in favour of the plaintiff and upheld Mathe's claim by finding Section 15 of the Citizenship Act unconstitutional and striking it down. The Attorney General had appealed the case at the time (Rockfell Lekgowe Law Group, 2022) but on the 21st of July 2023, an official communication by the then President of the Republic of Botswana – Dr. Eric Mokgweetsi Masisi announced that the Botswana law on citizenship which until then, prohibited *Batswana* from holding dual citizenship had been abolished.[42]

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[40] Interview with a government official at the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration & Gender Affairs, 21st December 2020, Gaborone, Botswana.

[41] Full details of the case and arguments therein are outlined here: http://citizenshiprightsafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Sithabile-P-Mathe-Ors-v.-AG-Botswana-High-Court.pdf

[42] See Your Botswana article for the official Press Release and details on the announcement at: https://yourbotswana.com/2023/08/02/botswana-finally-abolishes-law-prohibiting-dual-citizenship/

Mathe's case is not the first of its kind in the country. The case of Unity Dow set the precedent of challenging the unconstitutionality of some Sections of the 1984 Citizenship Act. The Attorney General of the Republic of Botswana v Unity Dow Civil Appeal No. 4/91, often referred to as the Citizenship Case, or the Dow Case is a case in which Unity Dow, the Plaintiff, successfully challenged the Citizenship Act of 1984 on the grounds that it discriminated against women.

The Act stipulated that one can only become a Botswana citizen if their father was a citizen. This resulted in the exclusion of mothers married to foreign nationals from conferring citizenship to their children as stated previously. Yet male citizens with children with non-citizens could confer citizenship to their children. Dow (2001) elaborates this case in detail in her article titled - How the Global Informs the Local: The Botswana Citizenship Case.[43]

To understand the importance of the case, it is imperative to discuss the roots of citizenship embedded in the foundation of Botswana's formation as a nation-state in 1966. This will help with contextualising the issues and to highlight the significance of Dow's case in influencing the changes in the citizenship laws and its subsequent effect on groups such as people with migrant backgrounds over time.

At independence, in 1966, the citizenship rights of all *Batswana* were guaranteed under Section 20-29 of the Botswana Constitution. In this instance, citizenship was granted under *Jus Solis* laws and was granted irrespective of the nationality of the parents of the person born in Botswana. However, 16 years into the democratic state, the national parliament passed a new law that introduced the Citizenship Act. Subsequently, Sections 21-22 were repealed from the Constitution and replaced with the New Citizenship Act of 1982. Under this new Citizenship Act, citizenship was guaranteed through descent (*Jus Sanguinis*) to anyone born before 31 December 1982 and had been recognised as such (Bagwasi & Alimi, 2018). According to Section 4 of the act:

> A person born in Botswana shall be a citizen of Botswana by birth: (1) provided that a person shall not be a citizen of Botswana by virtue of this subsection if, at the time of his birth, he acquires the citizenship of another country by descent through his father.

[43] See more details on the article here: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07399330120965

As stated, a consequence of this law meant that Botswana citizenship became granted through descent (*Jus Sanguinis*). This change was underscored in Section 5 (1) of the Act which stipulated that:

> A person born outside of Botswana shall be a citizen of Botswana by descent if at the time of birth (a) his father was a citizen of Botswana; or (b) in the case of a person born out of wedlock, his mother was a citizen of Botswana.

The 1982 Act was subsequently revised two years later and replaced with the Citizenship Act of 1984. This revised Act discriminated against women as Sections 4 and 5 provided that a person born in Botswana was guaranteed citizenship only if their father was a Citizen of Botswana. The Act exempted children born out of wedlock as they could obtain citizenship through their unmarried mother of Botswana citizenry. The consequences of such provisions in the Act were not only based on a patrilineal and gender-based discriminatory stance of the citizenship process but disadvantaged and violated the rights of *Batswana* women married to non-nationals from passing their citizenship to their children (Dow, 2001).

The Citizenship Act of 1984 further discriminated against *Batswana* women because their foreign husbands could only become citizens after a minimum of ten years in comparison to *Batswana* men whose foreign wives were eligible for citizenship after two and a half years (Bagwasi and Alimi, 2018). Furthermore, the provisions in the 1984 Act not only limited the rights of women but as Dow (2001) argues, relegated women to second-class citizens because women were not considered full citizens since their access to the public sphere was traditionally through the man who was considered a full citizen. Additionally, a woman who got married to a foreigner was considered to have lost her citizenship as being a married woman meant transferring one's loyalty to her husband and therefore his country (Dow, 2001).

This reasoning was used to rationalise and advance the support, adoption, and implementation of the Botswana Citizenship Act of 1984. It is unsurprising that this decision was taken because according to Dow, in her interview with Pfotenhauer (1991), the law was changed based on the recommendations of a report by the Law Reform

Committee that consisted of male members only. Thus, Molosiwa and Bolaane (2021) concur with Dow's (2001) argument that in addition to an ethnic approach, Botswana also took a gendered citizenship approach to its citizenship.

In their analysis of Botswana's struggle to refine its citizenship model between the 1960s and 1980s while also grappling with a hostile political environment, Molosiwa and Bolaane argue that Botswana's historically rooted and patriarchal gender regime influenced the country's re-fashioning of citizenship. This was further affirmed in the Constitution of Botswana as Dow (2001) asserts that the foundation of Botswana is not its Constitution but its culture and traditional practices.

In essence, this means that in certain instances, culture has more influence over the civil rights of individuals that are espoused in the Constitution. This in a way equates to the reinforcing of customary law. Dow's argument was further confirmed by the state during her case - The Citizenship Case – The Attorney General of the Republic of Botswana v Unity Dow Civil Appeal No. 4/91. During the case, the state argued that the whole fabric of the customary law in Botswana, without reference to tribe[44], is based on a patrilineal society that is gender discriminatory in nature.

The above argument was not only problematic but archaic and discriminatory. Moreover, this view by the state further asserted *Tswana* hegemony and the exclusion of non-*Tswana* groups from mainstream society because not all ethnic groups in Botswana are patrilineal. An example of this are ethnic groups found in the North-West district of Botswana which include the *Bayeyi*, the *Hambukushu*, and the *Basubiya* that are all matrilineal Bantu-speaking people with links or origins from south-central Africa (Campbell, 1979 in Larson (1989). Therefore, the argument made by the state at the time was not applicable to all citizens and falsely presumed that the *Tswana* culture was the default national culture. However, while this might be the case officially due to assimilationist policies, in practice, the evidence as shown points otherwise.

Dow's case and victory resulted in the amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1998, in particular, Section 4(1) which previously discriminated against women. The new

[44] I use the word tribe here as this is a direct quote, otherwise, the term ethnic is preferred for obvious reasons that the word tribe is derogatory and presents an idea that such groups had no historical dynamism (Mamdani, 2001).

amendments granted citizenship to all individuals born in Botswana, provided that at the time of birth, one parent is or was a *Motswana,* regardless of gender. This change eliminated the previous gender-based discriminatory provisions. However, it then introduced another discriminatory element in Section 15 discussed earlier, which created challenges for groups like people with migrant backgrounds and other *Batswana* in retaining or holding dual citizenship in the case of those who had it.

So far, the Scholarship on citizenship inequality and lack of recognition in Botswana has largely focused on ethnic minority groups. Thus, by providing a historical overview of the citizenship laws over time and how the developments have affected various groups such as women, I also include my research participants within these discussions and use the lens of recent migration to build on the work of these scholars. Moreover, through this historical analysis of the citizenship laws, I show that until recently, Botswana's citizenship approach continued to inform modern society as well as its postcolonial citizenship.

Cases such as Dow and Mathe all championed by women who previously could not pass on their citizenship to their children according to the repealed 1982 and 1984 Acts, are showing through their lived experiences that in as far as assimilation and creating a uni-identity, Botswana has not fully achieved its goal of a mono-ethnic state. Moreover, these cases further challenge the state's masculine approach to citizenship in Botswana and contribute to studies that focus on acts of citizenship from below.

Although the two cases directly challenge the state through litigation, they build on Krous' (2024) argument that citizenship is framed by a dynamic and flexible set of relationships. The same author argues that these relationships extend beyond formal rights and duties and are continually shaped by real-world social contexts. In addition, as both cases show, citizenship is expressed in everyday practices, whether through the exercise or refusal of rights, purposeful defiance of norms, or tactical evasion of duties (Krous, 2024). Thus, a gendered lens also moves beyond the examination of postcolonial citizenship through the rights conferred to citizens in terms of ethnonationalism and constitutional equality to examining the way membership is negotiated or envisioned at the local level (Ng'weno and Aloo, 2019).

These two cases also demonstrate the Botswana state's willingness to gradually adopt a more progressive, citizen-centric approach to governance. This is evident in its openness to change in response to evolving societal norms and legal challenges. However, as Chapter Four will highlight, this is not always consistent, as identity politics can also lead to exclusionary practices regarding citizenship rights.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter's review of historical developments shows a complex interplay between nation-building, citizenship and diversity. Botswana's nation-building was not only carried over from the pre-colonial and colonial periods, but it was also never one that aimed to acknowledge and recognise diversity. To be a *Motswana* meant to be divested of one's ethnicity and to assimilate into the dominant *Tswana* culture which has no history of recognising diversity, and affected groups continue to contest this issue. Furthermore, the state's narrative of national identity and citizenship outlined a set of practices and beliefs that acted to bind what it meant to be a good citizen.

This narrative is also connected to a range of subjectivities and practices that seem to present as the real source of power. Although Botswana has largely been left out in debates of ethnic conflicts that have plagued most postcolonial states from the 1960s up to the early 1990s, it finds itself as a country with contradictions in its model. On the one hand, it does not recognise diversity, while on the other, it offers a civic identity that enables all its citizens to have equal access to state resources and benefits. Hence, this chapter sought to deconstruct the official historical narrative of Botswana's nation building and citizenship and its subsequent translation in policy and practice.

A practice that I argue has invisibilised certain populations in ways that make it difficult for them to make normative claims to the state or its citizenship. Despite these tensions and Botswana's contradictory approach, over the years and more recently, the state has begun to show some form of receptiveness to the demands for recognition and rights of excluded groups, highlighting a dynamic struggle for inclusion and

acknowledgement within the national narrative. An ongoing subtext in postcolonial Botswana and as history shows, even predating the colonial period.

The chapter also highlights ongoing contestations of the status quo throughout different periods, noting that there have always been voices questioning the state's dominant narratives. This shows that Botswana has never been entirely hegemonic and that despite the presence of hegemonic narratives, the system has adjusted in response to societal pressures. These cases cited in this chapter exemplify how postcolonial states, including Botswana, are shaped not only by strong institutional structures but also by the actions and voices of people on the margins, as the following chapters will illustrate.

These people at the margins demonstrate an ambivalence towards the state and show that the ongoing discussions continue to shape the state’s evolution. Finally, the chapter further builds on studies like Sechele (2015) and others that challenge the notion of Botswana's postcolonial democracy and therefore, contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Botswana's postcolonial democratic transition, particularly by including the experiences and voices of people with migrant backgrounds into discussions of postcolonial citizenship and national belonging.

The next Chapter will build on this discussion to show how people with a migrant background navigate this ambivalence in contexts such as Botswana by leveraging the power of the margins through their multiple, hyphenated identities.

4 Chapter Four: *"I am a piece of everything"* Embracing Multiple-Hyphenated Identities and Centring the Margin

> All my experiences put together are important in defining me. I have taken the best of everything. I am a piece of everything because if you ask me my favourite food is probably Turkish and Indian, and my favourite experience and way of life is probably going to be from Sweden, and there is probably going to be my favourite something from Botswana, from Zimbabwe, from wherever. So I have just taken, I think what works for me as the best and most positive things in life experiences from different places, and that is my identity. I treat identity as very fluid.[45]

4.1 Introduction

Context and historical background are important, as identity is not a straightforward or linear process, especially for groups such as people with a migrant background. Much of the literature on such groups' identities highlights the complexity and fluidity of identity for them. For this study's research participants, fluid identity becomes a double-edged sword. It enables them to fit into different contexts, yet also makes them strangers who are never feel fully at ease in just one place.

The central argument of this chapter is that people with a migrant background in Botswana embrace their multiple and hyphenated identities as part of who they are, and by extension, it is an identity they have come to own. This embracing of identity is presented as a kind of ambivalent or oscillating state of affairs that is characterised by a form of tactical belonging which sees people with a migrant background tap into the power of the margins. Through this, such groups demonstrate what life at the margins looks like for them. Moreover, they show that the margins is not just a space of marginalisation but also a space of potential creativity and agency.

[45] Interview with Research Participant - *Ruva* on 29 June 2020

The chapter also elucidates the multifaceted nature of identity fragmentation, showing various methods through which individuals may delineate and deconstruct their self-identity. These are based on values, legal categories and historical understandings just to name a few. For this thesis, showcasing this is important because it offers a diverse repertoire of possible relations to space and people. Additionally, it opens cracks that can be exploited and multiple intersections that people can mobilise.

People with a migrant background in this study further call upon scholars to rethink the liminal space and in-betweenness that their various identities produce. As this chapter shows, choosing one identity over another does not provide a complete picture of who the research participants are. Thus, accepting all the pieces that make up a sum of who they are is what feels most authentic and resonates with them the most.

By doing so, we see a form of generative marginalisation where there is recognition of the power structures which I argue can only be seen by those at the margins, something that for example, a *Tswana* who has been fully embraced by the national identity may not even notice. Furthermore, this location at the margins is what hooks (1989) defines as a form of resistance and a location for radical openness and possibility that is a critical response to domination.

The chapter also demonstrates that by embracing their multiple-hyphenated identities, people with a migrant background in Botswana have developed a form of agential marginalisation characterised by individual agency, self-awareness, and assertiveness in how they self-identify. They understand the different dynamics of their identity. In this space, such individuals modulate or move between frequencies by switching from one identity to the other depending on the location, context and space.

hooks (1989:20) aptly captures the above experiences and states that, “to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body.” Therefore, the chapter also argues that people with a migrant background are challenging the monolithic boundaries and essentialist notions of what is commonly known to shape and inform identity, such as nationality, ethnicity, and culture, among other socio-economic and political factors. Furthermore, the research participants show that the civic discourse of being a *Motswana* does not support multiple and hyphenated identities, even though people with a migrant background embrace them.

While confirming what other studies have long argued: that social, cultural, and political factors influence identity, this chapter highlights a specific dimension to the debate. Participants in this study, through a self-reflective approach, helped reveal and provide further evidence that these social, cultural and political factors, even though from multiple localities, play a significant role in shaping identity construction processes. At the same time, people with a migrant background also show that they are not just shaped by these factors but that through their agency, they also reshape the social, political, and cultural world around them.

As such, identity construction at the margins is not merely reactive but constitutive because people with a migrant background, through their everyday practices and assertions of belonging, actively reshape the political, social, and cultural landscapes of Botswana. In doing so, people with a migrant background (re)produce and (re)constitute the broader meanings of citizenship and national identity. Moreover, given the historical marginalisation of people with a migrant background in Botswana, this chapter seeks to re-centre their voices as active agents of identity construction and national belonging

The following section expands these arguments. I begin by briefly unpacking what makes one a *Motswana* in Botswana to set the tone of understanding how people with a migrant background self-identify and what informs their self-identification. I then move further to explore the role of mobility in the construction of identity, and then discuss the role of class on identity before discussing the argument I raise that people with a migrant background are embracing multiple-hyphenated identities as an identity that best encapsulates their experiences. Finally, I show how through these experiences, people with a migrant background are de-centring the margin through their agency.

4.2 *Motswana Wa Sekei:* Constructions of Tswana Identity and the Other

> To me, because I have worked in the courts, *Sekei* is an ear marking that you use on goats and sheep to identify the goat and the sheep. And to me I equate that with the language of the indigenous Motswana. And I often ask other people, what does this mean? What does it mean to be an indigenous Motswana? And who gets to make the decision about who is indigenous or not? If you have both parents, like my husband, both parents are Batswana,

> but you were born in New York? Are you indigenous? If both your parents are Batswana but you grew up outside, are you indigenous? If one of your parents is not a Motswana, are you indigenous? If both your parents are not Batswana but you are a Motswana, are you indigenous? In short, my question always is, who are we othering? And that is why I use the word othering because who is this directed at?[46]

To foreground the discussions on how people with a migrant background self-identity, it is imperative to first discuss who is considered a *Motswana* or what makes one a *Motswana* in Botswana. This is because, although every *Omang* bearing *Motswana* or citizen in Botswana, is officially considered a *Motswana*, at the social level that may not be the case. Also, the interest here was to understand if people with a migrant background especially those with citizenship self-identified as *Batswana* and if so, to what extent and if not, how did they self-identify. Hence, this section unpacks some of the discourses of what makes *Tswana* identity in relation to who can be considered as one and whether this identity speaks to the experiences of people with migrant backgrounds.

Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) in their study on *Batswana*'s perceptions of one another, discuss the different categories that *Batswana* use to differentiate who is an "authentic" *Motswana* from those who are not. In their paper, they define the prototypical group as the core group. In fact, using the prototype theory, the two authors found that the prototypical approach was prominent in defining and safeguarding the Botswana national identity as the *Setswana*-speaking ethnic groups were considered *Batswana tota* (authentic/real citizens) at the core.

These groups normally extend to the eight *Tswana* ethnic groups outlined and recognised in the constitution. Moreover, this perception further contributed to the perpetuation of "othering" of those not part of this in-group. Hence, Bagwasi and Alimi further assert that the notion of *Tswana* ethnic groups as the core group corroborates the notion of exclusivity of identity amongst *Batswana* based on their ethnic orientation.

Bagwasi and Alimi's above assertion is further strengthened by the fact that based on their data, those who were members of non-*Tswana* speaking groups and from other cities or villages not part of the eight dominant ethnic groups were considered less prototypical of *Motswana* tota but more prototypical of *Motswana*. As such, the authors

[46] Interview with Research Participant: *Queen* on 6 August 2020

conclude that the term *Motswana* includes every citizen of Botswana irrespective of linguistic and cultural background yet the term *Motswana* tota is exclusive to *Setswana*-speaking people.

This advances the views of scholars such as Nyamnjoh, Nyati-Ramahobo, Werbner, and others who maintain that Botswana's identity is rooted in *Tswana* ethnicity. Moreover, the discussions by Bagwasi and Alimi further support evidence that shows a conflation between ethnicity and citizenship as identity in Botswana. This shows as will be expanded on in the ensuing sections, having a *Motswana* (citizenship) identity does not necessarily mean that one identifies as such ethnicity wise or is considered a *Motswana* by society. Furthermore, as the opening excerpt from one of the research participants, *Queen*, originally from Kenya highlights, there is the language of *Motswana Wa sekei* that is used at the social level. This differentiates who is considered a real *Motswana* which also has implications for who can make claims to citizenship and by default, citizenship rights.

The opening extract from *Queen* highlights that the concept of *Motswana tota*, as discussed by Bagwasi and Alimi, is deeply embedded in the social and political fabric of society. This entrenched idea is reflected in the colloquial use of the term *Motswana wa Sekei*, which, though politically incorrect, is often used as a synonym for an indigenous *Motswana*. This type of language is also used in political spaces under what Meekwane (2021) argues is disguised as "targeted citizens." According to the Economic Inclusion Act No.26 of 2021, a "*targeted citizen" is a citizen whose access to economic resources has been constrained by various factors as may be prescribed by the Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry (the "Minister") from time to time*.

This definition is ambiguous and leaves room for several interpretations that might make it difficult for the Act to be effectively applied in practice. Moreover, the Bookbinder Law (2022) argues that when the definition by the Minister of Investment, Trade, and Industry eventually comes, it may be both significant but also contentious at the same time. This is because, already, within the political space, some Members of Parliament (MPs) have argued that naturalised *Batswana* do not have the same challenges as "ordinary" *Batswana* and because of this, called for a clear distinction between the different categories of *Batswana* (Meekwane, 2021).

The challenge with this proposed distinction is that it is exclusionary and connotes indigeneity. For example, the categories tabled by some MPs was that the classification of *Batswana* should be between a "*Motswana* by birth who is defined by having a home village, a *kgotla*[47] and a *kgosi* (Chief) and relative outsiders who have acquired citizenship through naturalisation" (Meekwane, 2022:1). However, the *Sunday Standard* (2022), points out that the "targeted citizens" phrase also has race, class and gender undertones because it is based on demographic data that suggests that those who have been left behind are the indigenous *Batswana*, women and youth.

While the Act aims to redress socio-economic imbalances, its lack of an adequate definition of "targeted citizens" leaves room for categorisation of citizenship and in turn Botswana identity that is not based on need but on othering. Moreover, it differentiates between or creates divisions by recognising some as indigenous *Batswana,* a concept which in this case is not all encompassing or inclusive and is often used to relate to a select few. Hence, *Queen* who from the beginning of this section has shown her complete opposition to the use of the term *Motswana wa Sekei.* Not only does she find the term problematic but is equally disturbed by the fact that the term is unfortunately used in political spaces as highlighted below. In her reflection, this is what she had to say:

> It's a pity because this idea has been adopted in political circles and has become really something. It's a language that you hear often, and I rally against it because to me these are actually forms of tribalism, but we don't actually realise it, but that is what they are. When you 'other', and that is the language that I use, you make a person that has citizenship like you the other. You now create classes of citizenship and as lawyers, we all understand the difficulties with that. The Rohinganian Muslims don't find themselves where they are because it is by accident, they find themselves exactly where they are because of classes of citizenship.[48]

As the above illustrates, participants such as *Queen* not only articulated their problem with othering that leads to marginalisation within Botswana but also situated their

[47] In Setswana a Kgotla is an open meeting place or place of gathering to discuss matters that affect all members of an ethnic group or community with the chief presiding. In fact, proceedings are not in effect until the chief is present. The traditional structure of a Kgotla is a setting of a kraal built by tree logs erected next to each in a semicircle, almost within the proximity of the chief's compound. However, the modern structure, although similar, uses a typical brick and cement wall called leobo instead of tree logs for the outer structure, and may be set far from the chief's abode (See further details on Know Botswana at: https://www.knowbotswana.com/botswana-parliament-and-kgotla.html).

[48] Ibid: Interview with *Queen.*

experiences within a broader global landscape of minority struggles, notably referencing cases such as the Rohingya and thereby linking local exclusions to transnational patterns of disenfranchisement. Moreover, such discussions illustrate that being a *Motswana* or identifying as one does not always translate to full recognition as there are categories that are adopted at the political and social level. As Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) state, despite the Botswana Citizenship Act presenting an accommodative and inclusive identity of a *Motswana*, the reality is significantly different. The authors explain that at the social level the *Motswana* identity undergoes further classification to include *Lekwerekwere* (African foreigner usually from outside of the SADC region), *Motswakwa* (foreigners from neighbouring countries sharing similar linguistic and cultural traits (e.g., South Africa and Lesotho) *Lekgoa* (white) and *Lekula* (India)).

The term *Lekwerekwere* can include both citizens and non-citizens. If someone does not satisfy some of the social categories and racial classifications in place or is not considered an ethnic *Motswana,* then the term *Lekwerekwere* can still apply. Other forms of categorisations used to classify foreigners considered as *Makwerekwere* at the social level include the colour of the skin (dark complexion) and the inability to speak *Setswana*. These categories can, without intending to include *Batswana* or discriminate or 'other' *Batswana* who present the same features that are used to distinguish a foreigner from a *Motswana*.

4.2.1 Features that Determine a Motswana "Tota"

In their study, Bagwasi and Alim (2018:64) found that the term *Lekwerekwere* was used "pejoratively to denigrate and despise dark skinned Africans who come from poor and politically unstable African countries." These findings also correlate with the experiences of some research participants in this thesis. For example, when it comes to aspects of language, *Leonore* who is originally from Ghana offered critical reflections on the ability to speak *Setswana* as a marker for a *Motswana* identity or for one to be considered a *Motswana tota*.

She acknowledged both the positives and negatives that result in the exclusion of other groups, including minority groups not considered part of the core *Tswana* ethnic groups. Moreover, *Leonore* reflected on how a lack of fluency in *Setswana* was used to

exclude other *Batswana*, especially naturalised citizens and ethnic minorities who do not speak the language. In reflecting on this issue, *Leonore* stated:

> To be considered an authentic Motswana, you need to do what you just did. Speak Setswana (referring to the researcher's use of Setswana in providing clarity). I think speaking Setswana is important for the Tswana (referring to Tswana ethnic groups) identity but not for everyone because there are other languages in Botswana, we can't ignore that. There are groups such as the Basarwa (San/Khoisan groups). I don't know if they speak Setswana or only SeSarwa. I think there are other ethnic groups in Botswana that speak distinct languages, it is not only Setswana. There are Hambukushu who speak another language. So I struggle with that because when I was in Mater Spei (referring to the high school she attended) we had the Kalanga in class and they made it very known that it is discrimination to be forced to speak Setswana and questioned why Kalanga can't be taught. So my answer is yes and no. It's nice to see Indians and Europeans learning Setswana but I think it should not be used as a weapon to create second-class citizens which I think a lot of the minorities in Botswana have suffered. It should not be used as a weapon but to create a unifying identity, and I think it has been used as a weapon sometimes or for disadvantages. The diversity in the country should be celebrated. Otherwise, you will have a situation where things like languages become extinct. I think that needs to be addressed and reflected upon.[49]

Besides the issue of language, factors such as culture and home village are used to exclude outside groups and assert *Tswana i*dentity. Participants in my study confirmed this assertion. The common theme I found was that the ability to speak *Setswana*, practise traditions and norms of the *Tswana* culture, and come from a village with a *Kgosi* qualified one as authentic *Motswana.* In Bagwasi and Alimi's (2018:59) study, they found that the normative indicators for being unquestionably considered a *Motswana* include being born in Botswana, respecting *Setswana* culture, defending *Setswana* values and norms, having at least one parent of *Tswana* descent, speaking *Setswana* as a mother tongue, and having ancestral ties to the country.

This way of thinking also determines who is considered an authentic citizen and by default, a *Motswana tota*. Hence, possessing most of the listed attributes means one's citizenship or *Tswana* identity is beyond reasonable doubt. These societal perceptions are also rooted in the fact that Botswana tied the citizenship of its people to their rural roots (Molosiwa & Bolaane, 2021). This process is not only patriarchal, as it excluded women,

[49] Interview with Research Participant: *Leonore* on 2 July 2020 via Zoom

but also continues to exclude those with a migrant background. Only those with roots (represented by a village) in Botswana were considered authentic *Batswana*.

This also results in the exclusion of migrant descendants without links or ties to a village. To contextualise this point, *Falcon*, a person with a migrant background who was born and raised in Botswana by parents of Zimbabwean origins had this to say on this issue:

> You know, Batswana have this tendency of ko gae ke kae? (where is your home village?) I usually say Tatisiding because it's in the North region where Kalangas are based so they just take me as a Kalanga. Now that you brought this up, that whole Kalanga thing helps because as soon as you say you are from the other side of you know the river (North region), the guys say yah no Ke Mokalaka (He is Kalanga). And I also just leave it as it is.[50]

Falcon's reflections also confirm Bagwasi and Alimi's point above that despite ethnic minority groups not being considered as *Batswana tota*, they are still considered as *Batswana* by society. Hence participants such as *Falcon* were aware of this categorisation by society and used it to their advantage to avoid explaining their identity or *Tswana* nationality. As *Falcon* showed, the fact that his parents settled in Tatisiding, a small town near Francistown, his association with Tatisiding has served as an advantage for him because it connotes that he is part of the *Kalanga* ethnic group and by virtue of this has a home village, a chief and a kgotla, therefore his identity as a *Motswana* is not questioned.

Another participant, *Paul*, of Guyanese origin who lived in Maun at the time, shared a similar experience to *Falcon*. On this matter he stated the following:

> I associate Tswana nationality with ethnicity. You know in Botswana, when you start talking to someone, immediately they will ask you where you are from and from which kgotla, who is your herd man, etc. So when it comes to such questions, I would say Shakawe because I am dark and that is where most dark people are from and obviously nobody would inquire further. Especially if I am in Francistown and Gaborone and someone asks me, they will just take my word because they don't know the language in Shakawe. But when I am in Maun, I can't say that because then they will start speaking to me in Hambukushu language and I obviously can't speak it. So when I am here (Maun) I say I am from Guyana.[51]

[50] Interview with Research Participant: *Falcon* on 15 July 2020 via Zoom.
[51] Interview with Research Participant: *Paul* on 20 February 2021 via WhatsApp.

The above extracts underscore that although ethnic minority groups face challenges with recognition and inclusion of their cultures within the nation-state, they are nonetheless still considered by society as *Batswana* even though at differing levels from *Batswana tota*. However, those with a migrant background or naturalised citizens are seen to be 'outsiders' in society because they lack roots (village) in Botswana. In addition, *Paul's* reflections above also reveal that besides speaking *Setswana*, factors such as skin colour also contribute to who is considered a *Motswana tota*.

Paul's experience was confirmed by several participants who shared their experiences of being typecast because they had darker skin colour. There is a perception in Botswana society that those who have darker skin are either from non-*Tswana* ethnic minority groups found in the Northwest and Northeast regions as highlighted by *Paul* or foreign nationals from countries mostly outside Southern Africa as Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) have shown in their study.

To put the skin colour point into context, I use the example of *Anderson*. He was 30 years old at the time of the interview. He has lived in Botswana since he was 8 years old but struggled to obtain citizenship. His parents have been living and working in Botswana since 1998 and have applied for citizenship more than twice but were rejected both times without any explanation.

Anderson is a light-skinned young man of Ndebele ethnicity. He grew up in Molepolole, a village in the South region of Botswana predominantly inhabited by the *Bakwena*, one of the eight *Tswana* ethnic groups. Fluent in *Setswana*, he learned the *Tswana* culture through socialisation. Due to his skin colour and language skills, he often appears to others as an a *Motswana tota*. Here's what he had to say about this issue:

> [Lol]…. I think what makes people think I am a Motswana is probably my fluency in Setswana. I am 80-90 percent conversant in Setswana. So people will be like, "okay dude, if you were a Zimbabwean we would know that through your pronunciation. If you say Mogoditshane (instead of Mogoditsane) or something, we would catch your mispronunciation of the word." So my fluency in the language and then probably the next thing is the looks. They say for some reason I do not look like a Zimbabwean at all. So yeah, I don't know if that is discriminatory or judgmental or whatever it is but they say I don't look Zimbabwean.[52]

[52] Interview with Research Participant: *Anderson* on 30 June 2020 via Zoom

In support of *Anderson*'s point but on the other receiving end, *Tasha,* a 39-year-old woman at the time of the interview, originally from Zambia and having arrived in Botswana in 1991 at age 10 had the following to share:

> I am told my Setswana accent and English accent are different. So if I am conversing in Setswana, some people claim they wouldn't have known I was a foreigner in those days. So if we are just conversing in English and then they see the name, it's gonna come up. Where are you from? You are not from here. You know so then you have to explain. Plus, my complexion. *Kana* (also), the thing that also gives me away is my complexion. It's like people from the Southern side of Botswana do not know they are dark people because I can tell you in school, I used to be harassed. You can imagine that you are passing, and people are marvelling at your dark skin and commenting about it. Colourism does play a role in identity because our gardener is light in complexion. Very light and he is from Zimbabwe with no proper documentation, but he is never stopped because he is light and he can speak *Setswana*. So they (Police) never even ask him to say can we see your Omang. He says in the few instances that they do, he tells the police that he left it at home. He can get away with it because he is light. Now if he was dark, it would be a different story lol.[53]

The foregoing discussions show that despite provisions in the Constitution of Botswana that recognise all *Batswana* citizens as equal, at the social level, there are several factors that influence the categorisation of who can claim the *Tswana* identity. The ethnic component favours those from the *Tswana* ethnic groups as the *Batswana tota* while the non-*Tswana* ethnic groups are recognised as *Batswana* but not at the same level as those of *Tswana* ethnicity.

This is a contributing factor to the continued othering of naturalised citizens who are considered as not from the soil. Moreover, speaking *Setswana*, understanding, and practising the *Tswana* culture, and having roots in one of the villages in Botswana are among the societal factors that enable recognition as an authentic *Motswana* (both in ethnic identity and citizenship).

These perceptions do not keep up with the migration trends of the country and the current socio-political and cultural landscape, especially considering the significant rural and urban migration in Botswana. Many citizens, including those of ethnic-*Tswana* descent, are born and raised in cities and have lived there most of their lives without ties to

[53] Interview with Research Participant: *Tasha* on15 February 2021 via Zoom

a traditional village. As such, my research also supports other studies such as Spano (2015) and Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) and shows that the term *Motswana* is not only used to describe native *Setswana* speakers and citizens of Botswana but also to marginalise those without *Tswana* origins.

This narrow definition limits the ability of those with a migrant background from fully identifying with the *Tswana* identity in terms of both citizenship and as part of their identity. Moreover, based on the above, it is evident that identity in this context is understood in relation to citizenship and ethnicity. However, because of the conflation of the two, what makes a *Motswana* is further broken down at the social level to exclude individuals originally from other races or ethnicities from fully claiming the *Tswana* identity in Botswana.

It is within this context that this research's interest has been to further explore how people with a migrant background self-identity. I was interested to find out if they embrace the *Tswana* identity and how they navigate their identification in a context where there is no space for people like them. The key thing for me was to understand whether such groups relate to the *Tswana* identity given that among the participants, there were those who had citizenship which means legally they are considered as *Batswana.*

4.3 Understanding the Self-Identification of People with a Migrant Background in Botswana

> Who am I? That is a great question. Being Motswana does not necessarily mean that you have to deny your heritage. Does it? The idea that you have to deny your heritage is, um, it runs counter to our humanity. It's a principle that actually falls very short of ubuntu or Botho as we understand it. I am the sum of all these places and all the people who make me. So, you know how you have Italian-Americans? I am a proud Kenyan-Motswana.[54]

The scholarship on identity is not only vast but a main feature in literature and studies on migration (see examples of Zevallos, 2004; Awokoga, 2009; Liu, 2015; Jayasinha, 2015; Sezgin, 2013; Reyseck, 2014; Anthias, (2001, 2002), Sedmak, 2018). For this reason, this

[54] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Queen*.

section limits the scope of discussion to how people with a migrant background self-identify and the factors that inform this identity.

The above excerpt from *Queen*, a legal practitioner with roots in Kenya first introduced in the previous section shows an awareness of multiple and multifaceted identities and rejects the naturalist or essentialist forms of identification through acknowledging her mixed identities and experiences as what best defines or informs who she is. *Queen* further underscores her point by stressing that she is a sum of all the places she has experienced and in turn the places make her.

Selasi (2013)[55] captures *Queen'*s experience by conceptualising it as multi-local identities. Selasi is of the view that our local experiences define who we are as these take place at the local and not the broader nation-state. For example, one may live in Nigeria, New York and Ghana but where their experiences are fostered are in the cities and communities they reside in. Using herself as an example, Selasi who is African but lives in the diaspora goes on to explain that "in thinking of my identity, it is multilocal, there are finite places, right down to the smell, quality of air, the spices and the food that make me who I am and how I see the world".[56] Selasi further asserts that what human beings seek is just to be themselves without the struggle of the weight of group identity, religion, state, colour etc. McCann (2013)[57] adds to Selasi's views and states that essentially, "the universal is the local, with the walls taken down."

As will be shown by my research participants, this is how they more or less see themselves. The different experiences they have encountered in different locations have influenced or shaped who they are and are becoming. In a sense, they are pushing back against essentialist ideas of identity as I have highlighted. Accordingly, Hall (1996:2) defines essentialist or normative understandings of identification as "constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and within the national closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation." In the same vein, Hall (1996) further argues that the non-essentialist definitions of identity that employ a discursive approach, in contrast to

[55] Taiye Selasi & Colum McCann: We are All Multi-Local Interview discussion on YouTube, 21 October 2013.
[56] Ibid: Taiye Selasi & Colum McCann Interview.
[57] Ibid: Taiye Selasi Colum McCann Interview

naturalism, see identification as a construction and a process that is never completed but always in process.

Participants who were residing outside Botswana demonstrated this by showing the evolving nature of identity. The experiences of research participants living in the diaspora added another layer to their identity, transforming it into a continuum of experiences influenced by location and the experiences in those places. For example, *Zinhle, a 43-year-old* medical practitioner at the time of the interview, with origins in Zimbabwe, acknowledged that his accumulative experiences in different locations have contributed another dimension to his identity. In his words, this is what he had to say about his complex identity:

> Uhm it's funny because I do split it up. So if someone asked me a formal question about where you are from, I would generally say Botswana because that is the official answer in terms of my citizenship, I guess, and my passport. Umh, so ethnically, I would still or will identify as Ndebele. Umh and then will link that back to Zimbabwe in some way. Umh and yah, so, it's interesting; the answer to that will change depending on who I am speaking to. So I am 43; I was born in Botswana and lived there, visited Zimbabwe, and schooled in Swaziland until I was 20, um, and then I was away the rest of the time, apart from a year in 2005. I have been to either Australia or the UK. So the identity thing, I think there is an added dimension to where I go; actually, most of my adult life, I have not lived in Africa at all, so there is a big part of Australia in terms of how I see the world, and there is a big part of the UK, of course, in terms of how I see the world. Even with the question of Botswana and Zimbabwe, I wonder how well I understand either of those two places now because there is this other layer of the West. So it's probably a mixture of all of those things now, lol. Yah.[58]

Zinhle's response shows how multifaceted identity can be. On the one hand, he acknowledges his Botswana identity through his citizenship and passport, but he also identifies with his Ndebele ethnic roots as he was brought up in that culture. However, over time, his experiences living in the diaspora have influenced who he has become and is yet to become. Another important factor that is discussed at length in Chapter Six on belonging is that being in possession of multiple identities means a connection to one place is loosened or is not as strong as *Zinhle's* experience shows.

[58] Interview with Research Participant: *Zinhle* on 23 July 2020 via Zoom.

Zinhle further demonstrates the fluidity of identity and how it manifests in different places and contexts through his overlapping experiences. However, while identities were fluid as *Zinhle's* case demonstrates, this fluidity was not uniform as certain everyday practices, such as language use or traditional ceremonies, revealed varying degrees of closeness or distance to different identity markers.

Queen's identity on the other appeared stable or fixed and rooted in her Kenyan-*Tswana* identity, although she occasionally shifts between the two while *Zinhle's* identity is shaped by various places. This influence has led him to adopt a fluid identity, allowing him to navigate between different identities. He can embrace any one of them depending on the situation. Thus, my study contributes to the many discussions on the fluidity of identity that other scholars have highlighted. Liu (2015), states that fluid identity has long been recognised in the literature, dating back to the twentieth century, and is described as a dynamic process by scholars such as Mead (1934), among other earlier researchers or scholars in the field.

Following on Sedmak's (2018) study of second-generation migrant women, I use the term fluid in reference to a person oscillating between two or more relatively stable identities. This can occur several times, take multiple directions, and adopt varying levels of intensity and pace during different periods of one's life. Sedmak also highlights the epistemological challenges of trying to capture someone's identity with the simple question, "Who are you?" Despite these challenges, Ting-Toomey (2005) points out that two common questions we often ask ourselves are - "Who am I?" and "Who are you?"

Ironically, in Botswana, the colloquial and official term for the national identity document is *Omang.* This is a *Setswana* word that directly translates to Who are you? and formally connotes the question of identity and belonging. Thus, in this complex context, I sought to find out how people with a migrant background self-identify. However, as the experiences of my research participants show, it is not always easy to answer the question of identity, especially when it comes to defining the self.

A further complication is when the individual has a migratory history, coupled with multiple cultural experiences and a history of mobility, as the example of *Zinhle* has shown. This difficulty was even more evident when I asked participants to define themselves. Participants were at first uneasy because they were not sure if the question was related to

the normative and often essentialised ways in which identity is understood in society. This is because the question was frequently posed to participants in relation to where they came from, e.g., country of origin, nationality, and other times in relation to social identity, e.g., ethnicity. All these had implications for gauging which place the participants belonged to or as shown in the previous section, if they were *Batswana.*

A common theme that emerged from the findings was that, while participants understood and accepted their multifaceted and hyphenated identities, they were not always sure how to respond when the question was posed. Most struggled with providing a straightforward response to this question due to their multifaceted experiences. Some were unsure how to define who they were and, in some cases, sought clarity on the question. For example, in her response to the question on identity, *Bella*, a migrant descendant with origins from Tanzania stated the following:

> I always say I am lost. I don't really know where I am from or who I am because I am a mixture of cultures, to begin with. I have a little bit of Tanzania in me because of my parents and the way they raised me. The morals they instilled in me, and then I have a little bit of Tswana in me, obviously, because I live here. And a little of South Africa, because I studied there. So it's hard for me to define who I am in terms of where I am from. I don't know. This question is hard for me. It's really hard. I feel like you have to break it down for me, like... I don't know how to answer your question[59]

The above shows a conundrum of explaining how one self-identifies in relation to the expectations of the participant's understanding of what society accepts as the "right way" to self-identify. This type of identification is often in relation to one's ethnicity, nationality, and country of origin. As the case of *Bella* also shows, and in her own words, she knew that she was a "mixed bag" due to her experiences which have been influenced by different cultures.

Bella alluded to the fact that "I am a mixture of cultures to begin with" before explaining the challenge she faces in defining herself. This shows *Bella's* self-awareness and the challenge she faced in feeling pressured to identify in a way that society expects, which doesn't reflect her experience. She felt that society expected her to choose between

[59] Interview with Research Participant: *Bella* on 18 July 2020 via Zoom.

the three countries she mentioned, linking identity with belonging to a specific place as a way of defining herself. Despite a clear self-awareness of identifying with different cultures and experiences located in different places, participants like *Bella* were aware of who they are but were worried that people may not understand them due to essentialist expectations. The group-based identification that *Bella* and other migrant descendants struggled with was embedded in nationality and ethnic identification.

According to Sedmak (2018), this type of identification fosters the habit of thinking about identity monoculturally and does not reflect or even recognise an individual's multiculturalism and trans-culturalism. Therefore, this research joins previous studies to expose the problematic nature of simple and monoethnic identifications. For my research participants, this type of ideology did not create any space for different experiences but instead emphasised monoethnic affiliations, which is why some participants struggled to respond to the question.

Berger (1973), as cited in Liu (2015), argues that identity is not something fixed but is constructed through social interactions. Similarly, Ting-Toomey (2005) agrees, stating that individuals acquire and develop their identities through interactions within their cultural group. The experiences of migrant descendants support these assertions and show that identities can be fluid and evolving rather than fixed, shaped by interactions, histories, ambitions, and other factors. My research participants further revealed that they navigate their identities through interactions with others and the state, consciously using or challenging these identities.

This highlights that identity can be understood in two ways: how individuals see themselves (personal identification) and how others perceive them. It also shows that the context or environment where a person is can influence both how they self-identify and how others define them. According to social identity theory, the relationship between the individual and the social environment is implied and, as such, defined as a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category (Onukogu, 2018).

Tajfel (1979) is of the view that social identity gives a person the sense of who they are based on their group memberships. McLeod (2023) on the other hand shows how social categorisations create both in-group and out-group dynamics. They argue that similarities and differences are used to place people in groups and serve either as markers of identity

and belonging or as tools of exclusion. Hence, the existence of different categorisations already discussed in the previous section that are used to differentiate a *Motswana* tota from the other.

To contribute to these debates, my participants pushed back on social categorisations that are used particularly in Botswana to define who is a *Motswana* or can fully claim *Tswana* identity as these did not adequately speak to their experiences and forms of self-identification. As such, my research participants illustrate that social categorisations put people in binaries of either "in or out" that do not take into consideration the nuanced experiences of those who do not fit into a singular narrative of being or self-identification.

The discussions above further highlight that while participants in my study hesitated to align with a single identity, many recognised the diverse elements, mixed cultures, and experiences that contribute to their sense of self. They also acknowledged specific factors influencing their identification, whether due to personal experiences or practical considerations. Consequently, from the data, three distinct forms of identification emerged: personal identity, multiple and hyphenated identity, and administrative identity.

Importantly, what also came out from the findings was the acknowledgement by research participants that these identities did not diminish the participants' embrace of their multiple heritages, which I argue fosters a fluid form of identity among the people with a migrant background that I interviewed. In the next subsections, I delve into more detail on these forms of identities and provide examples using extracts from different participants.

4.3.1 Personal Identities

Participants of this study self-identified in diverse ways. Some identified themselves as African or acknowledged using hyphenated identities to express their identification with two nations, e.g., Kenyan-Motswana, or ethnic groups, e.g., *Igbo-Mokwena.* Others preferred to be identified first by their core values and principles, e.g I am hardworking, an honest individual, etc. Their values and principles were an important attribute of their identity and how they viewed themselves. Examples of participants that underscore these points are extracted from two participants. The first is *Monroe*, a salesperson, originally from Tanzania and *Hunter*, a medical doctor with Nigerian origins.

> I think when I define myself, I identify as both a Motswana and a Tanzanian. I believe I have a strong will and an excellent work ethic. I am disciplined and honest, and I think it is important when you define yourself to take the core value of how you were raised.[60]

> Well, first and foremost, I am a very open-minded person. I know it's cliché. People say I have a free spirit. In terms of belonging and identity, I identify primarily as a person. Not even an African, Nigerian, or Motswana. I feel like I am a human, and we are all humans. I am actually not a fan of nationalities because I feel like that is one of the ways we are divided amongst one another. I think the world would be a better place if we didn't place so much importance on these things (ethnic and nationality-based identities).[61]

Based on the above responses, it is evident that some participants' personal identity is also an important factor in their self-identification. Personal identity, according to Degge-White (2021), is how one sees and distinguishes themselves from those around them, as well as characteristics that differentiate them from others, such as hobbies, interests, personality traits, and so on. Onukogu (2018) agrees and adds that identification is not only about how one sees oneself but also about how one feels about oneself. Onukogu (2018) also references Cooley (1902), who argues that while self-identification originates from the individual, it is shaped by how others perceive them, as well as by societal norms, values, social roles, and political or historical factors.

The experiences of my participants also confirm this and show that although outside perceptions may have an influence, they also exercise a certain level of agency in determining how they choose to identify themselves. For example, in *Hunter's* case, he was adamant that he first identifies as a human before any labels while *Monroe* prioritised values to define herself. This is important as it shows that social categorisations (nationality, ethnicity, race, etc) discussed previously are not the only ways of affiliation that matter. Others place emphasis on principles such as work ethic, honesty, discipline and other values. As such, these links between value, place or background add substance to the discussion on identity and help explain why people feel different or rather, how people make sense of that difference.

[60] Interview with Research Participant: *Monroe* on 23 July 2020 via Zoom
[61] Interview with Research Participant: *Hunter* on 10th July 2020 via Zoom

4.3.2 Hyphenated Identity

Hyphenated identity is another form of identification that emerged from some participants. Using the example of *Hunter* introduced above, he preferred to be identified by his personal attributes or values rather than a particular nationality and also recognised the influence of both Botswana and Nigeria on his identity. *Hunter* acknowledged his fuzzy identity which was a result of his state of being in limbo or in-between. He stated that rather than choosing either of the two nationalities, he preferred to embrace both and used a hyphenated ethnic identity to define himself as an *Igbo-Mokwena*.[62] The following quote captures his thoughts on the matter:

> But I also do know that I am a black man and Nigerian by DNA, so I always say I am Nigerian first. It is a 50/50 thing. I mean, there is always that bit of confusion. Sometimes you are always kind of in limbo. You are in between. You are neither here nor there. When I am here (Botswana), I feel like I am a Motswana, but a lot of people feel like, Oh, you are not really a Motswana, and then when I am in Nigeria, I feel like these are my people, but then they are like, Nah, and I don't really relate to them. I would say that my identity is a little hazy, but... yeah, it's like a 50/50 thing, I would say. That is Igbo-Mokwena.[63]

Hunter's experiences bring up the aspect of relating to two or more different cultures. He prefers a hyphenated identity because, despite being raised in Botswana by Nigerian parents who instilled and passed on to him the values and culture from their country of origin, *Hunter* still feels a connection to both countries for various reasons. Two more participants also had similar views as *Hunter*. Both participants identified with Botswana and their parents' countries of origin. For example, in *Paul's* case, he identified with Botswana for administrative reasons and adopted a hyphenated identity, whereas his identification with the Guyanese identity (his country of origin) was more heartfelt (this concept will be unpacked in the next section) and personal. In his response, Paul stated the following:

[62] The Igbos are one of Nigeria's three most populous ethnic groups. Mokwena, on the other hand, is a singular term for the Bakwena ethnic group found predominantly in Molepolole and surrounding villages in Botswana. TC was raised in Molepolole.
[63] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Hunter.*

> To be honest, I am still Guyanese with a Motswana identity card. Meaning, I still want to be identified as Guyanese as well as Motswana. I don't want to be just one side. I think this is how I feel. [64]

Whereas, *Monroe*, similar to *Paul* has learnt to embrace both cultures that influence her identity and also shows that she has decided to embrace both being a Tanzanian and a Motswana.

> So even in terms of being with other Tanzanians as well at home, you will always feel like a foreigner but being in Botswana you are also made to feel like a foreigner so it's like, okay, where do I belong. But as I got older during University, I started to come more to terms with being both and kind of accepting that it is okay for me to be Tanzanian and still consider myself as a Motswana.[65]

What is interesting about these hyphenated identities expressed by some of the research participants is their influence on the level of integration and acceptance of both cultures and contexts. In this section, I refer to integration as being fully immersed in and adopting the socio-economic and cultural aspects of society according to the standard integration parameters of the host country. Belanger and Verkuyten, (2010) are of the view that acculturation theorists have associated hyphenated identities with integrated acculturation profiles, and in turn, integration and hyphenated identities are being viewed as related. My participants' insistence of not identifying with a single location supports this assumption as they show a level of integration in Botswana instead of assimilation which was the main goal of the country's nation-building and postcolonial state.

Adopting hyphenated identities is interesting to explore in a country like Botswana, whose civic understanding of nationhood does not officially recognise cultural diversity (Belanger and Verkuyten, 2010). Thus, the study reveals that people with a migrant background do not fully embrace Botswana's identity as they continue to identify with their parents' countries of origin or other places they have lived in before. Hence, I argue that acceptance of hyphenated identities by people with a migrant background challenges the country's self-understanding (Belanger and Verkuyten, 2010).

[64] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Paul*
[65] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Monroe*

4.3.3 Administrative and bureaucratic identification

> At first, I used to go through the emotions and explain that I am a Motswana and a Tanzanian and this is how I am a Motswana and Tanzanian. But now I just think I say I am a Motswana because I have an ID and passport that says that I am a Motswana. So I usually go with that until somebody asks me a question of o tswa kae ko gae? (where is your home village?) and I am like oh my gosh and I start explaining from the beginning that many winters ago, I was born in Botswana, my parents are from here but they were foreign ….you know it's a long process… you know, but you ask me at first hand and my answer is going to be Ke Motswana (I am a Motswana)[66]

The above quote shows that administrative and bureaucratic identification constitutes another aspect of their identification process that emerges from the study's findings. A participant mentioned previously, *Zinhle*, alluded to this and the above extract by *Monroe* further underscores this point. People with a migrant background in this study show that they identified with the Botswana national identity because they were in possession of identity papers such as the passport and *Omang* (ID).

For these individuals, citizenship was viewed as a guarantee of their right to stay in Botswana and to access rights. Yet their nationality was not expressed as an emotional bond for life to the state of Botswana (Bakewell, 2007). *Tasha*, for example, is one participant who chose to identify with her country of origin. From her interview extract, this is what she had to say:

> I tell people that I am originally from Zambia because, even today, the Botswana passport is just a piece of paper or a document. It does not ultimately speak to my identity. I still identify myself as a Zambian. I am a Zambian for all intents and purposes. It is only that we have taken this step to say we have lived here for the bulk of our lives, so it only makes sense for us to obtain citizenship.[67]

Another participant *Louvre,* originally from Tanzania expressed multiple identities and thus prefers to identify as an African because even her Tanzanian heritage has a migratory history that includes Ethiopian descent from her mother and Sudanese and Masai heritage from her father. For these reasons, she chooses not to identify with any ethnic group because she cannot identify with just one. Moreover, her upbringing had a lot of influences.

[66] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Monroe*
[67] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Tasha*

As such, this is what she had to say about it, especially in relation to nationality and identification with the Botswana identity for administrative purposes.

> So I hardly ever first introduce myself as somebody from a specific country because I can't relate to that. Uhm, I find that I am uhm, I have to pay tribute to where I was born, Tanzania, and the culture that groomed me, which has a lot of Tanzanian influence in it. Uhm, but even with my Tanzanian nationality, there is a lot to unpack from there. I guess my Botswana nationality comes from the fact that I grew up here and chose to be a Motswana. Uhm, for practical reasons, but it's not necessarily because I identify fully as just a Motswana. I am more inclined to think of myself as a person of African descent because, for me, that is the reality. Uhm, so I am an African, and I happen to have a Botswana citizenship, a Botswana passport, and reap the benefits of Botswana citizenship[68] .

The examples of *Tasha* and *Louvre*, although different in how they chose to self-identify, bring in elements of administrative identities. What is apparent from some of these extracted quotes is that the Botswana identity is recognised because of the documentation they possess (i.e., passport and *Omang)*. They acknowledge that legally, through their citizenship, they are *Batswana*. However, the research participants also revealed that they did not fully relate to Botswana's national identity except administratively. Hence, I bring in nationality in this section to highlight the relationship between identity and citizenship.

Based on the experiences of my research participants, it was clear that for them nationality connotes identity and in support, Bakewell (2007) shows that identity documents attest to identity and citizenship. In his study of migrants on the remote Angola-Zambia border, Bakewell (2007) conceptualised the terms 'hand felt' and 'heart felt' nationality. Through these he surfaces the disconnect between an individual's official nationality and their emotional connections. We see this in *Louvre* and *Tasha's* responses and across the experiences of people with a migrant background in my study.

As *Tasha's* example and others showed, despite having Botswana identity documents, she still felt a strong sense of connection to Zambia, which Bakewell relates to as the heartfelt idea of nationality. During the interview, *Tasha* shared that even though she had renounced her Zambian citizenship, she was still Zambian at heart, and that her blood was Zambian. Similarly, *Tasha* also possesses an idea of hand felt nationality. Bakewell

[68] Interview with Research Participant: *Louvre* on 29 June 2020 via Zoom.

(2007) describes this as something that is defined by papers or location and is easily changed depending on circumstances. To highlight this point, *Tasha* stated the following:

> For me, I just see this as a piece of paper that is also helping me from an economic perspective because one of the reasons that we looked at was that a lot of positions were being localised, and we also needed to continue working. I like to say, yes, I have renounced my Zambian citizenship. Yes, it was a difficult decision to make, but ultimately, I was also making it for the future of my children at the end of the day. I don't see it any different from the people who migrate to Australia, Canada, or the UK. They do it for economic reasons. They are also thinking about their children. For me, that happened to be Botswana.[69]

Tasha in the above excerpt brings up an important element of making the choice to be a *Motswana* for economic opportunities. Despite having arrived in Botswana at the age of seven, her connection with the country is purely for practical reasons. Even though she admits that there are certain behaviours and attitudes she has adopted from living in Botswana, she clearly still has a strong connection to her country of birth, Zambia.

Based on these discussions, what we see is that there are several ways in which people can self-identify and based on my findings, these can include the person's core values and principles, their historical background and legal categories (including administrative or bureaucratic). Furthermore, as demonstrated, participants' expressions of identity extended beyond legal documentation such as *Omang*, highlighting alternative forms of identity and belonging rooted in cultural memory, community networks, and transnational affiliations.

In this sense, people with a migrant background also enact forms of global citizenship that transcend formal national recognition. Moreover, what this also shows is that there are multiple and diverse possibilities for relations to space and people and this in turn can help explain the multiple intersections that people can mobilise.

4.3.4 The Relationship between Mobility, Place, and Identity Construction

This section discusses the role of mobility and place on fluid or multiple identities of people with a migrant background in Botswana. Translocality will be used to show how the local

[69] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Tasha*

and different spaces and places they experience or occupy influence their identity. According to Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013), translocality describes the socio-spatial dynamics and processes of simultaneity and identity formation that transcend boundaries including but also extending beyond those of nation-states.

Research participants in this study had a history of migration and mobility. Most of them had either studied outside of Botswana for secondary school or University, while others lived elsewhere for work opportunities. These experiences shaped who they have become and their sense of self. According to McCann (2013), "the local is no longer the traditional meaning of place of birth or origin, the local has become the place where you experience yourself, your daily life and your relationships.[70]

In support, Selasi (2013) concurs and states that "all identity is experience."[71] And as my research participants repeatedly show throughout this section, their identity is the sum of all their experiences and thus underscoring the importance of experience in shaping one's identity. Furthermore, during the interviews, participants revealed that they often used their fluid identities to avoid explaining themselves. A form of agential use of identity. These strategies depended on who was asking and their location at a particular time.

This further reveals the influence of location and place on identity as participants showed that their tactical strategies can take place in different locations and spaces. Moreover, the experiences of people with a migrant background also demonstrated that an identity that can be a disadvantage in one context can be useful for them in another context. In this instance, their hyphenated and multiple identities become a resource and not a disadvantage. This is because people with a migrant background instrumentalised their identity in ways that served their needs by exercising individual agency.

This type of strategy can be equated to what Landau and Freemantle (2010) refer to as cosmopolitan from below. First introduced in Chapter One, both authors conceptualised the term tactical cosmopolitanism to explain a series of cosmopolitan tactics that enabled immigrants in Johannesburg to achieve their partial inclusion in South Africa's transforming society without being bound by it. Thus, in the case of my participants, they employed tactical strategies to navigate the different spaces they occupy and also used the

[70] Ibid: Taiye Selasi & Colum McCann (2013)
[71] Ibid: Taiye Selasi & Colum McCann (2013)

fluidity of their identities to their advantage when the situation allowed. The example of *Falcon* and *Lyon* both with Zimbabwean origins below illustrates these points.

> I think my identity was based on where I was actually. I fit well within the Zimbabwean structure of things, as well as the Botswana structure of things. I think I kind of worked on the basis of what suited me best at the time. Even in Zimbabwe, if I felt like being a Motswana was the best situation, then I would be like no, ke (I am a) Motswana. But in Botswana, if I felt like you know what, it suited my situation, then no I am Zimbabwean. So I think for me both places worked in my favour at all times. I mean even in South Africa because of the surname I have, South Africa worked well for me because a lot of guys would say why would you want to go and extend your residence permit, you are South African. And I would say, no I am not South African, just my name sounds South African. So I don't think it was a disadvantage… I think I used it to my advantage. I have always kind of felt that if it worked for me, well then I will go in that direction.[72]

> When I am in Botswana I am always told that I am a foreigner, that I am a Kwerekwere. When in Zimbabwe or I am around Zimbabweans, I am told I am not Zimbabwean. So I have always had those two at loggerheads …. It has also worked to my advantage because I can easily switch from one nationality to another. So it favours me. I have been on vacation in Zimbabwe, where as a foreigner you have to pay an extra amount but because of my situation, I present myself as a local. So it works for me. So even this side (Botswana) I do the same thing.[73]

In reference to their own research into the migration experiences of a group of young adults in Australia, Easthope (2009) argued that mobility and place are essential components of identity construction and, in turn further discussed the complex inter-relationships between mobility, place, and identity. My study with migrant descendants in Botswana points to similar discussions as demonstrated by the above quotes by *Falcon* and *Lyon*.

Another element that emerged was that mobility and place do not only give rise to the self-identification of my research participants but are also used to navigate who they choose to become in that space at a particular time and how they, in turn, use their identity as the previous examples have shown. By doing this, participants are demonstrating that they are simultaneously transcending and reconciling their identities.

The influence of mobility and place on identity aligns with Goffman (1963) cited in Gabriel (2004:115). He argues for the importance of understanding the influence of

[72] Ibid: Interview with *Falcon*

[73] Interview with Research Participant*: Lyon* on1 July 2020 via Zoom.

migration on identity construction because when people move, they usually experience new interpersonal relations that will impact their understanding of their own identities. This was evident with the experiences of some of my research participants who had moved and lived in different countries other than Botswana for either work or studies.

The perceptions of society in the places where they lived shaped the identity of the participants too. For example, participants who were exposed to two or more countries or cultures mentioned that they changed their identities depending on who they were speaking to or where they were. This also depended on how identity was understood and shaped in those specific places. For instance, one participant with origins from Tanzania stated that when in Botswana, they identify as Tanzanian but when in Tanzania, they will identify as a *Motswana*. This was done because they either wanted to avoid explaining their heritage and motivating how they fit into the nationality of the country when they do not "look, sound or dress like a local" or to avoid statements such as "how are you a *Motswana* who cannot speak *Setswana*."

The below extracts from *Bella*, *Lyon* and *Louvre* emphasise this point. *Louvre* brings out her self-identification and explains that how her identity is perceived depends on the place and who she is talking to:

> Uhm.. not really, uhm it depends on who it is. In government offices, I think they are forced to, but when you have deeper conversations no, uhm because people always try to, they always wanna know where your parents are from. When you are in Botswana, it's just about where your parents are from, they wanna know which kgotla (tribal court) you are from, they wanna know what your tribe is, if your tribe is not in Botswana then surely you are not Motswana according to a lot of people. Uhm, amongst people in situations as I am, people who have naturalised, there I understand. Uhm but when I now also go to Tanzania, I am also not Tanzanian enough and I apparently have a different accent, uhm I have mannerisms that are foreign, I am not authentically Tanzanian anymore, so they say I am diluted, uhm so I think it really depends on where I am and, who I am talking to.[74]

Lyon's experience also underlined the societal perceptions of identity that influence how one self-identifies. He further shows that how you perceive yourself may not be the same as how others see you. Thus, whether one's self-identification is accepted or not, is

[74] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Louvre*

dependent on the normative social categories that have been adopted for one to fit into the perceived description of the collective group. For example, *Lyon* highlighted that his name, the colour of his skin and accent were things that set him apart and resulted in people assuming he is a foreigner in Botswana.

> So in terms of when the official documentation is required, it has not affected me in any way. But in terms of society, one would look at me and say I am a foreigner. I think what makes people think I am a foreigner is because of my name, and obviously my skin (referring to dark skin), one would say I don't look like a local and also the way I speak, it does not have that natural Setswana accent in it. I don't know what people pick up. I would say I speak Setswana fluently; I really don't know what they pick up. Even in Zimbabwe as well when I speak my Shona, people always have a way of identifying.[75]

Lyon's example illustrates that such individuals who grow up in bicultural environments are constantly negotiating their identity and place between two cultures. According to Liu (2015) the categories that people with a migrant background use to define themselves culturally, significantly affect their self-image because those categories symbolically mark the boundaries between the self and the other. However, as shown by the experience of *Lyon*, the same applies to the categories that societies apply that mark the boundaries of who fits the identities that are constructed at the societal level and those that do not fit such identities. Finally, *Bella's* example also underscores the role of place and the perceptions of the people who are asking the question. These factors played a role in how she self-identified at different times. She had the following to say:

> Okay it depends where you are asking. So for example when I was doing my Masters in South Africa, if someone asked me where you are from, I would be like, I live in Botswana, I have Botswana citizenship but I am originally from Tanzania. And they are always like, ey, that's complicated. But when I am here in Botswana, when someone asks me, I say I am from Tanzania which is weird because my friends are always like, no you are from here, you have citizenship but when someone asks me in Botswana, I say I am from Tanzania. When I am in Tanzania, I say I am from Botswana lol. So my answer depends on where I am in the world lol. [76]

[75] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Lyon*
[76] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Bella*

In addition, *Bella* provided a justification for her identity switching strategy as an excuse not to explain what she thinks is a complicated identity for others to understand and relate to. In her words, *Bella* had the following to say:

> So I think it's an easy way out for me. It's an excuse for me to be like well I am not from here that is why I don't know, this and that. And then when I am in Tanzania, I am not from here, that is why I don't speak so fluently or know this, or and that. So it's always an excuse.[77]

The preceding discussions and experiences of people with migrant backgrounds in Botswana showed that several factors including mobility and place influence how these individuals choose to self-identify in a particular place. Like Awokoya's (2009) study, the above discussions also highlight that people with a migrant background are not only adopting a sense of identity within the limiting confines of constructed stereotypes and expectations held by mainstream society. They are also demonstrating that their identities are based on many conflicting factors that require them to be aware of their surroundings so that they can modify their identities to that particular context.

The above discussions further support one of the thesis's main arguments that people with a migrant background exercise agential identity in deciding how best to use their multiple identities or experiences to their advantage. The participants also showed that choosing to adopt one identity over the other can be used at various times and for various reasons. This strategy is what Awokoya (2009:132-133) calls a multi-layered consciousness of migrant descendants' identity and of the different contexts in which they existed.

4.3.5 Socio-economic Class, Space and the Production of Postcolonial Identity

Another important factor revealed through discussions related to place and mobility is the role of socioeconomic class as a structuring force in identity formation. While the primary focus of this study has been on ethnicity, culture, and legal status as determinants of identity and belonging in Botswana, class and spatial location (urban/rural and diaspora) are equally

[77] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Bella*

significant. Moreover, the notion of multiple and hyphenated identities described in this study such as *Motswana*-Kenyan must be understood not merely through an ethnic lens but also through a classed and urban lens.

This is because many respondents in this study exhibited characteristics aligned with what Selasi (2005) describes as Afropolitanism. Selasi defines Afropolitanism, as an identity that is constructed along at least three dimensions - national, racial, and cultural, with each carrying subtle tensions and negotiations. Selasi further argues that unlike their parents, who could often claim a singular national belonging, Afropolitans must actively define their relationship to multiple places of residence and affiliation. Thus, their sense of national identity becomes a matter of choice and affect that selectively internalises elements such as citizenship, language, or cultural practices. And as the participants showed, place and space as well as their experiences affected or influenced how such groups self-identified.

In as much as most of the participants interviewed came from middle to upper-middle-income families[78], were urban-based, and were highly educated, and well-travelled, class was not initially given sustained attention in the analysis. Nonetheless, it emerged in various ways throughout the narratives, highlighting that identity formation is not shaped solely by ethnicity or legal status but also by class position and access to resources and experiences. Urban spaces like Gaborone, Francistown and Maun in Botswana as well as the diaspora where most respondents resided, provided greater opportunities for social and cultural navigation, access to elite networks, and exposure to regional and global identities, which could be the opposite of rural settings often reinforced by stricter ethnic boundaries and exclusionary practices.

As Achille Mbembe (2017) and others have noted, urban African centres cultivate identities that transcend rigid ethnic and national categories. Consequently, the multiple and hyphenated identities observed among respondents are not only products of migrant descent but are also performances of urban middle-class belonging, shaped by specific access to globalised cultural capital. Thus, identity in Botswana is not only an ethnic or

[78] Most of the participants' parents came to Botswana as skilled labourers to fill in the skills gaps and shortages that were present in certain professions at the time. This meant that most participants came from well of homes which enabled them access to socio-economic opportunities and exposure.

legal matter but can be influenced by socioeconomic stratification as is the case with some of the research participants in this study.

4.4 People with a Migrant Background: Hybridity Theory, The Third Space and Centring the Margin

> A person in the margins is outside the definitions imposed by the master discourse, just as the margin of a book lies beyond the words; she has the ability both to define herself and to gain a new perspective on society as a whole. A person in the margins is outside the usual categories, definitions, and binaries of society; not "Self' or "Other," not "Black" or "White," she develops and articulates instead her own subjectivity and identity, her own highly personal sense of the world - Hooks (1989)

The preceding discussions have in many ways made a case for the recognition of multiple and hyphenated identities, cultures and experiences that inform how people with a migrant background self-identify. In the introduction section, I mentioned that people with a migrant background in this study are demonstrating an acceptance of their hyphenated and multiple identities through embracing all their experiences as part of who they are. In a sense, such groups are embracing the space of in-betweenness that is produced through their experiences.

As shown by hooks' quote above, people with a migrant background are playing with the power of the margin or centring the margin. This is because they have not only located themselves outside the categories of the normative definitions of how one self-identifies but have developed their own sense of identity and embraced it. Moreover, as illustrated through their experiences of navigating their identities in different locations and spaces, people with a migrant background have demonstrated that the margin is a position of strategy, not essence (Walker, 1999).

Lancione (2016:3) explains that being at the margin means being positioned outside a boundary, while others are "inside," closer to the centre. This process of bordering practices defines what is right or wrong, who belongs and who does not, thus creating margins. In essence, Lancione argues that these borders produce specific spaces and identities. In Botswana, for example, this practice is evident in the way ethnic identity has

been shaped around *Tswana* ethnicity, pushing those who do not fit within this identity to the margins, effectively keeping them "out."

Building on Moola et al (2023) this chapter also demonstrates that the margin can be a place where powerful counter-discourses are generated and speak back to dominant discourses which in this case are the discourses of identity based on rigid categories of nationality and ethnicity. However, in the same vein, Walker (1999) notes that notions of the margin and marginalised people carry powerful negative connotations and as such, we often think of the margin as a place of oppression and even despair. hooks' (1989) work urges us to recalibrate this way of thinking by locating the margin as a radical standpoint perspective position.

In fact, hooks suggests that identity marginalisation is much more than a site of deprivation but a site of radical possibility, a space of resistance. It is this marginality that acts as a central location to produce counter hegemonic discourse that is not just in words but in habits of being and the way one lives (hooks, 1989). Therefore, according to hooks, theorising and centring for example people with a migrant background's experiences critically is an agenda for radical cultural practice.

While some authors already mentioned here approach the discourse on margins through a racial and gendered lens (in the case of hooks) and through childhood and disability research (in the case of Moola et al.), my study contributes to these discussions by centring the margins while intentionally de-emphasising ethnicity and nationality as the primary frameworks for self-identification. This is particularly relevant in studies on people with a migrant background in the context of post-colonial nation-building and national identity. In addition, by de-centring ethnicity and nationality in discussions on identity, this chapter shows that people with a migrant background have disrupted dominant discourses and made space for hidden and alternative narratives of self-identification (Moola et al, 2023).

These alternative forms of self-identification or in-betweenness are what I consider as the third space drawn from Bhabha's hybridity theory. Building on from Bhabha, Easthope (2009) notes that the term hybridity which was originally used to describe people of mixed race has since evolved and was adopted by postcolonial and post structuralist theories to refer to the notion of in-betweenness as a position or being between positions.

Similarly, Beya (1998) concurs and postulates that some scholars adopted the hybridity theory, primarily due to its prominence in postcolonial cultural criticism and its unique perspective on identity and cultural shifts resulting from migration (Jayasinha, 2015).

Although developed by Homi Bhabha in his seminal work - The Location of Culture (1994), the theory of hybridity has become central to understanding cultural dynamics (Beya, 1998; Jayasinha, 2015). While Bhabha is credited as a major figure in this discourse (Sayegh, 2008), it is noted that ideas of cultural flux and relativity were present before his seminal work, with scholars like Stuart Hall highlighting the centrality of migrant experiences (Moslund, 2010; Hall, 1993). Nonetheless, Bhabha's contribution lies in integrating concepts like uncertainty and fragmented identity into academic discourse, challenging essentialist notions (Hoffman, 1999).

Beya (1998) emphasises how the hybrid theory challenges essentialist purity, exposing the contradictions within colonial discourse and the ambivalence of colonists towards the colonised other. In the context of nation building, this theory challenges the primordial approach which emphasises the importance of ethnicity, culture and heritage in shaping identity and nationalism (Coakley, 2017). Primordialist also link identity to deeply rooted historical and cultural connections often tied back to ancestral roots and shared experiences (Coakley, 2017). Furthermore, according to this perspective, identities are seen as innate and predetermined while often emphasising the importance of preserving cultural traditions and protecting ethnic homogeneity within a nation-state (Vitali, 2023) as exemplified by nation-states such as Botswana.

The hybridity theory, therefore, offers a nuanced understanding of cultural dynamics in postcolonial contexts. Sayegh concurs with Beya's perspective, asserting that Bhabha's analysis of the interactions between colonists and the colonised sheds light on how colonial experiences shape the identities of the colonised, imposing external social categories. This imposition results in the creation of hybrid cultural expressions that challenge colonial beliefs. Bhabha (1995:209) posits that these expressions emerge in a "liminal space," challenging Western imperialists or colonisers' essentialist claims of cultural purity (Sayegh, 2008).

To understand hybridity, Bhabha defines it as a process giving rise to something new and recognisable, emphasising negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha,

1994). The term, originally used for mixed-race people as stated, has evolved in postcolonial and poststructuralist theories to denote in-betweenness (Easthope, 2009). Staliūnas identifies different types of hybrid identities, particularly focusing on double consciousness, where individuals navigate multiple cultures or nationalities (Staliūnas, 2008). Participants in this study demonstrated embracing both cultures and utilising their in-betweenness to navigate their identities.

Bhabha's concept of the third space, as an arena for cultural interactions, challenges essentialist notions of identity (Bhabha, 1990). This space reflects participants' ambivalence in identification, as they assert agency in embracing their otherness (Bhabha, 1990). Bauman echoes Bhabha, highlighting the emergence of new hybrid identities through cultural interactions (Bauman, 1996). Scholars view hybridity as a challenge to essentialism, confronting and problematising boundaries without erasing them (Ang, 2003). This challenges notions of a unified identity and questions the dominance of national traditions (Salami and Pirayesh, 2019).

As mentioned, one type of hybrid identity that Staliūnas (2008:254) is interested in is the one that results in double consciousness. In this case, the author states it is where an individual tries to combine two or more cultures or national cultures. Although my participants' identities did not necessarily morph into this type of hybrid identity, there are still parallels that can be drawn as what some of them were presenting was a combination of two or more cultures and identities. Moreover, my research participants were either choosing to embrace both cultures or used this place of liminality and in-betweenness that resulted from the mix of cultures to navigate their day to day lives.

This space of liminality and in-betweenness is where people with a migrant background locate or make sense of their identity or self-identification. Hence, for Bhabha (1990), hybridity is the third space which enables other positions to emerge. Bhabha (1990:211) further argues that the third space is not so much an identity but an identification process "of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification - the subject - is always ambivalent, because of the interventions of that otherness."

Following Bhabha's explanation, I motivate that my participants' in-betweenness and liminality showed a level of ambivalence and ambiguity in their identification process

– this sense of not being fully this nor that was revealed in their hesitation to not just accept one identity or identify with a particular group. At the same time, people with a migrant background showed assertiveness and agency in adopting and choosing to embrace or accept their otherness as part of who they are.

According to Bauman (1996) in Bhabha's view, the third space is a metaphor for the space where cultural interactions occur, resulting in the rise of new hybrid identities through the processes of cultural hybridisation and transculturation. Thus, the mix of my research participants' experiences and forms of identities that results in in-betweenness and liminality is what emerges as the third space. However, in this third space, what emerges is not a hybrid identity but a form of ambiguity and ambivalence which is mediated by an agential use of identity as characterised by participants' recognition of their hyphenated and multiple identities.

In this third space, participants can choose to navigate their identity or at times accept this third space as a reality of what best defines them and their experiences. In discussing her own experience of living in a space of in-betweenness, Ang (2003), a South Asian scholar navigating life between Asia and the Western world, captured this concept as a lived reality and stated:

> If I were to apply this notion of complicated entanglement to my own personal situation, I would describe myself as suspended in-between: neither truly Western nor authentically Asian; embedded in the West yet always partially disengaged from it; disembedded from Asia yet somehow enduringly attached to it emotionally. I wish to hold this hybrid in-betweenness not because it is a comfortable position to be in, but because it's very ambivalence position is a source of cultural permeability and vulnerability that is a necessary condition for living together in difference. It is the ambivalence that is immanent to hybridity that needs to be highlighted, as we also need to examine the specific contexts and conditions in which hybridity operates - Ang (2003:150).

As Ang (2003) argues, hybridity confronts and problematises boundaries without erasing them through its implied unsettling of identities. Bhabha cited in Salami and Pirayesh (2019) highlights that the concept of hybridity questions a homogeneous and unified identity that is held together by people's national traditions. Discussions with research participants in this study show acceptance of their "otherness" as challenging the status quo of a bounded identity and as such their acceptance of an agential use of identity

and a reclaiming of the centre. This essentially leaves them with an ambiguous way of self-identification that I argue creates an ambivalent relationship with the state of Botswana. Moreover, like Ang (2003) cited above, people with a migrant background are suspended in-between two or more worlds and as cases like *Tasha*, *Louvre* and others have shown, they are embedded in Botswana yet partially disengaged from it. At the same time, they are also disengaged elsewhere (in some cases, their countries of origin) yet still emotionally attached to such places. People with a migrant background are not oblivious to this fact. In fact, it's their self- reflective approach that enables them to locate an honest position about their multiple and hyphenated identities even with their complications.

Despite the recognition of hybridity's value, critics like Jayasinha (2015) caution against oversimplifying identity or overlooking power dynamics. Scholars like hooks, Gilroy, Said, and Anzaldua offer critiques and alternative perspectives on hybridity, highlighting its limitations and calling for intersectional approaches that address issues of structure, power, race, and other forms of often overlooked oppressions; cultural identity and representation (hooks, 1984; Gilroy, 1993; Said, 1978; Anzaldua, 1987).

Anzaldua's concept of "mestizaje" emphasises the complexities of identity in border regions and the need for fluidity (Martinez-Echazabal, 1998). Similarly, the participants in this study demonstrated agency in negotiating multiple identities and belonging, echoing Anzaldua's call to unsettle traditional notions of identity and ways of being (Anzaldua, 1987). Using her own words through lived experiences, Anzaldua's words, aptly capture what living in the borders (metaphorically or physically) means:

> Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being "worked" on. I have the sense that certain "faculties" not just in me but in every border resident, coloured or uncoloured-and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened. Strange, huh? And yes, the "alien" element has become familiar-never comfortable, not with society's clamour to uphold the old, to re-join the flock to go with the herd. No, not comfortable but home (Anzaldua, 1987:n.p).

While the above highlights what Anzaldua admits are the joys of living in the border, she admits there have been discomforts and uncomfortability of straddling between

two cultures and dealing with the contradictions. Therefore, her work is an invitation for scholars to begin to identify with complexities that come with the space and feelings of in-betweenness as part of the human experience and as a field to explore multiple life worlds (Anzaldua, 1987).

This can present or be a space of self-discovery for such individuals through embracing intricacies that come with it. As such, the capability to assert and negotiate multiple identities and contradictory cultures is what the research participants in this study have demonstrated. And just like Anzaldua asserts, and has been alluded to before, what the participants in this thesis demonstrate is an agential use of identity in that they are not seeking permission to be accepted by society but to be met halfway. Thus, instead of moving from the margins to the centre, they are inviting us to re-think the margins and unsettle the centre (Iskander and Landau, 2022).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that in as much as the identities of people with a migrant background are multifaceted and fluid, such groups have accepted this reality as part of who they are. Rather than to seek existential stability, they embrace and identify as what best defines them in situ. While this may create ambivalence in their self-identification process and articulation, people with a migrant background engage in self-reflective approaches to understand how they use their multiple-hyphenated identities to navigate different spaces to their advantage.

I put forward that the research participants in this study are showing a sense of agential use of identity through employing tactics and strategies to switch identities and straddle between different worlds to their advantage. They know how to appear in certain spaces, when identity switching works for them and which story to tell about themselves that will best serve them in the moment.

I have also demonstrated in this chapter that people with a migrant background's self-identification is multi-layered. Though they embrace their mixed experiences, some also adopted multi-hyphenated identities, while at the same time recognising the Botswana

identity, mainly for administrative and bureaucratic purposes. Likewise, their migratory history, mobility, socio-economic class and experiences in different places, influence the fluid identities of these individuals and the ways in which they employ various tactics and strategies to instrumentalise their identity.

This chapter further illustrates that by not fully adopting the Botswana identity, there are various ways in which people can self-identify that are not bound by social constructs and ideas of nationhood. Moreover, people with a migrant background in this study further demonstrated that identification with the Botswana identity does not translate to fully embracing the identity. In this, they show that they are still connected to the places that contribute to the people they have become. Therefore, by embracing their multiple and hyphenated identities, people with a migrant background are in many ways pushing against the ideals of the Botswana nation-state, which through its mono-ethnic approach to nation building intended to create a uni-identity of its citizenry.

A theme that cuts across this chapter is that people with a migrant background are aware that they can never identify as just one thing. They are choosing to embrace all experiences and everything else that makes up who they are. This mix of their experiences, I argue, is an amalgamation of different identities and experiences that they seem to be embracing. Throughout the chapter, what has been common no matter how a participant chose to self-identify is that they alluded to either being a mix of something and were for the most part hesitant or not comfortable to choose one thing over the other. For them, they are a sum of all their experiences, and these make up who they are.

The chapter also makes the case that a variety of factors can affect identity construction and self-identification in that within a group, different interpretations of identity may exist depending on a person's socio-economic class, migratory history, transnational ties to their country of origin, cultural upbringing, and social experiences that shape their self-identification. For example, the more my respondents were immersed in the *Tswana* culture, the more they identified with the country and embraced hyphenated identities. Immersion in the *Tswana* culture for this study took several specific forms. The most common and effective forms of immersion included: language acquisition, participation in cultural practices, educational socialisation and social networks and intermarriage.

On the other hand, those raised as expatriates and exposed to various cultures retained strong ties to their country of origin and places other than Botswana. As such, identification with the state at a later stage in life became a choice they made to integrate into society for administrative purposes and for economic opportunities.

The discussions in this chapter also complement studies such as Spano (2015), whose research on former refugees originally from South Africa with Botswana citizenship showed that the identities of such groups were constructed and negotiated in multiple locations as opposed to being fixed, rooted, and territorialised.

Finally, the contribution that this chapter makes to broader knowledge and scholarship is that it shows that multiple-hyphenated identities of people with a migrant background are in many ways challenging the normative and primordial ideologies of nation-states. It pushes back against the standardisation of culture as a means to develop a collective consciousness and identification.

As discussed in the introduction, this chapter also contributes to knowledge and discussions by highlighting what life in the margins looks like for people with a migrant background. It has essentially demonstrated that for such groups the margin is not just a space of marginalisation but where creativity and agency meet. Following these discussions the next section will discuss how people with a migrant background are using tactical citizenship to redefine citizenship through various practices and strategies.

5 Chapter Five: *We are called Motswana wa pampiri* - Tactical Citizenship, Political Invisibility and Limits to Rights in Botswana

> On the issue of citizenship, we have what some often refer to as *Motswana wa pampiri*[79]. Citizenship on paper refers to people who are naturalised citizens. Who have come into the country and then applied for citizenship, but who feel that after they have acquired that citizenship, they are never quite treated the same way as citizens by birth, that they don't have the same opportunities necessarily, or necessarily the same rights. They may at a bureaucratic level have the same rights in terms of voting, old age pension, and so forth but I think it is much deeper. It is how they feel if the choice is between someone who is a naturalised citizen and someone who is a citizen by birth. Are they on an equal footing in every respect? So, there is a lot of food for thought there.[80]

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Three discusses the historical development of Botswana's citizenship laws and how they have evolved over time, ultimately contributing to the exclusion and marginalisation[81] of certain individuals due to the way citizenship is categorised. This chapter takes the discussion further by highlighting the experiences of people with a migrant background and showing how they are affected or have been affected by these changes. I also demonstrate how these forms of othering manifest at the political and social level in Botswana. As such, in this chapter, I understand the "political" more broadly to encompass not only formal practices of representation and voting, but also everyday acts of civic participation, negotiation of rights, and performances of identity and belonging within public space.

As a result, I show that people with a migrant background in Botswana, cognisant of this fact, develop strategies to navigate political invisibility and employ tactics to redefine their access to rights while confronting the limitations of Botswana citizenship. I

[79] A *Setswana* term used to refer to naturalised citizens. It loosely translates to citizen on paper or paper citizen. These words will be used interchangeably throughout the text.

[80] Interview with *Dublin*, migration scholar, 5th of August 2020 conducted online via Zoom.

[81] While marginality is often spatialised, in this study it is also understood as a social and political condition — a "zone of being" characterised by precarious access to recognition, rights, and full belonging."

argue that political invisibility and tactics are a means by which people with a migrant background redefine the rights they can access while simultaneously maintaining the boundaries and limitations of Botswana citizenship based on their perceived status as 'outsiders.' Furthermore, I examine how people with a migrant background in Botswana experience citizenship and the process of claiming rights.

I demonstrate that people with a migrant background view the framing of *Tswana*-ethnic citizenship as a key factor influencing their feelings of incomplete belonging to the nation. This framing also contributes to their lack of representation in both official and social discussions of national identity. I also show that people with a migrant background adopt an in-and-out perspective, viewing citizenship as a tool for claiming rights rather than a marker of identity or belonging.

This highlights the tensions between how citizenship is framed and the lived experiences of people with a migrant background. It also exposes the mechanisms that silence migrant descent and minimise minority status, which are rooted in *Tswana* privilege and policies that reinforce exclusion. By using the concept of *Motswana wa pampiri*, I reveal how these tensions push people with a migrant background to navigate between asserting their rights and protecting their citizenship status and adopting strategies to claim their rights in the face of exclusion.

This chapter also challenges traditional ideas of citizenship, highlighting how it is reshaped daily through local-level rights-claiming strategies. Drawing on Lee (2006), I refer to these processes as tactical citizenship. Lee's (2006) work with domestic workers in the United States of America (USA) helps in demonstrating that the research participants' employment of tactics and strategies to access some rights while self-alienating themselves from others are showing/helping us reformulate alternative forms of citizenship. These alternative forms of citizenship simultaneously agree to and challenge the conventional scripts of "citizenship in political theory. This chapter advances these discussions by showing that tactical citizenship is not only used by non-citizens but also citizens as a form of citizenship practices from the below.

Using de Certeau's notion of tactics, Lee refers to alternative uses of citizenship scripts as tactical citizenship. In the case of Botswana, tactical citizenship underlines one way in which people with a migrant background (both citizens and non-citizens) participate

politically to claim rights. Furthermore, by drawing on people with a migrant background's diverse perspectives and experiences, the chapter also highlights the complexities of citizenship, particularly in contexts where ethnicity and indigeneity shape national identity and rights access in a state.

The chapter proceeds by i) providing a brief overview of the politics of identity as an exclusionary approach to citizenship; ii) discussing the challenges with the interpretation and implementation of citizenship laws, iii) the concept of *Motswana wa pampiri* and the creation of citizenship laws in Botswana iv.) tactical citizenship and the instrumentalisation of access to rights and finally v.) the limits to Botswana citizenship and political invisibility.

5.2 Politics of Identity as an Exclusionary Approach to Citizenship Rights

Botswana's citizenship approach and practices continue to be criticised by some individuals for its exclusionary approach to claiming certain rights. In addition, throughout the country's history, citizenship in some instances has been used as a form of discipline and control. This approach has resulted in both the exclusion by the state and the self-exclusion of minority groups, as it regulates how such groups claim certain political rights and the extent to which they engage in matters of the state that affect them on a daily basis.

Some sections of the Botswana citizenship Act are vague and can be subject to misinterpretation and abuse by politicians and immigration officials. For example, Section 5 of the Act, which speaks to citizenship by descent, is not as straightforward as it has been presented. The case of John Modise is an example of this. Modise, a *Motswana* born in South Africa to *Batswana* parents prior to the independence of Botswana, was brought up in Botswana but had his citizenship revoked in 1978, the year he became the founder and leader of an opposition political party (Manby, 2009).

During that period, the government decided he could not claim citizenship by descent, and the Office of the President declared Modise a prohibited immigrant, which resulted in his arrest and deportation to South Africa, where he was also not recognised as

a citizen, rendering him stateless (Manby, 2009). After a lengthy battle spanning several years, he finally received assistance through the intervention of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. The Botswana government reached a compromise and granted Modise citizenship through naturalisation rather than descent. This was obviously limiting because persons who obtain citizenship by naturalisation in Botswana are restricted from holding political office, including the presidency position (Manby, 2009).

A more recent case in 2019 is that of Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, who was asked to renounce her Malawian citizenship after declaring interest in challenging the then incumbent state President Eric Mokgweetsi Masisi for the presidency of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). This request was made after Venson-Moitoi, a *Motswana* born in Botswana to a Malawian father, had served under the BDP-led government for 40 years in a variety of positions (Dube, 2019). Venson-Moitoi claimed that this was a ploy by the government at the time to derail her plans to run for office. After checking with the *Omang* office,[82] she was told that there was no reason to renounce her Malawian citizenship and that she was still within the legal constraints (Dube, 2019).

The examples above demonstrate how the state, through the influence of political leaders, has used identity politics to not only redefine citizenship when it suits a specific agenda but also to deny the rights of others through discipline and control when authority is challenged. This reaffirms Molosiwa and Bolaane's (2021) argument in Chapter Three on radical masculinities in reference to refugees and asylum seekers mostly from South Africa that were welcomed into the country and provided shelter but were excluded from citizenship. The Botswana nation-state perceived their radical views based on their political views from back home to be a threat to the existing peace and stability in the country.

Section 6 of the 1998 citizenship Act, which expressly mentions citizenship by settlement, has been used to the detriment of some ethnic groups, particularly those descended from border communities. The Section states that settlement in Botswana must have occurred before September 30, 1966. However, this provision is vague, as most of the ethnic groups in present day Botswana settled during the pre-colonial and colonial periods at varying times. Additionally, it raises specific questions as to which groups are affected

[82] The department under the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration & Gender Affairs that is responsible for the issuing and replacing national Identity card (ID).

by this provision because there is anecdotal evidence to show that non-*Tswana* ethnic groups are in some instances denied citizenship or struggle to obtain citizenship despite the provisions stipulated in the Act. I use *Donald*,[83] one of my research participants, to demonstrate the ambiguity of Section 6 and its effects on minority groups.

Donald is a retired government official whose parents arrived in Botswana in 1950, the year before he was born. *Donald's* family settled in Botswana from Zimbabwe, which was at the time of emigration called Southern Rhodesia. His family settled in one of the border areas in the North-East region of Botswana. *Donald* did not face any challenges while growing up, in fact, through the assistance of the government and missionaries, he was able to attend school and further his education. He even obtained a passport when the document was first introduced in the country for the purpose of travel. However, he notes experiencing challenges when he started progressing in his career. According to *Donald:*

> In 1966, people were asked to regularise citizenship. Those who arrived before 1966 were eligible to become Botswana citizens. In my case, my mother was always in Johannesburg. Except we arrived in 1950, and my birth certificate showed that I was born in 1951. Well, there were no birth certificates at the time; it was my passport. So they (immigration officials) told me, "You are not a Motswana citizen because you were not born here." We told them that because we received the passport before independence, most children born around that time were given passports. There was no farce about it at the time. So this is when immigration officials raised this issue because now I was changing to a diplomatic passport and I was going to be transferred overseas. What happened was that the president at the time, President Sir Seretse Khama, granted me citizenship through presidential power, and I ended up going abroad.

The preceding examples demonstrate that the law is not always uniformly applied in practice. In the case of *Donald,* he was eligible for citizenship under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, but this was ignored by immigration officials, and he instead had to obtain it through the Presidential power. In addition, the above examples further illustrate that the attitudes of officials who have no understanding of the law or have preconceived ideas of who belongs or has the right to claim citizenship have detrimental consequences for those with a migrant background.

[83] Interview with Research Participant: *Donald*, retired government official on 20th of January 2021 conducted in person.

As argued earlier, the interpretation and implementation of laws pertaining to this are arbitrary and only affect a certain portion of the population whose origins are not considered indigenous despite the history and length of time spent in the country which further highlights the ethnic character of Botswana citizenship. Furthermore, the law as shown, has been used in some cases as a form of discipline and control for those with a migration background who attempt to challenge authority. As the case of *Donald* shows, changes that have taken place over time have consequences for how the law is understood and interpreted on the ground. The next section further discusses these challenges using the experiences of people with a migrant background.

5.3 Perceptions with Exclusion: Challenges with the Interpretation and Implementation of Citizenship Laws

Chapter Three demonstrated that the Botswana citizenship Act has undergone several changes aimed at addressing some of the discriminatory provisions that excluded groups such as women and minority groups. Although the positive changes have been welcome, in some cases, change has also brought about challenges for certain individuals and excluded them from accessing citizenship as the examples below will show.

It is worth noting that the examples provided both from scholarly literature and the experiences of my research participants speak to the ideas of indigeneity and autochthony that have been discussed by other scholars and are played out in practice. Furthermore, these experiences show that the changes to the Citizenship law have contributed to a lack of understanding and misinterpretation of the law even by immigration officials which has impacted citizens oblivious to this fact.

The examples from participants in my study underscore this challenge and shed light on the social implications it can have on families. For example, one of my research participants named *Louvre,* first introduced in Chapter Four [84] arrived in Botswana when she was about to turn 2 years old. She obtained citizenship through her father, originally

[84] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Louvre*

from Tanzania who had been naturalised and became a *Motswana* and by extension, her whole family obtained citizenship as they too qualified.

At the time, Louvre's citizenship was granted under the Citizenship Act of 1984, however, the Act was subsequently revised resulting in the Citizenship Act of 1998 which brought about new provisions that prohibited dual citizenship for individuals above the age of 21. Since *Louvre* was still under 21 years at the time of obtaining citizenship, she automatically had dual citizenship. However, her challenge started when she turned 21 years of age and Section 15 of the 1998 citizenship was automatically applied, resulting in her Botswana citizenship being revoked without her knowledge. This resulted in complications that rendered her stateless for a period of over a year, posing a risk to her livelihood, mobility and access to citizenship rights.

Although she technically still held Tanzanian citizenship, she faced challenges because, when she obtained Botswana citizenship, officials confiscated her Tanzanian passport. This was not supposed to happen, as she had not yet turned 21. Additionally, the absence of a Tanzanian embassy in Botswana made it difficult for her to obtain a new Tanzanian passport she could use to travel and as a form of identification.

For other participants, changes in citizenship laws were experienced at the family level. These changes created a situation where multiple citizenships existed in one family. For example, *Leonore*[85] a participant whose parents were originally from Ghana was born into a family of four children. Due to changes in the Citizenship Act, she and her brother are the only siblings who were granted Botswana citizenship, while her other two siblings and parents were not eligible to apply. *Leonore's* citizenship was granted under the provision of the Citizenship Act of 1982. In narrating her experience, this was her recollection:

> So, in Botswana, up until 1983, if you were born in Botswana, very much like British citizenship, you could claim citizenship, so I was born before 1983. I have two older brothers. So, the oldest was born in Ghana but the second one was born in Botswana. I was born in Botswana. My youngest sister was born after 1983 so she could not claim citizenship. I could get citizenship even though my parents were not citizens but then I think my parents, I don't know, I think they must have

[85] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Leonore*

> had this idea that they will always go back to Ghana at some point, and I guess that just never happened.

The different dynamics within families with mixed citizenry obviously had consequences for how affected individuals experienced Botswana and the challenges this presented for them. In her reflections, *Leonore* underscores this point and states:

> I think my sister would have had different experiences to tell you because she experienced Botswana as a Ghanaian and I don't think she would share the same identity issues I had because she has always been a Ghanaian. She has never had a Botswana passport, and she has always been stamped as a Ghanaian. For me because I have the passport, there is a bit of where do I fit in here? So, this was always viewed as a bit of a crisis for me because I always wanted to fit in somewhere and I didn't.

Another example which validates *Leonore's* experience is Ruva*,* a 30-year-old at the time of the interview, with origins from Zimbabwe. *Ruva* pointed out that the process of obtaining citizenship in Botswana does not consider family dynamics and the complications or challenges that may arise when certain family members are denied citizenship while others receive it. Moreover, she pointed to the lack of transparency involved in the process of decision-making after lodging an application because the applicants are not provided with the reasons for rejection. In her account, she narrates the following:

> My dad was denied citizenship even though he was the one working and contributing taxes if you want to put it that way and he was the reason we were there (in Botswana). He has been declined twice which is very interesting because it then brings the awareness that our structures are not transparent enough. We don't know why he was denied. We don't know why he was denied the second time and our laws don't require that they explain the reason to you. So it has been interesting because all these years since I was 4, we have been living on temporary resident permits. Then my mum, my sister, and I became citizens in 2007 and not my dad. He continued to apply for temporary residence over and over again. That of course is very disruptive to family life and it made us notice a lot of what was happening. That this is common in Botswana, that they (the government) don't respect marriage and they can tear families apart by simply denying one spouse a permit or citizenship and giving the other spouse.[86]

[86]Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Ruva*

When engaging the government official at the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration, and Gender Affairs on this issue, the official mentioned that this lack of transparency is something that is legalised through the Citizenship Act. This provision in the Act not only grants the presiding Minister's decision as final on the matter but also the right not to disclose the reasons for the denial. The official, however, disclosed that even though the law does not allow for this, there have been rare cases where they have felt compelled to divulge to applicants the reasons for rejection to give them closure. The official mentioned that a candidate has the right to appeal the decision but as shown by the example of *Ruva'*s father, that does not always guarantee a positive outcome.

The foregoing discussions have shown the implications of the development and changes of the Botswana Citizenship Act over time. Although some changes have been positive in addressing inequalities to redress issues of gender equality and discrimination among citizens, other changes have continuously contributed to the marginalisation and exclusion of certain factions of the population that include people with migrant ancestry. As the examples provided by the research participants have shown, these challenges particularly affect citizens that are not of *Tswana* ethnicity and have further resulted in the differentiation among citizens at the social and political level where those originally from outside of Botswana or naturalised are considered less authentic citizens on paper and at the social level.

The citizenship processes in Botswana have made it difficult for research participants to feel connected to Botswana's citizenship. They perceive it as exclusionary, with the procedures for obtaining citizenship lacking transparency, especially when applications are denied without explanation. Most participants view citizenship mainly from an administrative perspective, as it relates to accessing rights, which is discussed in Chapter Four and the following sections.

5.4 *Motswana wa pampiri* – the Creation of Second Class Citizens in Botswana

> When living in Botswana, no matter the documents I would have, there was still a lot of uhm.. it is seen as almost derogatory to be a citizen who is naturalised. You know people will still say to you "*O Motswana wa di pampiri*" (you are a citizen on paper), you know it's just the papers. So meaning you are not authentically Motswana…..(sigh)[87]

The above quote and the one preceding the introduction highlight the issues embedded in the framing and approach to citizenship in Botswana. In conversation with the participant quoted above, it was clear from their analysis that the concept of 'citizen on paper' is something that has permeated both social and official spaces and has been used to marginalise those considered as less 'authentic' *Batswana*. As highlighted in chapter Three, several scholars have problematised the mono-ethnic identity that was built upon the *Tswana* identity and its contribution to the lack of recognition of other ethnic groups present in the country. Even non-*Tswana* naturalised citizens feel like second-class citizens because the state's narrative makes it difficult for them to claim full recognition. This has implications for their sense of belonging; their experiences in claiming rights and opportunities; and the ways in which they find their place in society and relate to the nation-state. Furthermore, as *Monroe* above highlights, the word *Motswana wa pampiri* (citizen on paper or paper citizen) is widely used in reference to those who received citizenship through naturalisation.

Molosiwa and Bolaane (2021) trace the development of the term to early postcolonial society during the liberation struggles that were taking place in neighbouring Southern African countries. The authors state that although the Botswana government and *Batswana* in general welcomed and were hospitable to refugees that fled into Botswana, over time a discourse about troublemakers and "paper citizens" emerged as highlighted in the preceding sections. In the case of refugees, the term was used negatively to refer to individuals that were considered troublemakers. However, in contemporary Botswana, the

[87] Ibid: Interview with Research Participant: *Monroe*

term has come to be synonymous with naturalised citizens, a point *Dublin* and *Monroe* highlight.

This creates a form of othering and an exclusionary approach to citizenship with derogatory words referring to such groups. This resonates with Spano's (2015:160) findings where, "the conceptualisation of citizenship and nationhood around the idea of *Tswanadom* has generated claims of autochthony by the *Tswana* citizens but also perceived feelings of discrimination by former South African migrants, now naturalised citizens." One derogatory word that has been used to discriminate against others is *Makwerekwere,* also discussed at length in Chapter Four. According to Bagwasi and Alimi (2018), it is a derogatory term used to define African immigrants who are distant – linguistically, culturally, and socially. I therefore argue that this difference whether ethnic or racial is among the reasons why naturalised citizens are considered paper citizens.

The conflation of citizenship and its definition along the ethnic *Tswana* identity lines effectively excludes naturalised citizens. As a result, those who do not share similar cultural traits and the language will continuously be treated as the "other" and not considered "real" *Batswana* in society. Bagwasi and Alimi use a prototypical approach, also discussed in Chapter Four, to explain how society views 'others' as different from the normative understanding of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' in Botswana. I argue that these distinctions contribute to legitimising 'othering' and creating second-class citizenship.

5.5 People with a Migrant Background's Tactical Citizenship

Building on the previous discussions about the mechanics of citizenship in Botswana, earlier sections explored how citizenship is used as a political tool to exclude those with a migrant background. The sections also examined how changes in the interpretation of citizenship have affected these groups and how the concept of *Motswana wa pampiri* has been used to socially classify naturalised citizens as less authentic. This leads to an analysis of the tactics migrants in Botswana use to navigate these challenges and realities.

This thesis moves beyond the understanding of citizenship as an abstract concept and looks at how it is practised and contested at the societal level. I also explored

representations of citizenship that go beyond the liberal democratic view of formal elected assemblies, as discussed by Isin and Turner (2002). Instead, in this chapter I, focus on how the meanings of citizenship are constructed through practice and deliberation, as argued by Verloo (2017). To analyse the bottom-up performances of citizenship in contrast to the top-down approaches of official policies, I draw on De Certeau's (1998) concept of everyday practices and his discussion on tactics, which other researchers like Verloo (2017) and Lee (2006) have also expanded on.

According to De Certeau (1998), tactics occur in ways that do not follow conventional political action and often rely on what Scott (1998), as cited in Verloo (2017), refers to as tacit knowledge. De Certeau (1998) further explains that a tactic is a strategy that cannot rely on a defined space or institutional location, nor can it draw clear boundaries that separate "the other" as a visible whole. Additionally, De Certeau is of the view that the space of a tactic belongs to the other. This form of tactic/s is what scholars such as Lee draw inspiration from to conceptualise tactical citizenship in their study with domestic workers in the USA.

As noted in the introduction, I also draw on Lee's (2006) concept of tactical citizenship to explore the experiences of people with a migrant background in Botswana, focusing on how they relate to Botswana's citizenship and navigate their everyday realities. According to Lee, tactical citizenship is not a voluntary choice free from structural constraints but rather, it is a reactive strategy used by marginalised groups who lack other viable options to address their precarious livelihoods within the global political economy.

In the case of Botswana as with the domestic workers in Lee's study, tactical citizenship underlines one way in which people with a migrant background participate politically to claim rights as citizens. Moreover, as discussed above, people with a migrant background are cognisant of their status as the "other" within the national and normative framings of citizenship and hence use tactics to navigate how they claim rights and self-alienate where a situation necessitates. By knowing when to engage, when to withdraw and which rights to claim and when to self-police or alienate, people with a migrant background are presenting a different script of citizenship that differs from the liberal democratic system that post-colonial nation-states such as Botswana have adopted (Somolekae, 1989).

Building on Hebdige's theory of subcultures, defined as cultures of conspicuous consumption that use and reuse cultural products and artifacts to reveal hidden identities and convey forbidden meanings (Lee, 2006), Lee argues that the domestic workers in his study create their own subcultural style of citizenship. They do this by appropriating cultural artifacts, such as citizenship scripts, rather than adhering to traditional ideas of citizenship. Furthermore, using *bricolage* - a term that refers to how individuals improvise and adapt elements from their environment in response to their circumstances (Lee, 2006), Lee argues that this subcultural style of citizenship disrupts the normalisation of citizenship in conventional discourse. It involves gestures and actions that challenge the silent majority, undermining the principles of unity and cohesion and exposing the myth of consensus (Lee, 2006).

As such, the domestic workers in Lee's study strategically adapt citizenship scripts, originally designed by democratic theorists, to navigate their classification as "others." They creatively repurpose these scripts for groups that don't fit traditional models of political participation, enabling them to enact their own forms of citizenship (Lee, 2006). Similarly, I argue that my research participants build on this approach while also challenging us to rethink conventional citizenship models rooted in political theory.

My research participants, just as with the case of Lee's, push us to consider alternative scripts that embrace both sameness and difference, blurring the boundaries of "in" or "out" participation in citizenship (Lee, 2006). On the other hand, Nyamnjoh (2007) agrees with Lee in many ways. In his paper on citizenship hierarchies, he urges scholars to explore more flexible and negotiated forms of citizenship. Nyamnjoh also calls for a reconceptualisation of citizenship that creates political, cultural, and socioeconomic space for both excluded nationals and non-nationals in Botswana.

As a contribution to these discussions, my thesis lends a voice and additional evidence to these emerging or growing calls for scholarship to re-conceptualise citizenship. This is further supported by the fact that in the case of Botswana, people with a migrant background engage in alternative forms of citizenship participation, including calculated self-alienation and rights claiming, as well as tactical approaches of political invisibilisation to safeguard their citizenship status. While not always conscious, these tactics serve as practical means for navigating daily life, ensuring immediate rights, economic welfare, and physical well-being. Moreover, despite people with a migrant background's awareness that they at times employ tactical actions, they also

recognise the necessity of their actions to navigate challenges in society and claim rights where there may be limitations or barriers. Hence, like Lee's concept, tactical citizenship here is employed to interpret the subjective experiences of people with a migrant background.

It is important to highlight that because of the diversity of my participants, not all had citizenship, hence, it was interesting to note that unlike other studies that have analysed tactical citizenship from the vantage of participants who are undocumented, my study shows that even those with citizenship employ tactics. Thus, while the concept of "one foot in, one foot out" is typically applied to migrants or individuals in a state of limbo, I argue that even those who technically have access to rights, or appear to have options on paper, adopt similar strategies.

This reveals that the postcolonial state remains incomplete, as it continues to marginalise groups who, while not desiring to leave, still identify with the nation and take pride in it. However, as already illustrated, people with a migrant background do not fully buy into the state's framework, either by choice or due to a conscious decision to reject certain aspects of it. Furthermore, this diversity of experiences shows a common pattern among those who have been minoritised in different ways. This phenomenon also reflects a broader trend across the continent, where postcolonial states have struggled to reconcile diversity with the goal of national unity. This is not necessarily a critique of whether the state's efforts are good or bad, but it highlights the persistence of marginalised categories of people.

Interestingly, these individuals do not always express anger at their marginalisation, but they recognise and even embrace their marginal status (as discussed in the previous chapter), using it as part of their identity or naturalising it as a way of navigating citizenship. This "half in, half out" approach offers a new lens for understanding citizenship in Botswana, challenging both empirical and normative literature on inclusion as these groups essentially show that even though they will remain citizens, they will also continue to operate at the margins and embrace it as a part of who they are. The following sections will outline how people with a migrant background navigate the challenges and limitations they experience. The focus will be on both citizens and non-citizens' strategies to bring out nuance in these approaches and the tactics they employ.

5.6 Reading the Marketplace of Citizenship: Limits to Botswana Citizenship Rights and Political Invisibilisation

As the data from my interviews shows, people with a migrant background struggle to fully realise their rights and entitlements. Such limitations were experienced to a lesser extent when applying for jobs and to a greater extent in terms of full participation in the political landscape of the country. For some participants, not being an indigenous *Motswana* meant that there were certain spaces and platforms they needed to carefully consider before accessing. For others, citizenship was a paper that guaranteed access to certain rights and a way to associate with the Botswana nation state.

For non-citizens, the key issue revolves around access to rights, which are reserved for citizens, and the challenge of obtaining Botswana citizenship. Despite having lived in the country for many years and often growing up there, many non-citizens remain in a precarious position. They must repeatedly renew their residence permits and live in constant fear of their applications being rejected, which could force them to leave the country they consider home. In response to these challenges, non-citizens with a migrant background find ways to navigate the system, using tactics to access some rights despite the limitations they face.

5.6.1 Challenges with Accessing Botswana Citizenship

Anderson who I Introduced in Chapter Four is one of the participants who face limitations with accessing citizenship. Although he is often mistaken to be an indigenous *Motswana* because he can speak *Setswana* and is light in complexion, he still faces limitations because he does not have access to Botswana citizenship despite the length of time he has spent in the country from a young age - 22 years at the time of the interview. When we discussed his citizenship status and the limitations he faces, this is what he had to say:

> Well, it's the laws, the immigration, and the nationality policies that are in place, right? For example, they tell you that you must live in Botswana for 10 years before you can apply for citizenship, but I've been here for longer than that. I literally

> grew up here, and I resonate much more with Botswana than I do with Zimbabwe. However, the legal framework of the country doesn't just allow you to apply for citizenship easily. They want to see what you have contributed to the country - your investments, if you own land or a business, or what you have here that shows you are deserving of citizenship. So, while I am still 100% Zimbabwean on paper, because I have lived here almost all my life, I constantly strive to become a Motswana by applying for permits and citizenship. But the policies around how they govern themselves make it challenging.[88]

Anderson also stated that in addition to the investment in the country and showing how one contributes to Botswana, he raised the issue of how challenging it is to obtain Botswana citizenship. He showed that despite having grown up in Botswana, it did not guarantee that they would be accepted. While elaborating on this, he said:

> Well, the length of time you have been here does not determine whether you become a citizen. And, let me say this, having grown up here, I can boldly state that Batswana are very proud people—proud of their heritage, and they want to protect what they have. Even if you grow up within the system, if you are not truly part of it, they will not easily let you in. They may identify with you when it benefits them, but when it doesn't, they will not. So, even though I grew up in the system, if my documentation does not show that I am officially part of it, they will not identify me as part of the system[89].

Anderson's case is not unique and shows a widespread challenge of obtaining citizenship among people with a migrant background. As the case of *Ruva's* father also showed, the length of time and being a tax paying member of society does not guarantee success in the application outcome.

5.6.2 Policing Behaviour and the Fear of Losing Citizenship or Residency Permits

People with a migrant background, both those with citizenship and those holding resident permits, expressed concerns that their rights felt conditional, often depending on their behaviour or perceived contribution to the country. Many participants shared the view that their citizenship or residency could be revoked at any time, reflecting a broader sense of insecurity. These uncertainties are rooted in Botswana's strict approach to deporting

[88] Research Participant Interview with: *Anderson* on 30 June 2020 via Zoom.
[89] Ibid: Research Interview with *Anderson*.

residents, especially those who have been outspoken critics of the government, as they are often seen as threats to the country's peace and security.

One high-profile case is that of Australian native, Professor Kenneth Good. Although not a citizen but a permanent resident, Good's case serves as an example. Good was a Political Science lecturer at the University of Botswana for 15 years and had written extensively about Botswana. In 2005, Good was unceremoniously declared a prohibited migrant by the state and subsequently deported back to his country of origin after co-authoring and presenting a paper titled: "Presidential Succession in Botswana: No Model for Africa".

The paper co-authored by Good offered a critique of what he and his colleague saw as the increasing autocracy in Botswana and the excessive concentration of power in the presidency (Taylor, 2006). Hence, Fritz (2005) argues that the government's action against Good was an attempt to silence his critical views on the presidential succession in Botswana. Good was perceived as a threat to the country's peace and security due to his outspokenness and critical views of the government, expressed through his academic publications and presentations.[90]

Good also serves as an example of what Molosiwa and Bolaane (2021) describe in earlier sections of the thesis as "radical masculinity". His case also highlights the limitations faced by outsiders in critiquing the state, even when the critiques are constructive. As a result, individuals who do not see themselves as indigenous may hesitate to fully express or publicly voice dissent, fearing that doing so could lead to the revocation of their citizenship or residency permits.

A similar case of deportation involved *Button's* family, an individual with a migrant-background who was born in Tanzania but came to Botswana as an infant, just 6 months old. He grew up in Botswana, attending preschool through to high school in Botswana before briefly studying in Zimbabwe and South Africa, followed by higher education in China, where he pursued electrical engineering. Unlike Good's case, *Button's* father was accused of a crime, which resulted in the family being stripped of their permanent residency permits and deported. The family was denied the opportunity to fully

[90] Read Taylor, I (2006) The limits of the 'African Miracle': Academic freedom in Botswana and the deportation of Kenneth Good for an in-depth analysis of Good's deportation case.

defend themselves and to exhaust all legal channels to prove his father's innocence. In sharing his experience, *Button* narrated the following:

> What I am about to tell you is something that makes me feel deeply betrayed by the country. In early 2012, while I was already in China for university - supporting myself while my parents paid for my tuition, my parents were suddenly told they had to leave Botswana. They were given no explanation, just one week to leave, despite having lived there for 25 years. They had built a life in Botswana - owning property, a business, had friends, ties to the community, and their children were attending school there. We later found out that people who were jealous of my father had spread rumours about him. To be honest, we were not wealthy; we didn't have fancy cars or multiple houses. We were just kind and welcoming. We hosted braais and church picnics, and we were part of the community. When our church learned we were being forced to leave, half of Palapye came to say goodbye, as if someone had died. People were crying, and we were all confused.
>
> It turned out that some people accused my father of selling drugs, which was completely false. This is where I feel betrayed: the government just believed the rumours without investigating. My father had to liquidate everything to pay for the legal battle, even to the point where he couldn't afford to pay my tuition anymore. He spent nearly a year and a half trying to fight this, and it eventually became a case involving the DIS (Directorate of Intelligence and Security). You might have heard in the news last year about the arrest of the DIS director.[91] He was the one who signed off on the decision without even reviewing the file. When asked to review it, he simply said, "I already signed it." As we watched his downfall, we prayed for him, even though we felt some satisfaction knowing he wronged us. It was still painful to see him fall like that. And to this day, the issue remains unresolved. They took our permits, and we have been left in limbo ever since. We were permanent residents. We were here for life and they took those away from us. We are trying to get those back.[92]

The two cases discussed involved individuals with permanent residency. While cases involving naturalised citizens are rare (except for Modise's case), these examples highlight Botswana's tendency to deport or declare individuals as prohibited migrants. This practice is well-known in society and has led those who do not consider themselves indigenous (both citizens and non-citizens) to self-regulate their behaviour out of fear that their citizenship or residency permits might be revoked. This fear contributes to political invisibilisation and not fully belonging, as it creates a climate where covert policing of

[91] Details of the arrest the participant was referring to can be found in this Mail & Guardian article dated 18 January 2019 accessed here: https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-18-botswana-arrests-ex-spy-boss/
[92] Research Participant Interview with: *Button* on 24 July 2020 via WhatsApp and Zoom

behaviour instils fear and restricts freedom of speech and full participation. This issue will be further explored in the ensuing sections.

5.6.3 People with a Migrant Background's Limits to Political Participation

Another issue that limits people with a migrant background is their right to full political participation which speaks directly to issues of indigeneity and autochthony that have been highlighted above and the "othering" of those considered as less "authentic" citizens. Nyamnjoh (2002), in his discussion on the inequalities of citizenship due to notions of nationhood embedded in *Tswana* values, argues that without the right to paramount chiefs and official recognition as ethnic groups 'in their own right', non-*Tswana* groups continue to see themselves as subjects and not citizens.

My study extends on this view and shows that in the case of naturalised citizens, they continue to see themselves as "outsiders" because of their lack of roots in the country. The case of Modise (the political leader whose citizenship was revoked after he formed an opposition party) already highlighted in the preceding sections serves as an example. Currently, naturalised citizens are not eligible to hold the highest political office, that being of the President. *Donald*, the retired government official already introduced in the preceding chapters, disagreed with this provision in the Botswana Constitution and mentioned that the law made him feel like a second-class citizen.

Donald acknowledged that despite certain limitations and subtle forms of discrimination, he has not been entirely disadvantaged by the state. He highlighted significant benefits he received as a citizen, such as a state-funded university scholarship and the opportunity to hold prestigious government positions, including Permanent Secretary to the President and Ambassador of Botswana in various countries. Other participants with citizenship also recognised that having an *Omang* granted them access to various opportunities and rights available to all *Batswana*. Some noted that once they were naturalised, they could access business opportunities, employment, healthcare, education, and more.

For some participants, limitations were evident in their lack of political participation within the country. This self-exclusion or deliberate political invisibility

stemmed from the fear of having their behaviour scrutinised, as discussed earlier. Additionally, for others, due to being non-indigenous *Batswana*, there were specific spaces and platforms they had to approach with caution. As a result, for these individuals, citizenship was seen merely as a document that grants access to certain rights, rather than a full sense of belonging or identity tied to the state.

Beyond this, participants viewed citizenship as something conditional, dependent on their behaviour and contributions to the country, with some fearing it could be revoked at any time. This concern led the majority to avoid active participation in national politics. Those who did engage limited their involvement to voting and staying informed on the policy and legislative developments of Botswana. Any political discussions or expressions of dissatisfaction were kept private, shared only with close friends, family, or colleagues. Many participants feared that being publicly vocal might draw attention to their status as non-indigenous *Batswana*, potentially risking the revocation of their citizenship. As *Falcon* expressed:

> I am not too involved in the political landscape. I will vote. When there is something that I tend to not agree with, the ballot paper is always the best. In terms of how I feel about the whole political landscape, I suppose from a big picture, it is. I always look at it from this perspective, even if I was to scream and shout it will kind of be looked at as Mo tswa kwa yo wa re to dia (this foreigner is making noise for us). I don't think it will be taken seriously in all honesty. So that's part of it. So, where my political ambitions end is the ballot box. As long as I have cast my vote, that's it, I am done. You guys will sort yourselves out.[93]

This reflection shows that for *Falcon*, his migrant background is something he feels will always be used against him in a negative way thus he felt he had no right to publicly voice his concerns in comparison to indigenous *Batswana* who will be taken seriously. On the other hand, participants such as *Bella* and *Monroe* feared that being politically active beyond the ballot box could have dire consequences for their security and citizenship status. This is what they both had to say about the issue:

> I don't follow much of the politics for certain reasons [lol]… I don't want the Directorate of Intelligence & Security (DIS) coming after me… I keep away from

[93] Ibid: Interview with *Falcon.*

> Botswana politics. I have been warned or I have been told that when it comes to Botswana politics, just keep quiet it's not your country.[94]

In *Bella's* case, she was also not active. She mentioned that it is usually conversations with friends behind closed doors. Nothing public. To elaborate on her point, she stated:

> When we talk about politics with my friends it is usually gossip stuff. The general stuff people talk about. So, I would not say I am active. With things like voting, there are these conversations that I tend to have with myself, like does it matter if I vote BDP, are they really watching? Like what if they take my citizenship because I am not voting correctly [lol]. Kana you never know if they are watching these people [lol]. I have voted in the past. You gotta pick wisely. I am not big on politics. I don't like politics and you don't want to be involved in politics and then things go sideways and it's like, oh you are not even a Motswana, and you are making these comments, like your opinion is irrelevant, like you are not even from here. What are you saying? I feel like you speak about it in a closed room with friends. You are not out there saying this and that. I could not do what ATI is doing. I am not trying to get deported.[95]

These sentiments further underscore participants' feelings of not truly belonging which clearly has implications for exercising their right to full political participation in society without the fear of being ostracised. Moreover, these fears are founded in Botswana's reputation for declaring those seen to challenge the government as prohibited migrants as shown in the high-profile cases of Good and Modise. Although cases of deportation usually apply to those with Permits or Permanent Residence status, naturalised citizens still feared that because of their lack of indigeneity, their citizenship would not be protected in comparison to that of an indigenous *Motswana*, hence *Bella's* reference to the ATI[96] example.

The experiences of my participants support Nyamnjoh's (2002) point that being an *Omang*-carrying citizen provides access to rights, however, there are limitations to how far those rights and opportunities can be exercised. The same author also argues that being a

[94] Ibid: Interview with *Monroe*.
[95] Ibid: Interview with *Bella.*
[96] ATI is a *Motswana* musician. In 2020, he released videos on social media expressing his dissatisfaction with the ruling party. The videos were criticising the government for favouring foreigners (in this case naturalised citizens who were doing well) more than "indigenous" citizens in terms of accessing land and business opportunities..

rights-bearing *Motswana* is a matter of degree and power relations as some are less *Batswana* than others, even though they are in possession of the same *Omang* and are protected by the same constitution.

While presenting her case from the perspective of the issue of minority rights in Botswana, Nyati-Ramahobo (2008) argues that since the 1980's there has been a resurgence of identity politics and overt tensions on the question of belonging. Minority groups have begun to seek equity, better representation, and access to better opportunities. Though this is also the case for people with a migrant background, unlike ethnic minority groups, there seems to be a reluctance in vocalising these issues in public.

From the interviews, people with a migrant background seem to be content with the provision of the rights they can access (work, health care, education, starting a business, land, etc) and some are wary of putting their citizenship at risk by being vocal on political issues. Even non-citizens with permanent residence or in possession of residence permits were reluctant to be vocal about their views due to fears of being arrested or having their papers revoked. However, because of time spent in Botswana and being invested in the country, some participants mentioned that they did express their views but did their best to be politically correct. For example, *Anderson* had the following view when asked if he was active in politics:

> Nope lol. I do not want to sleep in jail. I have been in a cell before so I do not want to sleep in Jail. So politically, I am not involved in anything. But then, the fact that I have been here for so long, when something happens with the political parties, I do say something but in my saying something, I try my best to be as reasonable and as politically correct as possible, even when I can tell that this thing is crap because I don't want to be caught on the wrong side of the law and yah.[97]

This section has shown that people with a migrant background, by virtue of feeling like outsiders or treated as such, also exclude themselves from active participation in politics. Evidence drawn from interviews with research participants as well as documented high-profile cases of deportation have compounded their fear to actively engage, hence, their participation ends in the ballot box as one participant stated. Moreover, some research participants felt they will not be taken seriously or have no business airing their opinions

[97] Ibid: Interview with *Anderson.*

publicly because they are not 'real' *Batswana*. By doing so, people with a migrant background self-alienate or politically invisibilise themselves from political participation and from exercising their right to freedom of expression.

This form of invisibilisation also raises questions of which citizens can be vocal and be heard and who are in turn silenced or in this case silence themselves and the conditions that lead to this. These discussions bring into the fold discourses on presence and absence which are evoked through a range of social processes (Jones, Robinson and Turner, 2015). An example of this is nation-building where in the case of Botswana, the assimilation approach has aimed to turn diverse groups into one *Tswana* identity with a lack of acknowledgement of diversity (Jones et al, 2015).

As the above discussions have illustrated, the framing of Botswana citizenship which is embedded in the selective representation of the nation are apparent in both normative and official discourses. Moreover, as illustrated in the preceding discussions, *Tswananess* is often seen as a requirement to belong and participate in national issues. However, what this thesis shows is a prevailing discourse where differing views from those who do not fit the criteria are considered as "outsiders". Such a framing is shown by examples of Modise, Good and Venson-Moitoi and now in the case of my research participants who refrain from being vocal on national matters as they fear being discredited or labelled as not belonging.

This mode of being is described as an absence, as conceptualised by Jones et al. Within this framework, such absence is linked to denying others access to spaces, places, and participation, serving as a method of control to exclude dissenting views and experiences from specific locations (Jones et al, 2015). This phenomenon is recognised by some people with a migrant background, hence one of the tactics they employ is self-alienation or absence from active politics as a form of self-preservation.

5.6.4 Institutional Discrimination as a Barrier to Accessing Opportunities

In terms of barriers to accessing socio-economic opportunities, there was also recognition that institutional discrimination affected people with a migrant background. This discrimination was not overt, but participants could feel it and some had experienced it.

Two participants in particular shared experiences of difficulties in obtaining scholarships from the government to study abroad due to delays they believe were exacerbated by the fact that their names were not *Tswana* and therefore implied their foreignness or lack of authentic *Tswananess*. Both participants eventually obtained the scholarships after requesting intervention from senior government officials. One of the participants *Zinhle,* a medical professional with origins from Zimbabwe had the following to say on the issue:

> The issue reached the Minister of Health, who was also the local MP for the Tati region where my family lived. We informed him about being blocked from attending an Australian University despite having acceptance letters. He intervened, urging the National Service department to release us early from our duties and allow us to go and study, emphasising the need for medical professionals in the country. However, some resisted, leading the case to go to Parliament. I was not there in parliament but I am told that when the Minister took the case there, there were some people in Parliament, who were pushing back on this and one of the MPs I am not sure who it was asked who are these people anyway that have these non-*Tswana* sounding names hahaha who everyone is up in arms about them getting to school. So it was this kind of an indication that even though I had been born in the country, I had sort of lived there my whole life, apart from boarding school, my family had been there the whole time, that the name was still significant, even in this whole larger process. People that had not met me, didn't know anything about me but all they saw was a name, the Ndebele sounding name and therefore, I wasn't entitled to whatever other benefits or opportunities that a "real" local person might be entitled to.[98]

This example shows that the law can be used to ensure that equality prevails where such cases are reported. However, in some cases, discrimination is not always easy to report or prove due to its subtleness. For example, *Louvre* shared her experience of accessing opportunities and had this to say:

> I feel disadvantaged by the fact that I don't have what you would call a typical *Motswana* surname or name. I don't speak the language in the same way that somebody you would call authentically Motswana does, uhm so it's very hard to get through the door in many circumstances. Uhm except for when I guess, it is regulated. So, if the only requirement for me to access an opportunity is to have an ID for example voting, then it's fine but if I need to now go an extra step, it can be very difficult.[99]

[98] Ibid: Interview with *Zinhle*
[99] Ibid: Interview with *Louvre.*

Another participant felt such experiences were examples of implicit undertones of xenophobia. In sharing her experience, she stated that it is something that is always at the back of her mind when applying for opportunities. She explained that if it came down to a choice between her and someone with a *Setswana*-sounding name, she was of the view that the option would go to the latter. *Bella,* shared a similar experience and in her reflection stated the following:

> A perfect example would be when I am applying for a job. I have to be conscious of the fact that I have to attach my ID to my CV because if they see my surname on my CV, they are just going to assume that I am not from here. So I have to attach my ID so that they can see that I am actually from here. Small things like that, that make it abundantly clear to me that there will always be a bridge I guess in understanding.[100]

Tasha, a participant with origins from Zambia also brought in the element of the name as a way in which she could be discriminated against from certain opportunities. In an extract from her thoughts on the issue, this is what she had to say on the matter:

> I think maybe it's the perception that I have, to say anybody that will look at this and will see the name, they will discriminate on that basis. So for example, if I apply for a job with a person who has a *Tswana* sounding name, they are most likely to prefer the latter candidate and pick them over me because of the fact that I am not an indigenous citizen. And it's only I suppose where there isn't any other, that is when they will say, *nya* (no), after all she is a citizen. But as I am saying, this is really just my perception which is based on nothing other than me thinking that human beings are how we are. We more likely identify with our own than with people that we say are outsiders . After all, I still look at myself and I say they still look at me as a foreigner at the end of the day. I don't see anything that would have changed by me having this piece of paper in the sense that, previously as a foreigner, with my Zambian passport I was a foreigner, now with my Omang, I still imagine that I am still considered as a foreigner with an Omang.[101]

As the example of *Tasha* shows, some of these perceptions are not based on any factual evidence they have encountered but purely from their experiences of how they think they are perceived by society and in turn how they see themselves within the national narrative. This also ties back to earlier discussions of who is considered an "authentic" *Motswana.*

[100] Ibid: Interview with *Bella*
[101] Ibid: Interview with *Tasha*

From these discussions and based on the normative and the ethnic framing of citizenship, most people with a migrant background are of the view that they are not considered as "authentic" *Batswana,* and they do not see themselves as such because they do not fit into the categories of what an "authentic" *Motswana* has been portrayed as.

Due to this, there is a sense that this reality could play a role in people with a migrant background being discriminated against when accessing opportunities. Hence the need for some people with a migrant background to present their Botswana identity documents when applying for opportunities to provide their citizenship status beforehand in case of doubts arising which may affect their chances of being considered for opportunities. However, despite having these feelings or thoughts, some participants were doing quite well in terms of accessing certain opportunities.

For example, in the case of *Louvre,* several months after the interview, she was appointed in a senior position at the local government level. Another participant was able to start his business after obtaining citizenship, while *Queen* with origins from Kenya was a former Magistrate. Two senior retired government officials were able to thrive in their careers despite their migrant backgrounds and certain forms of discrimination they experienced. These examples are evidence that while undertones of institutional discrimination may exist, possessing an *Omang* (ID) also enables access to opportunities which underscore Solway's (2002) observation that the country has succeeded in implementing a bureaucratic rationalisation approach.

For non-citizens with a migrant background, the main challenge stemmed from policies that favoured citizens. While some understood Botswana's focus on citizen empowerment, they still felt excluded, especially given their long-term residency and contributions to the country's development. Many expressed frustration that even unqualified *Batswana* were often granted opportunities, while they were denied the same despite their skills and time spent in Botswana. *Anderson*, for instance, was particularly vocal about this issue and shared his perspective when asked about his experience in accessing opportunities in Botswana:

> I am glad we are having this conversation, though it's a difficult one for me. Just this past week, I attended two job interviews, and it's clear that Botswana is currently prioritising citizen empowerment. Regardless of how competent or

> incompetent someone might be, the first priority will always go to a citizen. While I understand the rationale behind this, it doesn't make sense from an economic perspective. For instance, I do personal development coaching, mentorship, and public speaking, but when opportunities arise, if I don't have a citizen to vouch for me or to "cover" for me, I won't get the gig. So, while I support citizen empowerment, I believe it should be done with the understanding that some citizens may not be as qualified as others, including non-citizens who could do a better job. In essence, it's becoming harder for me to access opportunities despite my qualifications.[102]

Unlike people with a migrant background who have citizenship and who can provide their *Omang* to mediate discrimination, non-citizens with a migrant background navigate policies that exclude them through relying on friends who are *Batswana* to access opportunities. They do this through a process of fronting. In this context, a citizen is the nominal or legal owner of a business, but the business is actually run and controlled by a foreign national who may not qualify for ownership due to local laws or regulations. This arrangement is typically made to bypass legal restrictions on foreign ownership or participation in certain sectors of the economy.

This practice appears to be so widespread in Botswana that, in July 2024, Ms. Sarah Letsoga, the Principal Industrial Officer from the Ministry of Trade, expressed concerns during a council briefing about the high level of fronting in the business sector. She pointed out that some locals were obtaining business licences solely to lend them to foreigners (Tebogo, 2024). In Botswana, fronting is illegal under the Industrial Development Act. Sarah Letsoga further stated that according to Section 37, subsection (1), any person who fronts for another, operates a manufacturing enterprise under a fronted industrial licence, or obtains a registration certificate through fronting commits an offence. The penalties include a fine not exceeding P50,000 for a first offence and, for subsequent offences, a fine of up to P20,000 and imprisonment for up to two years, or both (Tebogo, 2024).

In cases of fronting, participants worked with a citizen eligible for business opportunities, often a close friend, and then shared the profits. While some non-citizens were aware of the risk of exploitation in these arrangements, it also served as an effective strategy for them to access opportunities reserved for citizens. One research participant shared the following reflection on their experience:

[102] Ibid: Interview with *Anderson*.

> Moving here has shaped me to become adaptable to any situation I am placed in. I can adjust to any environment I am thrown into. It's never easy, I agree, but I have developed a mentality of how to survive even in the most challenging places, especially when you need someone to get by. This is probably the most candid conversation I will ever have about my citizenship or nationality with anyone, because sometimes you start considering the most questionable things just to survive, right? (laughs). For instance, you might want to open a company where you are the mastermind, but you register it under a Motswana's name because they don't have the expertise to run it, but you do. They hold 100% ownership, but at the end of the day, you end up in a bad situation because, legally, the company is entirely in their name, and you don't exist in any paperwork. So, it's shaped me to realise that you need to find a way to exist in a niche within the system. One thing I am grateful for is having friends who are Batswana. Because of them, I have been able to survive. They have opened businesses in their names, and they have never ripped me off when it comes to payments. Like, if I tell them I have got a job for P50,000, I will give them P10,000, and I will take P40,000 because it's registered in their name. You get what I am saying? So, I have adapted to that situation or lifestyle, knowing that if I tried to do it on my own, it wouldn't happen.[103]

The discussions above highlight the challenges faced by individuals with a migrant background in accessing rights and opportunities in Botswana. The focus included both citizens and non-citizens because, for participants without citizenship, they still saw themselves as part of Botswana. The main barrier to full citizenship for them was the formal process of obtaining it, meaning they encountered similar challenges to citizens but to varying degrees. As demonstrated, individuals with a migrant background employed various strategies to navigate these challenges. In some cases, they deliberately chose self-alienation or political invisibility to protect themselves, a tactic used by both citizens and non-citizens. Economically, those with citizenship could overcome certain obstacles by using their *Omang* when applying for opportunities, while some non-citizens resorted to fronting to access opportunities reserved for citizens. In each scenario, people with a migrant background were aware of their limitations and strategically employed tactics to navigate these barriers. They became skilled at understanding the "marketplace" of citizenship and adapted their actions accordingly.

[103] To safeguard the participant's privacy and to avoid any unintended consequences of identification, even when using a pseudonym, I have chosen not to reveal the identity of the individual who raised this point due to the sensitivity of the issue.

5.7 Conclusion

At the heart of the discussions detailed in this chapter is the contribution to the literature on the citizenship of people with a migrant background. This chapter not only highlights issues of exclusion and the sense of being half in and half out that such groups experience, but it also brings to the fore the uncertainty that comes with postcolonial citizenship in the face of hybrid identities that many have spoken about. Moreover, the chapter showed that in some ways, people with a migrant background have found ways to instrumentalise their access to rights and navigate how this is done. They use this approach to access rights that meet their socio-economic needs but avoid rights that may compromise their legal status or citizenship as shown by their lack of active or public participation in the politics of the country. Through these everyday actions, they show that citizenship is not fixed or guaranteed by law alone, but is something people constantly reshape through practice.

This chapter also contributes to the broader discussions on new forms of citizenship or citizenship from below by highlighting how people with a migrant background use what I refer to as tactical citizenship. This concept shows how their rights-claiming strategies continuously reshape and influence the nature of citizenship at a local level, affecting the decision-making processes that determine which rights individuals can access. By moving beyond the conventional discussions of citizenship centred on rights and national identity, this chapter also builds on scholars such as Lee (2006) to show that tactical citizenship is not only practised by undocumented individuals but is also applied by citizens who face certain limitations due to their migration background.

The next chapter expands on discussions from this chapter and Chapter Four to explore the cross-cutting theme of belonging. In this context, belonging is closely linked to identity and citizenship, often emerging as an interconnected concept in discussions of identity and inclusion. While this connection has been subtly suggested in the previous chapters, it has not been explicitly addressed, and this chapter will turn to it.

6 Chapter Six: *"I will never fully belong"* Rethinking Notions of Belonging and Ambivalent Belonging Towards the Botswana Nation-State

So,
here you are
too foreign for home
too foreign for here - Umebinyuo, I (2016)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the sense of belonging for people with a migrant background in Botswana. The overarching concern of the chapter is to understand participants' feelings of belonging, factors that inform these feelings of belonging and what it means for them to belong. As outlined in the introduction Chapter, there is extensive scholarship on belonging that explores various forms of belonging connected to identity and citizenship. In some cases, as shown in Chapter One, belonging extends beyond citizenship to include other affiliations such as nationhood, gender, ethnicity, and emotional aspects of status or attachment. Whereas, in other cases, belonging can be linked to diverse forms of affiliation, reflecting connections to locations, communities, cultures, and more.

The interest of this study was to understand belonging within the context of the politics of belonging in Botswana and how it influenced people with migrant backgrounds' sense of membership and relationship with the state and the communities where they live. While Chapter Four examined how *Batswana* maintain boundaries within the political community, creating distinctions between "them" and "us" (Yuval-Davis, 2006), my focus here goes further. I explore how people with a migrant background navigate these boundaries and make sense of their own belonging.

In this chapter, I argue that people with a migrant background's sense of belonging, which extends beyond fixed boundaries, reflects feelings of both partial belonging and non-belonging. I further argue that this creates a form of belonging marked by ambivalence and

ambiguity toward the Botswana nation-state. I also argue that individuals with a migrant background experience this ambivalent sense of belonging due to conflicting notions of what it means to belong. On the one hand, they feel connected to Botswana because it is home, it is where they were raised, and where their familial ties are rooted. On the other hand, their history of migration and mobility fosters an awareness that they may never fully belong to a single place. This duality results in a complex sense of belonging that balances attachment and disconnection.

Secondly, this chapter illustrates ambivalent belonging by highlighting the various factors that influence the degree of belonging experienced by people with a migrant background in Botswana. One significant factor is their perceived inability to fully identify with the *Tswana* national identity. This constructed identity often excludes them, leading to a sense of not being accepted as authentic *Batswana* or as a *'Motswana wa Sekei,*' as discussed in Chapter Four.

This exclusion is further reinforced by social markers used to define who qualifies as a true *Motswana,* contributing to their sense of partial belonging. The discussions in Chapter Four also demonstrated that individuals with a migrant background possess multiple and hyphenated identities, which leads to their perpetual perception as "others" in both their country of origin and their country of citizenship. Moreover, the dual or multiple identity(ies) that people with a migrant background possess contributes to an awareness of a weaker attachment to any one place or belonging to one place. Additionally, for those living in the diaspora, their sense of belonging has shifted and now transcends territorial boundaries. However, despite all these factors, most people with a migrant background still consider Botswana as home and assert their belonging there because of the feeling of familiarity, familial ties and the influence the country has had on who they are and have become.

This is important because the experiences of people with a migrant background show us that not belonging is in a way a form of belonging by other means. Most importantly, it shows that there are several ways to belong in a place. In addition, through the experiences of the research participants, I demonstrate that ambivalence and agency can co-exist in shaping belonging that is rooted in both context and experience. This chapter also contributes to the scholarship on migration and belonging by expanding on

existing research that questions conventional notions of belonging tied to identity and citizenship. It shows that ambivalence is not merely a consequence of social exclusion but also functions as a form of agency. This agency shapes the experiences of people with a migrant background and impacts their relationship with the state.

Finally, the chapter demonstrates that localised attachments formed at the margins, as discussed in this study, also resonate with broader debates on social cohesion, particularly the distinction between "bonding" and "bridging" forms of community belonging. Thus, people with a migrant background in Botswana, while forming strong internal bonds, simultaneously challenge and expand the possibilities for bridging attachments across ethnic and national lines, reimagining the contours of citizenship itself and thus expand the possibilities of national belonging beyond just being a *Motswana*.

The following sections will explore ambivalent belonging among people with a migrant background. This will be followed by an examination of how they understand their sense of belonging and a discussion on ambivalent territorial belonging will follow. Next, I will analyse how people with a migrant background interpret the concept of "home" as a form of belonging and then provide a discussion on their relationship with the communities they live in and the Botswana nation-state. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the key points discussed and the argument the chapter makes.

6.2 Ambivalent Belonging among People with a Migrant Background

As mentioned, one of the interests of this thesis was to explore how people with a migrant background in Botswana establish a sense of belonging. The experiences presented and discussed here connect to the ambivalence and complexity of belongingness and interpretations of what it means to belong in Botswana or to belong as someone with a migrant heritage. Meloni (2019) explored ambivalent belonging among undocumented youth in Canada and argues that ambivalence is a significant factor that shapes the experiences of people with a migrant background. Furthermore, Meloni is also of the view that ambivalence is something that extends beyond individual feelings to encompass the

broader social and political dynamics. The author suggests that both the experiences of people with a migrant background and the state's attitudes toward them should be viewed through the lens of "structural ambivalence," implying that ambivalence is embedded in societal and institutional structures.

Meloni's study found that, for undocumented youth in Canada, ambivalence was not solely a result of social exclusion. Instead, it was also expressed as a form of agency that enabled these young people to endure the risk of deportation and detach themselves from the disempowering conditions they faced (Meloni, 2019). Similarly, for my research participants, who were mostly documented (citizens and permit holders) except for one, ambivalence served to create a sense of partial belonging while still not fully integrating. I describe this as belonging by other means.

In contributing to discussions of ambivalence in the context of migration, Erdal (2021) suggests that ambivalence emerges from contradictions and paradoxes embedded in social structures such as class, age, race, ethnicity, and gender, which shape how opportunities, rights, and privileges are distributed. The author further states that ambivalence is not just about mixed feelings but reflects a deep-seated uncertainty and a permanent feature of identity. In this sense, Erdal is of the view that recognition is an important element in identity which fosters a sense of belonging.

As shown in Chapter Four and the following section, the fact that there are identity markers or categories that determine who is a *Motswana*, people with a migrant background also associate this with not fully belonging as they do not see themselves in such categories. At the same time, ambivalence was present in research participants who expressed having to navigate multiple places while negotiating their identities in different contexts. A process that also supports Erdal (2021)'s argument that states that in the context of transnationalism, ambivalence becomes apparent when migrants navigate multiple places and spaces in different contexts.

Erdal (2021) further argues that this form of ambivalence is not just instrumental but is also influenced by individual agency, group dynamics, and social structures making it potentially transformative as migrants manage the tensions of migration and identity, particularly when recognition is withheld. The respondents in this research presented

similar agential uses of belonging just as with identity to manage the tensions between their feelings of partial belonging and non-belonging.

This was demonstrated through their recognition and acceptance that they will always belong to dual or multiple spaces, or in some instances, will never fully belong to one place. This acceptance of partial belonging is what empowers and gives them agency to navigate the different spaces they occupy. Building on Erdal (2021) I argue that such individuals' agency further emboldens the ways in which they manage the tensions between belonging in Botswana and other places. Belloni (2019) on the other hand has argued that in migration studies, ambivalence has been mainly used to describe migrants' fluctuating emotional attachment to the homeland. However, Boccagni and Kivisto (2019) are of the view that ambivalence among migrants is not only about balancing their homeland status with their local status in the host country, but also about the contrasting reactions these statuses evoke. The authors further state that a migrant's country or community of origin may evoke a sense of "home" emotionally while simultaneously being perceived as unhomely.

As the ensuing discussions show, the research participants in this study felt that they did not belong to either of the places - Botswana and their country of origin. Although in some instances, Botswana felt more like home than other places because of its familiarity, they still did not feel like they fully belonged. This underscores the complexity of belonging and the contradictions that arise from being in such a position.

For instance, Belloni (2019) is of the view that ambivalence among migrants arises from the contradictions that are experienced in the country of origin. Thus, it is important to understand migrants' ambivalence through examining the cultural, social, and political contradictions that they experience in different contexts over time and across different spaces and places. Boccagni and Kivisto (2019) on the other hand, emphasise the need to understand or study ambivalence in the process of inclusion of migrants as it has been largely ignored in studies that look at the integration of migrants into receiving or host countries.

This process of migrants' inclusion is what Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) describes as ideas of assimilation and integration that adopt a top-down view of the national societies that migrants arrive in. Pfaff-Czarnecka further asserts that these processes not only outline

and recommend the actions that migrants should take to become more culturally, socially and civically integrated, but also emphasise national boundaries as the starting point for assimilation and integration strategies. Boccagni and Kivisto (2019) challenge this approach and are of the view that by mainly focusing on the processes of inclusion of migrants, most of this research then tends to investigate outcomes rather than social processes of assimilation and integration.

This is done through looking at various indices intended to measure the level of integration of such groups such as economic status, levels of residential segregation, education, mixed marital unions, etc (Boccagni and Kivisto, 2019). The authors further argue that assessing how nations incorporate newcomers into their societies is essential for understanding broader integration trends. However, this approach does not fully address the social processes that shape these dynamics, and I would add, it does not help us understand their sense of belonging. My study contributes an additional perspective to these discussions by shifting focus to individuals who are not seeking recognition or integration into host societies. These individuals are conscious of their marginal status - a space where they experience partial belonging intertwined with contradictions. They accept this marginality as an intrinsic part of their identity as argued in Chapter Four, revealing that not belonging can be understood as a form of belonging or an alternative way of defining their place in the world.

My interlocutors further illustrated that their ambivalence arose from their hyphenated, multifaceted identities, multi-sited belonging, and experiences of mobility. They also expressed ambivalent territorial attachments and held varied interpretations of the construction of *Tswana* national identity, which they did not fully relate to as it did not wholly reflect who they are, resulting in a form of ambivalence to the Botswana nation-state and its national identity. This form of ambivalence to the Botswana nation-state also shows that the goal of the assimilationist national project has not completely taken root as intended by the founding fathers of the country.

In fact, there are groups like people with a migrant background who still feel a sense of alienation and one of not fully belonging. Moreover, as the following discussions will show, belonging and feelings of home are much more complex, and context matters in how they are unpacked and understood within the larger discussions of what it means to belong.

The next section therefore discusses belonging from the perspective of people with a migrant background in Botswana. The section unpacks how such groups understand their sense of belonging and the factors that make them feel like they belong while at the same time not fully belonging to Botswana and elsewhere.

6.3 *I belong here and elsewhere* – People with a Migrant Background's understanding and Sense of Belonging

> The question of belonging is a deeply troubled one that most migrants confront all their lives - do they belong to the land they left behind, or the one in which they find themselves in, or somewhere else altogether? - Butalia (2006:145) in Kihato (2009:151).

The concept of belonging in this study was unpacked by research participants as a feeling of being accepted within the place that people with a migrant background identified with the most. These feelings were loaded with contradictions which spoke to their multiple-hyphenated identities and experiences discussed in Chapter Four. Moreover, these feelings were also influenced by how people with a migrant background felt they were perceived as "outsiders" by society both in their country of origin and in Botswana. This is because participants felt they did not "fit in" in either place, a liminal space Landau (2006) describes as "knowhereville." In reference to the context of Botswana, I argue that their belonging is characterised by both absence and presence.

Drawing from the work of Jones et al (2015) and others, I define absence and presence as a form of political tools in global events as well as everyday life that enforces ideas about space, society and belonging. In the case of Botswana, certain factors that influence the everyday are used to decide who belongs and who does not belong. Again, as shown in Chapter Four and Five, there are certain markers of identity and citizenship that are used to determine belonging, and their absence or presence determines who can fully belong or feel like they belong.

In the work on multiple belonging, Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) highlights collective identity markers and distinguishes between 'belonging to' and 'belonging with'. In

focusing on belonging with, Pfaff-Czarnecka is of the view that this notion of belonging brings together shared identity, mutual support, and somewhat structured forms of collective loyalty, along with both tangible and intangible connections that often foster a sense of entitlement. Pfaff-Czarnecka further defines these shared forms of belonging as commonality. In this context "commonality" refers to a shared sense of identity, encompassing shared experiences, cultural practices (like language, religion, and lifestyle), values, and collective memories (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2013).

Pfaff-Czarnecka further argues that while personally felt and embodied, commonality is collectively shaped and expressed. In the case of Botswana as already established, this collective commonality is embedded in *Tswananess* and is therefore shaped by the culture and certain attributes linked to *Tswananess* as shown in Chapter Four. Brubaker (2004) cited in Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) further describes commonality as something formed through categorisation – a process the author states involves 1.) categorisation or identifying markers, 2.) groupness or an emotional connection, and 3.) self-understanding or shared assumptions. For these reasons, Pfaff-Czarnecka is of the view that this makes commonality a multi-layered concept, often acting as a social boundary that distinguishes "insiders" from "outsiders".

People with a migrant background often feel like "outsiders" because they lack the shared experiences and traits that characterise the "insider" group. This absence of commonality with the main group leaves them feeling only partially accepted. Jones et al (2015) support this view, suggesting that presence and absence reinforce certain power dynamics, narratives, and control over space. For migrants in Botswana, the presence or absence of certain factors influenced their connection to the country and their sense of national identity, ultimately shaping their feelings of belonging.

For those that felt connected to Botswana, there was a strong sense of connection to the spaces in which they resonated the most at the local level as opposed to the national level. These included communities of residence, friends, school, work etc. Moreover, familiarity with their surroundings and understanding nuances of the context and national developments over time played a huge role in feeling a connection to Botswana and feeling like a local citizen. Yet, at the same time, there was a disconnect since most participants

still recognised that they will never fully belong anywhere - both in Botswana and their parent's country of origin.

These feelings were largely attributed to how they felt they were perceived and to a larger extent how they felt or did not feel fully accepted in Botswana. According to Creese (2019), depending on the context, unbelonging can include language, accent, clothing, religion and skin colour. Moreover, as shown in Chapter Four, factors such as skin colour, a foreign name (non-Setswana name), fluency in *Setswana,* having a Chief, a home village, belonging to one of the eight *Tswana* ethnic groups and understanding cultural practices played a role in whether one felt accepted or not accepted as a *Motswana* (identity).

Most participants indicated that society uses certain identity markers to exclude them or highlight their lack of authentic *Tswananess*. Essentially, the absence of these markers signifies a lack of belonging, while possessing them indicates true membership in the community. Consequently, Jones (2015) and colleagues argue that this absence has historically been associated with denying people the right to access certain spaces, places, and opportunities for participation. The authors also argue that exclusion, often aimed at some ethnic groups, is used as a control strategy to silence dissenting perspectives and experiences. This process effectively removes from these spaces any actions, people, or ideas considered undesirable (Jones et al., 2015).

While in the case of Botswana, I argue that this is not the explicit intent, implicitly it results in an unintended and bonded form of belonging that creates "us" and "them" dichotomies of belonging based on the possession of or the presence of certain identifying markers that constitute a true citizen and by extension who belongs. Throughout this dissertation, it is evident that *Tswananess* is a powerful factor in shaping identity and belonging in the country. It is often perceived, implicitly or explicitly, as a requirement for belonging and, in some cases, for full participation in society.

Jones et al. (2015) note that in such contexts, alternative perspectives and, I would add, different ways of being are cast as "outsider" views, effectively discrediting certain groups or experiences as truly belonging. The authors further note that the danger with such a binary view is that it delineates belonging in a dyadic sense that ignores complex ways of belonging that straddle between inside and outside (Jones et al, 2015).

People with migrant backgrounds are aware that they are seen as "outsiders" both in Botswana and in their parents' country of origin, leaving them with a sense of belonging that is neither fully here nor there. Recognising this, they come to accept this "in-betweenness" as part of their reality, developing a sense of ambivalent territorial belonging as their own form of belonging or belonging by other means.

6.4 Ambivalent Territorial Belonging: Not Belonging as a Form of Belonging

The above discussions support the argument that scholars have advanced concerning the complexities of the relationship between local and national forms of belonging (Bakewell & Landau, 2018). Moreover, the discussions also support other studies that have shown that in each context, there are specificities used at the local level such as the identity markers already discussed in this Chapter and elsewhere that influence how one is viewed in society and in turn the extent to which they feel they belong or feel connected to the nation-state. As Miles (1990) cited in Chakraborty (2021) asserts, there are typical components that cement the ways in which one belongs which culminate into nationhood and subsequently citizenship. These include a common language, common history, common religion, common customs and common territory. However, some of these components are peculiarly different in the case of people with a migrant background.

Similar to Chakraborty's findings with French Tamils in India, people with a migrant background in Botswana experience conflict, contestation, and ambivalence about their nationality, ethnicity, and sense of belonging, which are tied to their ethnic, cultural, and territorial identities. However, I argue that these feelings arise mainly because the current notion of nationhood does not represent their realities.

I also argue that this ambivalence is not necessarily a source of discontent but rather an awareness and acceptance of their situation, acknowledging that their ethnicity and experiences clash with their nationality and that broader concepts of nationality and citizenship in the postcolonial world do not align with their sense of belonging (Chakraborty, 2021). For example, *Anderson's* experience cited below of not fully

belonging in either Botswana or his country of origin is complex. Socially, due to his name and skin colour, he is perceived as a *Motswana.* However, administratively, he does not belong, as he lacks access to certain opportunities and spaces reserved for Botswana citizens, as discussed in Chapter Five.

At the same time, he belongs in Zimbabwe as a citizen of the country but does not fit in at the social level. *Anderson's* experience illustrates his position between two worlds, yet his sense of belonging "nowhere" is what I call, a form of belonging by other means. In his reflections, he stated:

> I feel I have got no place to belong because belonging is a societal thing where you have got people that accept you and you have got the documentation and the paperwork to show that you have been accepted. So I feel out of place because I am still Zimbabwean but I cannot have the benefits of a Motswana child because I am not a Motswana but I also can't have the benefits of a Zimbabwean because when I go to Zimbabwe, I feel as if I am a visitor because I am not known in Zimbabwe as well. So I am a nomad, it's not the right word, I am just caught in between two places that I grew up in or that I have existence in but no relevance in. I don't know if that makes sense.[104]

The above extract shows that in many ways, people with a migrant background's understanding of this reality aligns with scholars like Yuval-Davis (2006), who assert that belonging is a broad concept characterised by the intersection of various forms of attachment. Hence, Carillo Rowe, as cited in Roman (2018), argues that understanding attachments in terms of belonging rather than identity provides a clearer insight into the complexity and multiplicity of belonging.

This perspective of belonging advanced by Rowe acknowledges ambiguity and ambivalence and recognises individual connections in a dynamic world. Belonging, unlike identity, then becomes not solely about the self as an isolated entity but involves "the affective, passionate, and political ties that bind us to others" (Rowe, 2005:18). These discussions show that belonging can take many forms and connect people to multiple communities. People with migrant backgrounds often create their own spaces of belonging,

[104] Ibid: Participant Interview with *Anderson*

redefining and reshaping what belonging means. This process, in turn, also transforms their sense of home (Nadyrbekova, 2021).

Drawing on Kihato's (2009) research with urban migrant women in Johannesburg, I argue that the concept of belonging can also reflect how people with migrant backgrounds establish roots in a place while simultaneously positioning themselves as separate. This can be understood as a form of belonging - where not belonging is, in fact, a way of belonging. A form of contradictory and paradoxical notion of belonging mixed with dislocation, rootedness and uprootedness (Kihato, 2009).

Finally, as demonstrated by the experiences of people with a migrant background in this study, the complex realities, where their legal homeland is Botswana, but their ethnic roots lie elsewhere, illustrate what Chakraborty (2021) describes as ambiguous territorial belonging. I refer to this as an ambivalent form of territorial belonging, which is embedded in the constructs of *Tswana* identity and belonging, characterised by the social indicators discussed in both Chapter Four, Five and this chapter.

This reality is something they have come to embrace, demonstrating a form of agency in how they understand their sense of belonging as reflected in how they understood and accepted their multiple and hyphenated forms of identity. This further shows that possessing an ambivalent form of belonging is a form of belonging by other means. In a nutshell, these discussions also connect with those in the previous section that showed that the markers for identity are also used to connote belonging and citizenship hence the issues cut across the entire thesis and are interlinked or connected in both discussions on identity and belonging.

6.5 A Feeling Tied to Family and Connection to a Place: Multiple Interpretations of Home

Botswana is home and Tanzania is the home that I visit[105]

While people with a migrant background are presenting an ambivalent sense of territorial belonging as shown in the previous section, their feelings of home were characterised by a mix of Botswana as home and identifying with other places as home too. These were very strong and a recurring theme for many of the participants. The main reason provided for identifying with Botswana as home was because of its familiarity. Participant's identification with Botswana more than their country of origin was largely due to their connection/s to their immediate families still living in Botswana, childhood memories of growing up in Botswana and the experiences they had accumulated over the years that have shaped the people they have become.

People with a migrant background's connection to their parent's' country of origin was related to it as a place of their roots - either as a place where they were born or where participants' parents originate. For the most part, participants reported that they did not feel they fit in whenever they visited their parent's country of origin because it was a place they considered as a home for family vacations. *Clarke*, a person with a migrant background with origins in Namibia clearly demonstrates why Botswana is home for her:

> Like I am from Botswana, I was raised here, this is my home, like o tswa kae ko lapeng? (where is home?), ke tswa ko Botswana (I am from Botswana). For me Namibia has always been like if I was to speak on it, it's always been like, oh we are going on holiday, re ya (we are going to) Namibia. It's not like home. I don't have any sentimental feelings for it. It's home because my mum stays there but I always feel like it's an extended vacation that I am kind of familiar with. It's like going to South Africa but your mum is there. Ee so uhm, yah.[106]

Along similar lines, others, especially people with a migrant background who were based in the diaspora, or those whose parents or family had since left Botswana, the concept of

[105] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with *Monroe*,
[106] Research Participant Interview: *Clarke*, 30 June 2020 via Zoom

home had evolved beyond territory and had become a connection to the past and a feeling tied to familiarity and family. This past connection was more rooted in family as a symbolic representation of home. For example, *Leonore,* already introduced in Chapters Four and Five, who was residing in Nigeria at the time of the interview contextualised her experience by expressing that after her family left the country, her connection to Botswana as home was broken. This is what she had to say on the matter:

> My Omang has since expired again. I would need to make another trip to go and renew my Omang but my mum left Botswana in 2010 so since she left I have no home to go to. Once she left, I remember feeling a shift thinking Botswana is no longer home any more. I have nowhere to go. As soon as my mum left, I realised that the connection with Botswana was broken and it was just me and having the passport. I have not been back since my mum left because I have no home to go to. There is nothing there for me. My siblings are also not there. It's funny that now that my mum has left Botswana, there is no reason for me to go back there. We don't own anything there.[107]

*Leonore'*s experience shows that feelings of home are not simple and are very much related and interlinked with the people that make a place feel like home, such as family. As such Wiles (2008) cited in Liu (2015) argues that the concept of home is ambiguous and as the preceding examples have shown, the concept of home can mean so many things to different people, yet at the centre of it, the presence of family is what makes a place feel like home for people with a migrant background in this study.

In support, Celenta and Klausegger (2021) state that the word home can mean a house, a family or sometimes a feeling of safety and comfort, however, due to increased mobility, the conceptualisation of home as a static place loses its meaning and home becomes an ambiguous space. Arguably, scholars such as Gorman-Murray, (2007) have alluded to the concept of home as something beyond the physical location dwelling but as a space of belonging, intimacy, security, relationships and selfhood.

Whereas scholars such as Khattak's (2006) work with Afghan women shows that home can extend beyond physical dwellings to include ideas of identity, culture, creativity, happiness, the past and the future and security and insecurity. As shown by *Leonore*, once her family left the country, something shifted as the physical location of Botswana did not

[107] Ibid: Interview with *Leonore*

mean anything to her without the presence of her loved ones there. To reiterate her point, she also added that she was not sure if she would ever go back to Botswana as it no longer felt like home.

> The fact that my mum is no longer in Botswana, it's no longer home for me, it really isn't. I don't know if I will ever go back. It's just not the same with my mum not being there so I am grappling with all of this for myself.[108]

Leonore's experience further underscores the feelings of home as not only being associated with loved ones but feelings of belonging to a particular space that is tied to feelings of familiarity. This familiarity is connected to emotional ties associated with family. Hence, once that is no longer the case, those feelings change and one's sense of belonging to the place becomes disjointed.

Another participant, *Queen*, shared that at some point she left Botswana to advance her studies abroad and upon completion, she had the option to remain abroad, or return to Kenya (her country of birth) or Botswana (where she had spent her formative years). She eventually chose to return to Botswana because that is the country she considered to be her home. Upon reflecting on her experience, this is what she had to say about her decision to return to Botswana:

> So, I then made a very conscious decision to come back to Botswana. For two reasons, first, my former employer was willing to take me back at work and secondly, my parents were still living here. So I was literally coming to what I regarded as home.[109]

Conversely, *Tasha*, who had been living in Botswana for over 19 years but only received her citizenship in 2016, still considered Zambia as home. She stated that she had a deep emotional connection with her homeland which had not diminished over time but was strengthened by the strong family ties that she maintained that are based there. Another participant, living in the diaspora had a similar feeling although their situation differs slightly from that of *Leonore* and *Queen*, in that, in his case, some of his immediate family was still in Botswana. However, due to several years of residing in Botswana, and then

[108] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with *Leonore*
[109] Ibid: Research Participant interview with *Queen*

subsequently establishing his life outside the country as an adult, the feelings of Botswana as home had loosened over the years.

Clarke, who was raised in Botswana, but her immediate family had since moved back to Namibia, still felt a strong connection to Botswana as home despite the physical absence of her family there. In explaining the reason for moving back to Botswana after her University studies in Russia despite her entire family having moved back to Namibia, she stated the following:

> I think it was a combination of things. 1.) because I had been away from Botswana for so long, of course I missed my friends and just the familiarity of being home. Uhm, that's one. Because you know the streets, you know whose where, what place is popping, that type of thing. With Namibia, it felt like I was being forced to start over without a choice. Like it was like we are here now, so you just have to come. I mean it was nice to see my mum and my siblings, but it just didn't feel like home.[110]

The above experiences show that there are different ways in which people interpret feelings of home depending on their experiences and connection to the place. Besides having emotional ties connected to family, the length of time someone has been away also contributes to how they feel connected to Botswana as home. Moreover, familiarity also plays a role because in some cases it means the presence of family, but for others, it is the connection to the people, the environment and life they have created in a space which makes it home.

Arguably, major factors for some people with a migrant background's feelings of home are more emotional and symbolic while in some cases, they are linked to deep emotional attachments such as family (Liu, 2015). These feelings of home also influence feelings of belonging. In some cases, home is not necessarily the place where they currently live or where they have citizenship. This shows the ambiguity and complexity of the notion of home.

As illustrated, Botswana can on the one hand feel like home because participants identify with a certain community that invokes fond memories of their formative years, but it may not necessarily be a place where they have their sense of belonging. To further the

[110] Ibid: Research Participant with *Clarke*

discussion of home and reveal the complexities of this concept in the lives of people with a migrant background, I show that this is not a straightforward process for them. For instance, some of them did not have Botswana citizenship at the time of the interviews despite the length of time they had been living in the country. However, they still very much connected to the country and considered it home.

One such participant was *Senior***,** a medical doctor who arrived in Botswana with his family before the age of 10. He discussed the interesting contradictions of Botswana feeling more home than his country of origin, Nigeria. In his narration of his lived experience and what motivated him to decide to apply for citizenship to which he was awaiting the outcome at the time of the interview, he had the following to say:

> I went straight for citizenship. I did that because I feel like Botswana is home. That is why it saddens me that if it is about speaking[111], and they tell me to go, it's not about that. I have been to more places in Botswana than maybe you (referring to the researcher) lol. So it's more like home. The last time I went to Nigeria, I was feeling a little bit more uncomfortable because it just felt different. They actually picked that I am a foreigner in my own country. I don't know how but you know how it is when someone comes to your country and you say, ah this one is a foreigner. So they picked it up in my own country. Imagine! So it means that it's not really home…Home is where you belong, where you feel comfortable, where you feel safe. Not where you feel like ah I don't belong here. Even when I was at school, people didn't believe that I was Nigerian. They would even ask for my passport. They would be shocked.[112]

In the same breadth, *Senior's* feelings of home were not that straight forward. He also contradicted himself because despite feeling that Botswana was home for the reasons he outlined above, he was cautious about fully embracing this idea knowing that he still did not have citizenship status and because of this he preferred to identify with his Nigerian identity. The following excerpt captures these sentiments:

> Why do I say I am Nigerian? That is a very good question. As much as I said I feel good about feeling at home here, I think as long as I am not Motswana on paper, I still believe I am Nigerian. Yeah I know, that sounds crazy because I told you everything about feeling at home here. Yah, as long as I am not Motswana on paper, why should I put myself in a place whereby I may not be wanted or might

[111] Here the participant was referring to being conversant in Setswana as a condition to be granted citizenship

[112] Research Participant interview with: *Senior*, 10 July 2020 via Zoom

> be denied. Why should I celebrate that and get ahead of myself and say that I am a Motswana. No, I am not a Motswana. That is why I say I am Nigerian.[113]

Senior's reflection further underscores the complexity of what informs one's feelings of being home. As he highlights, Botswana is home because he feels safe and comfortable in Botswana and feels like he belongs but at the same time, because of his lack of citizenship status, he had a reluctance to fully embrace this fact. In this case *Senior* added a different layer to the conversation of home and belonging which contradicts the notion of home as tied to citizenship status since he could fully identify with Botswana even without being a citizen. In essence, *Senior* was clear that Botswana was home, but his identity was still Nigerian based on his citizenship status. Thus, in his case, his Nigerianess had more to do with his identity than with feelings of belonging there.

Senior's experience underscores the argument by Dawson and Rapport (2021) who point out that inasmuch as home is an ambiguous concept, it is also a marker of identity for individuals and communities as argued elsewhere in this thesis. *Senior's* experience highlights the complexities of what "home" means, challenging the common definition of home as simply a "place of birth or a fixed location where one feels a sense of community, belonging, stability, and emotional comfort" (Hordyk, 2021:15). It shows that the concept of home is far more intricate than traditional definitions suggest. In addition, *Senior's* experience further illustrates dislocation as he shows that the state where his sense of home is geographically and emotionally are separated from his formal identity and citizenship.

Drawing from Fischer (2009), I refer to dislocation in the context of this thesis as a departure from the narratives of ancestral belonging which involves both geographic displacement and cultural dispossession due to partial assimilation into the place of settlement. In simpler terms, dislocation is a disruptive relocation (Babashikina, 2020). On the other hand, another participant who was in a similar position to *Senior* in terms of lack of Botswana citizenship status had a different experience. In her case, *Gift,* a chartered account with origins in Zimbabwe, grew up in Molepolole, a village on the outskirts of Gaborone and was now based in South Africa had the following to say:

[113] Ibid: Research Participant interview with: *Senior*

> I think I identify more with Botswana. I think it's home for me and when I have to explain to someone where I come from, I start by telling them that my nationality is Zimbabwean, my parents both come from Zimbabwe, but I was raised in Botswana and that is home for me.[114]

Botswana as home for *Gift* was tied to her familiarity with the place and the fact that she was raised there, and her parents were still based in Botswana. However, as she was now based in South Africa, that added another layer to her experience of what home means. South Africa has become a place she could identify with after spending most of her adult life there. In her reflection on the matter, *Gift* had this to say:

> Botswana is home for me so Zimbabwe becomes my second home. At this moment it's a bit difficult because I have spent so many years in South Africa as well so it is a bit difficult to really say where my sense of belonging is but between Zimbabwe and Botswana, I would still think it's more with Botswana than it is with Zimbabwe. South Africa is slowly becoming home because most of my mature life I have been here … so it is slowly becoming home but if I had to default to a second home, the next will be Botswana and then Zimbabwe after that because I have never really lived in Zimbabwe. Zim was like a vacation for me. Every holiday we were in Zimbabwe so it was like a vacation. Not that it is home.[115]

As shown in the previous discussions, some people with a migrant background's feelings of their country of origin as home were loosened because they had not spent much time there. As *Gift* explains, Zimbabwe for her was a place for vacation and did not necessarily feel like home even though her roots were based there. She was not alone in this as *Monroe* had similar thoughts on the matter. From her experience, she found it tricky to explain because she considered herself both a *Motswana* and a Tanzanian.

> I mean it still is a little bit of a tricky situation because in my head I would like to think I am both a Motswana and a Tanzanian because even when I did go back to Tanzania, like on holiday and stuff, I would stay with my granny. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I would always come straight home but it's not as familiar as Bots has become to me. So Bots is more like home and Tanzania is like home that I visit lol. So even in terms of being with other Tanzanians as well at home, you will always feel like a foreigner but being in Botswana you are also made to feel like a foreigner so it's like, okay, where do I belong. But as I got older during University,

[114] Research Participant Interview with: *Gift*, 5 July 2020 online via Zoom
[115] Research Participant Interview with: *Gift*

> I started to come to terms with being both and kind of accepting that it is okay for me to be Tanzanian and still consider myself as a Motswana.[116]

What *Monroe* is reflecting from her experience is this notion of ambiguity that the concept of home means for her. However, still within this ambiguity is a form of agency that emerges to embrace the dual realities of home as they exist for her. The level of awareness and reflexivity of her experiences and what they mean is reflective of most participants, even those with slightly different conceptualisations and meanings of home.

Like *Senior*, the case of *Gift* also shows that the country of her citizenship is not necessarily the place she identifies as home. She reflected on this as a reality of her experience and a fact she has had to reconcile with for herself based on her experience. The ensuing discussions on feelings and conceptualisation of home show a variation of mixed and ambiguous feelings of double categorisation – belonging yet also not belonging to other spaces.

A feeling of home but packed with ambiguity and complexities as the discussions of home are marked in some instances by a tension between a desire for reclaiming home within the space they currently occupy and the contrasting citizenship that connotes identity in a place elsewhere - the place attachment and place identity situation (Ducros, 2019). It is this ambiguity that, according to Celenta and Klausegger (2021), leads to groups such as people with migrant backgrounds' construction of home through reflexive approaches discussed above on what it means to grow up between two cultures.

For other participants, they identified more with their current place of settlement as home than that of their roots. Their roots were acknowledged as a part of who they are, but Botswana was home because of where they grew up and the ties that connected them to the place. This is despite the alienation in the attitude of some locals who might consider them different and contest their belongingness (Vathi and King, 2021).

In this case, these experiences highlight home as not only beyond the physical dwelling but also draws our attention to different affective possibilities of home (Datta, 2016). This is shown in the feeling of home as not necessarily an abstract concept but one tied to several feelings and attachments evoked in different spaces that people with a

[116] Research Participant Interview with: *Monroe*

migrant background occupy. For others home is where they are based or situated, for others it is attached to the presence of their family, while for others, it is multiple homes at the same time.

6.6 People with a Migrant Background's Relation to their Communities and Botswana

One of this thesis' research questions was to understand the implications that emanate from people with migrant backgrounds' identity and belonging in relation to the Botswana nation-state, and the communities in which they live. As already alluded to in previous sections, one such implication is that people with a migrant background seem to display a form of ambivalence towards the Botswana nation state due to their multiple and complex experiences with identity and belonging.

At the same time, they are also building connections within local communities through friendships, church, neighbourhoods, schools, and migrant associations with other families from their countries of origin. As demonstrated in this research, participants who had strong communal ties with the local communities where they grew up and actively participated in community activities were more likely to feel connected to these communities. In contrast, those who remained primarily within their own foreign communities did not form strong bonds with locals; instead, their sense of belonging and relationships were mainly with others from their countries of origin. For example, *Tasha* who grew up in a village on the outskirts of the capital City, Gaborone noted the following from her experience:

> I think to a certain extent depending on where you are. If you were, say in a village, because you are in a village you are then forced to participate in your kgotla meetings and all of that whilst in town people pretty much live their lives. In towns you find that people who have naturalised don't necessarily interact with Batswana per se. In the sense that they still maintain the cliques that they had of foreigners and all of that so they don't necessarily integrate themselves into the society. So for them, for all intents and purposes they are still very much foreigners and I think

> they only form part of Batswana from a statistical perspective but not necessarily having to integrate themselves in society.[117]

Tasha's reflections were supported by other participants. For example, another participant emphasised that when she was growing up, there was a large Tanzanian community where families socialised together and that as children, they were encouraged to form bonds, stick together and ensure that they marry people from within their community, in this case it was the Tanzanian community. The rationale for this was that Tanzanians as compared to *Batswana* were more trusted as marriage partners. In addition, emphasis was put on the notion that, if they ever needed help then their Tanzanian community members would be the ones that would be there for them. These actions were a way to maintain and preserve their culture and ties to their homeland.

> It is important for our parents to have that community, to keep that community because, to them, yes, we have citizenship, we are in Botswana but we are originally from Tanzania so we have to keep that togetherness. And it's frustrating because the youth, like the young people, are not as serious about the community as our parents are. They feel like we are letting it go and letting it die out. Their reasoning is that, who is going to help you in times of need, or when you have problems and stuff. They feel like the Tanzania community will help you. So it's important for them, for us to stay together. There is a big Tanzanian community in Botswana. It's a whole community. There is even a chairperson, treasurer, there are events, things like that. Like it's a real community, an active community.[118]

Chaudhary (2016) defines this form of socialisation as a form of social transnationalism where immigrants create a sense of belonging by integrating into their receiving societies while maintaining a variety of cross border linkages with their countries of origin. Moreover, the author further asserts that in the social domain, this encompasses various social networks that form through migration, as well as the flow of information and ideas that link places of origin with host societies Chaudhary (2016).

In this context, since the communities discussed are in the host country (Botswana), connections to their home countries are preserved by maintaining close relationships with fellow nationals. This allows them to uphold the traditions, culture, food, language and ties

[117] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with: *Tasha*
[118] Ibid: - Research Participant Interview: *Bella*

that link them to their country of origin. Although some studies demonstrate that the direct impact of transnationalism may not be visible, it may still influence the lived experiences of people with a migrant background in both the host country and their parents' country of origin (Jayasinha, 2015). Additionally, the need for the parents of people with a migrant background to maintain ties and connections with their home country supports Levitt and Jaworsky's (2007) argument that some migrants actively engage with their homeland through family, social, economic, religious, political, and cultural activities across borders, even while being integrated into their host countries.

Other scholars such as Kivisto (2001) maintain that the influence of transnationalism and its impact on people with a migrant background such as the second-generation and third generation may be limited due to their potential of assimilating into the host country. Quirke, Potter and Conway (2010) note that scholars such as Basch et al (1994), Levitt, (2009) differ and suggest that transnationalism will continue and will roll over to numerous generations that follow. On the other hand, based on their study with Turkish migrant descendants in Sweden, Westin, (2015) demonstrated that migrant descendants' transnational links with their parents' countries of origin were generally weaker than that of their parents, although the authors acknowledged that this may change at a later stage.

Likewise, while Levitt (2009) concurs with perspectives that suggest that children of immigrants will not engage in their parents' countries of origin, they argue that we should not overlook the strong potential effect of being raised in a transnational social field. Levitt (2009) further argues that the influence of growing up in a household that engages in transnational behaviours and practices may enable the children to acquire skills that will be valuable in both contexts and also enable them to master a series of cultural arrays that they may selectively deploy in response to the opportunities and challenges they face.

As illustrated by the participants of this study, many were largely influenced by their parents' cultural and traditional values from their countries of origin. Some adopted strict Christian liberal values, while others embraced a blend of their parents' values and the local context, shaped by their social interactions at school and in the community. Interestingly, most participants noted a strong presence of their country of origin's values and culture, instilled by their parents. They reported that their parents were stricter

compared to their *Batswana* friends' parents. Participants often spoke the language, ate the food and practised the culture of their parent's country of origin, and predominantly associated with communities of the same nationality. To illustrate this point, one participant stated the following:

> I would say my upbringing was really influenced by the Nigerian culture because at some point we went to a Nigerian church, there were Nigerian movies playing, the forms of discipline I guess and just the culture in the home was very Nigerian, in the sense that when I speak to my friends, they are like ah you do this at home? or you don't do this at home? Even something like playing outside was not allowed. It was like you could clearly tell *gore* it wasn't like what was happening in our community.[119]

Despite this background outlined above, some participants acknowledged the undeniable influence of their surrounding environment, which sometimes led to difficulties in fitting into their own cultural communities. They faced questions such as, "How are you this yet you cannot speak your mother tongue?" and were often expected to behave in ways considered appropriate for someone with their migrant origin. Therefore, while transnationalism plays a significant role in their experiences, people with a migrant background are also finding ways to reconcile the diverse influences from both their country of origin and Botswana.

As such participants reflected that the choice to socialise and interact with mostly expatriates or other families from the same nationality was not a deliberate effort, it had more to do with sharing similar experiences and relating to each other as foreigners in the same country. Additionally, assimilation into the local society was not prioritised, as many participants' parents believed their stay in Botswana would be temporary and that they would eventually return home. Consequently, learning *Setswana* was not emphasised in school. It was only after some participants naturalised or entered the job market that they recognised how different their upbringing was from that of their peers and how their lack of fluency in *Setswana* limited their full participation in society and in the workplace, where the language is essential for communication.

[119] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with: *Clarke*

One participant, *Louvre* to be exact, stated that, "we interacted with other community members, but we never integrated." While another participant, *Paul*, originally from Guyana stated that, "we lived in our own bubble" Moreover, participants stated that, now as adults, they are making conscious decisions to learn *Setswana* and immerse themselves into the Botswana culture. Those who studied tertiary in Botswana expressed that this helped them to form bonds and friendships with *Batswana* that they did not have before. Through these friendships and connections, they were able to attend weddings, funerals and cultural events that exposed them to the Botswana culture.

A participant reflected that her upbringing in some ways instilled some xenophobic attitudes towards *Batswana*, which she had to unlearn in adulthood. This sentiment was subtly echoed by other participants, for example, when they recalled their parents discouraging them from marrying *Batswana* as previously mentioned by *Bella* due to perceived differences in values or the belief that *Batswana* (both men and women) were not "marriage material."

For example, *Button,* introduced in one of the preceding Chapters stated that having grown up in Botswana, he considered it home and was more familiar with the place than his native country Tanzania. According to *Button*, he was raised in a very strict Christian home where his only form of socialisation with other *Batswana* was at school and church as he was not allowed to play on the streets like other *Batswana* children. *Button* also reflected that because of his upbringing, his parents were opposed to him marrying a *Motswana* woman because of the perception they had about them, however, he found their reasoning confusing:

> Sometimes it's weird because my parents brought us here. We only know Botswana. We know life and how things work here. I think I have probably been to a lot of towns or cities in this country more than the actual Batswana. Then the parents actually have the nerve to say we still don't want you to marry here. It's because of the hate they have experienced from some Batswana people. For example, there have been some instances where Tanzanian men have been with Batswana women and those Batswana women would just take those men for a joy ride. You know how old school parents are like. Something happens, it stays here. They don't want to change that is just how it is … they will be like it has happened to so and so, so what stops it from happening to you. So we would just look at them and think, but you brought us here. It is not our fault. Now you want us to go to

> our country (Tanzania) where, if I get out of the yard for example, I have no idea who I am going to meet. I speak English, I have an accent, they know that I am not local even though I speak the language.[120]

As demonstrated above, in some ways *Batswana* were stereotyped as lacking a good work ethic and moral values, and were considered as very relaxed and having laid back attitudes. Ironically, the same negative sentiments that people with a migrant background felt *Batswana* had towards them is what they and their parents were also projecting or what informed some of their attitudes towards *Batswana*. For example, one participant had this to say:

> Here people just want to be jealous and want to eat…so I would not say I would really… I would rather be here and live in my own bubble than to try and assimilate and be like what other people are. Which is a thing that we have done since we arrived here. Like we are here but we didn't want to be running around and doing things that people were doing locally.[121]

Landau and Fremantle's (2010) research on migrants in Johannesburg, previously discussed in this thesis, highlights a similar irony to that observed here. In this case, parents and, in some instances, people of migrant backgrounds exhibited attitudes comparable to those described by Landau and Fremantle. People with a migrant background also attributed the same "flaws" to locals that have often been used to criticise migrants (Landau & Fremantle, 2010:383). Based on the observations made from their study, the authors explain that by consciously differentiating themselves from locals, migrants maintain their loyalties to their countries of origin while orienting themselves towards a future in their host societies. This behaviour represents a form of "deterritorialised inclusion" (Landau & Fremantle, 2010).

Some participants, while maintaining ties with communities from their countries of origin, also developed connections and bonds with local *Batswana*. For instance, *Leonore* shared that, although she grew up with a strong sense of belonging to the Ghanaian community, she also became aware of the internal politics and jealousy that existed within it. She mentioned that as a Ghanaian community, there were many gatherings and get-togethers. Her family generally interacted well with everyone, including their neighbours.

[120] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with: *Button*
[121] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with: *Paul*

She particularly notes that her ties with the Ghana community were more visible when her father was still alive but after his passing, her family leaned more to their local neighbours and church community.

> There were strong bonds in the Ghanaian community, but I say this with a pinch of salt because I understand there was a lot of politics and jealousy within the community. There were gatherings and we came together. My family in general interacted with everyone even in our neighbourhood. I remember we were the first in my neighbourhood to have a television so the kids would always be at my house, whether they were Kalanga or Batswana. I remember my house being full of kids. My father's death had a huge impact in our lives. Before, there was a lot of family life, socialisation. There was fishing. We would go to Shashe dam to fish. I think he fished a lot because he was Gha and Gha's are known for fishing in Ghana. After my dad died there was a shift, and my mum relied more on the *Tswana* community. We had more of a sustenance life than social. At age 15 or 16 there was a shift. There were a lot of born again communities that sprung up and those also formed part of our social life.[122]

As shown in the preceding discussions, People with migrant backgrounds mostly grew up detached from their local communities and formed stronger bonds with their fellow country mates. In a few cases, some developed a connection with locals. A community in this instance was defined broadly in the sense that it included migrant groups, schools, neighbours, the church, work and friends etc. Moreover, how people with a migrant background related to each community depended on the nature of the relationship.

For instance, as seen in the examples above, some connections with migrant communities from participants' countries of origin were driven by a desire to preserve their cultures and identities. They also valued these relationships because they felt a sense of similarity and anticipated support from these communities in times of need. Many first-generation migrants maintained these close connections, viewing themselves as foreigners with little intention of assimilating or settling permanently in Botswana.

One participant shared that she was raised as an expatriate, with the expectation that she would eventually return to her country of origin. Consequently, her social interactions were primarily with other expatriates, and her friends were children in similar circumstances. Her only real connection to the Botswana community began when she

[122] Ibid: Research Participant Interview with: *Leonore*

entered the workforce, made friends with *Batswana*, and began to invest in the local culture and language. Thus, for the most part, relations of people with a migrant background with their communities were mostly in and out except in cases where they would try to deepen those relations with locals.

Similarly, when it came to their relationship with the Botswana state, it was mostly ambivalent due to feeling excluded and not fully belonging or considered as authentic *Batswana* despite still considering Botswana as home. As such, the experiences of the research participants speak largely to broader discussions of integration, assimilation and belonging in Botswana. A Key informant from the International Organisation for Migrants (IOM) alluded to the fact that when it comes to integration, the government has maintained a reluctance to promote it. The country has been known to adopt more of an assimilationist strategy for both naturalised citizens and minority ethnic groups within the country.

Unlike other countries, such as those in the global north where integration of newcomers is adopted in policy through providing language courses, assistance with employment etc. that is not the case for Botswana. In general, the country has largely shunned integration. This is evident in the lack of an integration policy and efforts towards integrating refugees in the country as the focus is more on assimilation or exclusion. This is something that has been maintained from pre-colonial, colonial to the post-colonial period as alluded to in Chapter Three.

Before independence, the role of assimilating and welcoming people into the community was performed by the Chiefs. The Chiefs would grant individuals citizenship by incorporating them into their *morafe* through allocation of a piece of land and in turn the individual pledges allegiance to the said Chief. In postcolonial Botswana, although Chiefs do not currently allocate land or give out citizenship as they used to, they still play a prominent role in welcoming and integrating newcomers into the community. For example, a Chief I interviewed in Tonota, a small village near Francistown, shared a story about a Zimbabwean teacher who had been working at the local school and eventually received Botswana citizenship. When she moved into the area, she came to introduce herself to him, symbolising her desire to be accepted as a member of the village. By formally recognising him as her Chief, she was also pledging her allegiance to him and seeking to integrate more fully into the community.

6.7 Conclusion

Central to this chapter's argument is the idea that people with a migrant background in Botswana experience contradictory feelings of belonging. These mixed feelings arise from the construction of Botswana's hegemonic *Tswana* national identity which often excludes them and leads to a lack of acceptance as authentic *Batswana.* As explored in Chapters Four and Six, factors such as recognition as a 'real' *Motswana* have an influence on both identity and belonging.

While such experiences are not unique and have been examined by other scholars, this study fills a gap in the literature by emphasising the ambivalent belonging of people with a migrant background. Studies on ambivalence, especially in the global north focus on either the inclusion of migrants in the host country or on undocumented migrants. However, this chapter's contribution adds to these discussions through focusing on people who do not necessarily seek recognition but embrace the contradictions and complexities that come with ambivalent belonging.

Through exploring this issue in the context of Botswana and people with a migrant background, the chapter further demonstrates that ambivalent belonging or in some cases not fully belonging to one place is also a form of belonging or belonging by other means. This further demonstrates that ambivalence and agency can coexist in shaping one's sense of belonging that is rooted in context and experience. Moreover, as illustrated, on one hand, such groups feel a sense of belonging because Botswana is their home, where they grew up and have familial ties. On the other hand, intersecting factors such as the nation-state's construction, their history of mobility, and migrant background make them aware that they will never fully belong to one place. This mirrors their experiences with identity and self-identification, further underscoring how belonging and identity intersect.

7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion: Reflections and Future Research

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has taken a case study approach and adopted a historiography combined with in-depth narrative interviews to understand the relations developed by people with a migrant background with the state and the communities where they live. Through examining state building processes and its influence on national identity and belonging, the thesis grappled with questions of citizenship, identity and belonging to make sense of these experiences and the ways in which the participants in this study self-identify and belong in Botswana.

The premise of this thesis was to inquire about how people with a migrant background position themselves vis-a-vis a Botswana national identity and the implications of this for their identity and belonging. The aim amongst other things was also to explore the experiences of people with a migrant background and what these tell us about citizenship and belonging in post-colonial states. Using a case study of Botswana helped to examine how nation-building and national identity continue to impact the identity and belonging of such groups in post-colonial African states.

The thesis brought attention to other forms of identification and lived experiences that go beyond essentialised identities and hegemonic views. Like studies such as Clark-Kazak (2011) in their work with young refugees in Uganda, people with a migrant background are showing political awareness and individual agency in how they navigate their everyday lives and make claims to their citizenship, self-identity and belonging in the Botswana nation-state. The study also differs from others in that it not only engages the experiences of people with migrant backgrounds in the context of nation-building but as mentioned, it further contributes to understanding the implications this has on postcolonial identity, belonging and citizenship. Thus, I positioned the study through a postcolonial lens

to examine these established ideologies around identity and belonging regarding people with a migrant background.

7.2 Summary of Thesis Argument and Contribution to Scholarship

The strength of this thesis lies in its contribution to knowledge on identity and belonging in the African context by focusing on an understudied group. As such, the thesis has argued that the ambivalence of people with a migrant background informs and shapes how they relate to the postcolonial nation-state of Botswana and its citizenship. I argue that this presents itself as a politics of ambivalent citizenship that is characterised or expressed through the research participants' multiple-hyphenated identities and multi-sited forms of belonging that in turn inform their engagement with the Botswana nation-state. The findings also speak to existing scholarship that discusses these issues of ambivalence, tactical citizenship and hybridity or fluid identities and marginalisation.

The thesis joins these conversations by introducing the experiences of people with a migrant background which provides a window through which life at the margins can be observed. This responds to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity and the concept of marginalisation, specifically arguing that the idea of hybridity does not go far enough in capturing the experiences of this study's participants. This thesis also challenges the notion of marginalisation as a space of oppression, arguing that such an approach is limited. This is because the participants of this study have demonstrated that even though they may not be fully integrated, they are comfortable with that position.

The thesis also reveals that the marginal and liminal positioning of people with a migrant background in Botswana illustrates the contingent, negotiated, and ultimately unstable foundations of citizenship in the modern nation-state. Their presence makes visible the tensions between ethnic nationalism and the inclusive ideals of democratic belonging, challenging the state's claim to a unified national identity. People with a migrant background further demonstrate that the constructed nature of citizenship by exposing the ways in which access to rights, recognition, and belonging are not guaranteed by legal status alone, but mediated by deeper social, historical, and ethnic logics. They problematise

the nation-state's self-image by resisting full assimilation into the *Tswana* hegemony, asserting alternative modes of identity and belonging that are multi-hyphenated and multisited.

In this sense, the study challenges theoretical and conceptual frameworks of marginalisation by showing that marginalisation can be a space of agency and negotiation, rather than just suppression. Furthermore, the study revealed that despite Botswana's assimilationist model of the elite nationalist founders, people with a migrant background have created their own space and fashioned their own identities that are divergent and non-confirming to the nationalist project. This finds its expression in their agency and self-awareness.

As will be shown in the ensuing summary of the thesis' main discussions, the preceding empirical chapters have illustrated how this politics of ambivalent citizenship has played out in relation to my research participants' citizenship, identity and belonging.

7.3 Summary of Thesis Main Discussions

The conclusions that have been reached were drawn from understanding the experiences of people with a migrant background and the meanings they inferred from their everyday experiences in the encounters they have with the state and their communities. These experiences and meanings are constituted or are continuously shaped and reshaped at the intersection of historical events, policies and social interactions from the context where that meaning is derived. The study also showed that it is in the interaction of such groups with the state, society and communities they live in that their identities are shaped, re-shaped and reformulated to fit into a particular space or place. It is also in these intersections or interfaces that meaning-making or agential use of identity and belonging of people with a migrant background emerges.

This demonstrates the influence or importance of histories and contexts in shaping meanings that are located or constructed in specific contexts. These meanings are mediated by people with a migrant background's mobility, migration backgrounds, socio-economic status and their multiple-hyphenated identities and multi-sited belonging which intersect

to shape and influence their lived experiences. At the core of these experiences is an exercise of individual agency where such groups are not victims of their circumstances but are cognisant of how to navigate their environment. They also learn how to navigate the factors within their context that influence how they respond, when they respond and engage with the state or communities where they have established themselves. As shown in the preceding empirical chapters the agency of people with a migrant background is located in their ambivalence and ambiguity.

These findings differ from studies that have viewed ambivalence negatively as a state of confusion, as a risk or trap for individual agency, especially in contemporary literature on the development of self. In addition, and similar to Raino and Marjanovic (2013), this thesis demonstrates that ambivalence can be recognised as a point of potential transformation and opportunity to gain voice and agency as opposed to the usual association of ambivalence as a paralysing state preventing one from making a decision and continuity with life. Finally, Raino and Marjanovic see agency and ambivalence as linked phenomena where expressions of ambivalence can be a potential source of agency.

Each empirical chapter attempted to highlight an aspect of this through showing a more ambiguous array of the experiences of people with a migrant background. The chapters build on migration scholarship that has moved past portraying migrants as people without agency and depoliticised individuals due to their circumstances (Meloni, 2019). Furthermore, as demonstrated in this thesis, people with a migrant background have brought attention to how their ambivalent state, whether it be with how they self - identify, belong or make claims to citizenship, is a form of ambivalence imbued in their agential ways of being and of relating within their contexts and the Botswana nation-state.

As all three empirical chapters show, at the heart of these experiences is the construction of the Botswana nation-state's embeddedness in *Tswananess* which shapes and influences their identity, belonging and citizenship. Moreover, I showed that identity, belonging and citizenship in Botswana are inextricably linked and are rooted in the *Tswanadom* approach. As Bagwasi and Alimi, cited in Chapter Four, have demonstrated, this framing has a bearing on who is considered a proper citizen *(Motswana tot*a) and by extension connotes identity and belonging.

People with a migrant background are very much cognisant of such contextual facts especially at the social level and therefore employ tactical citizenship to claim rights, self-alienate and in some instances politically invisibilise themselves as discussed in Chapter Five. This is also where their agency comes into play. As Kouros (2024) notes, tactical citizenship is an indication of tenacity and resourcefulness of marginalised individuals in directing their relations with the state.

The study also showed that tactical citizenship is not only used by non-citizens but also by citizens as a form of citizenship practices. Furthermore, Chapter Five challenges traditional ideas of citizenship highlighting how they are reshaped daily through local level rights claiming strategies of people with a migrant background therefore, reinforcing alternative forms of citizenship from the below.

In Chapter Four, people with a migrant background play with the power of the margins by their adoption and embracing of their "outsider" status through recognising their multiple and hyphenated identities that represent a true reflection of who they are and how they choose to self-identify. They do not seek to be fully *Tswana* nor do they deny its influence on their identity. For them, the ambiguous identities are where they locate who they are, a move that is completely removed from the assimilationist model that Botswana aimed to achieve. People with a migrant background in this study also demonstrated agential use of identity, thus, contributing to discussions on the margins by de-centring ethnicity and nationality as the primary frame for self-identification.

Chapter Six demonstrated that ambivalence and agency can co-exist in shaping belonging that is rooted in both context and experience. Moreover, the Chapter also demonstrated that when it comes to belonging, people with a migrant background are presenting a form of ambivalent territorial form of belonging which is rooted in their lack of identification with the Botswana national identity that does not capture the imagination of their experiences. Additionally, because of their migrant backgrounds and experiences with mobility, their ambivalent belonging is rooted in the places that have shaped them, and the experiences they have accumulated there and elsewhere.

An ambivalent territorial belonging is also shown in their embracing of Botswana as home even though they know they will never fully belong there. Or to put it more succinctly, for such groups, there is a recognition of Botswana as their legal homeland

while their ethnic ties are elsewhere or vice versa. This also contributes or results in their ambivalence towards the Botswana nation-state and how they engage or relate with it.

In summary, the empirical chapters show that, even though Botswana appears to have a civic model of citizenship, it is more ethnic in how it is understood, expressed and related to by some citizens, especially those of non-*Tswana* origins. As Meloni (2019) argues, postcolonial scholars state that ambivalent feelings become pronounced in contexts of domination and cultural difference.

In drawing from the experiences of people with a migrant background presented in all three empirical chapters, the implications for their 'in and out' approach can be summed up as a form of politics of ambivalent citizenship. The implications of these actions is that it underscores their agency and assertiveness in terms of identity and belonging in postcolonial states such as Botswana. Raino and Marjanovic (2013:) reinforce the above discussions and state that:

> Interestingly, in more recent studies, ambivalence has also been related to the possibility of the individual to exercise agency over social structures in different social situations: Individuals experience ambivalence when social structures constrain their ability to exercise individual agency in the negotiation of interpersonal relationships, and this ambivalence then becomes 'a catalyst for social action', either to reproduce the existing social order or to bring about change.

This thesis has therefore shown through people with a migrant background's politics of ambivalent citizenship that such groups find space to insert themselves in contexts that do not necessarily speak to their realities. Moreover, they are challenging the linear ways of how concepts of citizenship are understood and expressed. They are also showing us different forms of belonging and citizenship that are playing out at the local level and that do not conform or reflect the national narratives or policies implemented.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrated that people with a migrant background in Botswana occupy an ambivalent, marginal, or liminal space within the socio-political landscape of Botswana. I also illustrated that their responses to this position vary and thus, I propose that this marginal or ambivalent space is productive. It generates strategies that diverge from the traditional models of incorporation and that are not necessarily oriented towards conventional integration into host societies.

The broader argument this thesis makes is that voices at the margins are not seeking to take over the state, but rather to make it their own and find their place within it. This approach subtly challenges cultural hegemony, but without proposing a different alternative to it - hence it is tactical. Finally, I also demonstrated that people with a migrant background engage in a continuum of practices and various modes of belonging and self-identification. The diversity and practices of this group warrant further study to understand why they adopt the specific strategies and tactics they do. Furthermore, it would be interesting to also explore to what extent postcolonial states like Botswana reimagine national identity outside the frameworks inherited from colonial and ethnic hierarchies and finally, to understand how might marginal groups themselves forge new political subjectivities that resist both erasure and simple inclusion.

These could be potential areas for further research in studies looking at people with a migrant background, specifically, to understand the absence of visible populations with a migrant background, despite the likelihood that such groups exist in many countries. These individuals may find themselves in a state of partial belonging - never fully integrated, and perhaps not seeking full inclusion, but instead navigating the margins comfortably. This dynamic presents a different kind of politics, one that warrants further study, and this is an area that can be explored for future research in Botswana and the broader region.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A - Wits University Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Mlilo

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H19/08/25**
PROJECT TITLE	Political Subjectivities in Post-Colonial States: Identity and Belonging among Botswana's non -Tswana Migrant Descendants
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Miss S Mlilo
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Social Sciences/
DATE CONSIDERED	16 August 2019
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Two Year Extension
EXPIRY DATE	02 October 2024

DATE 03 October 2019 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Watermeyer)

cc: Supervisor : Dr L Landau and Dr J Misago

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

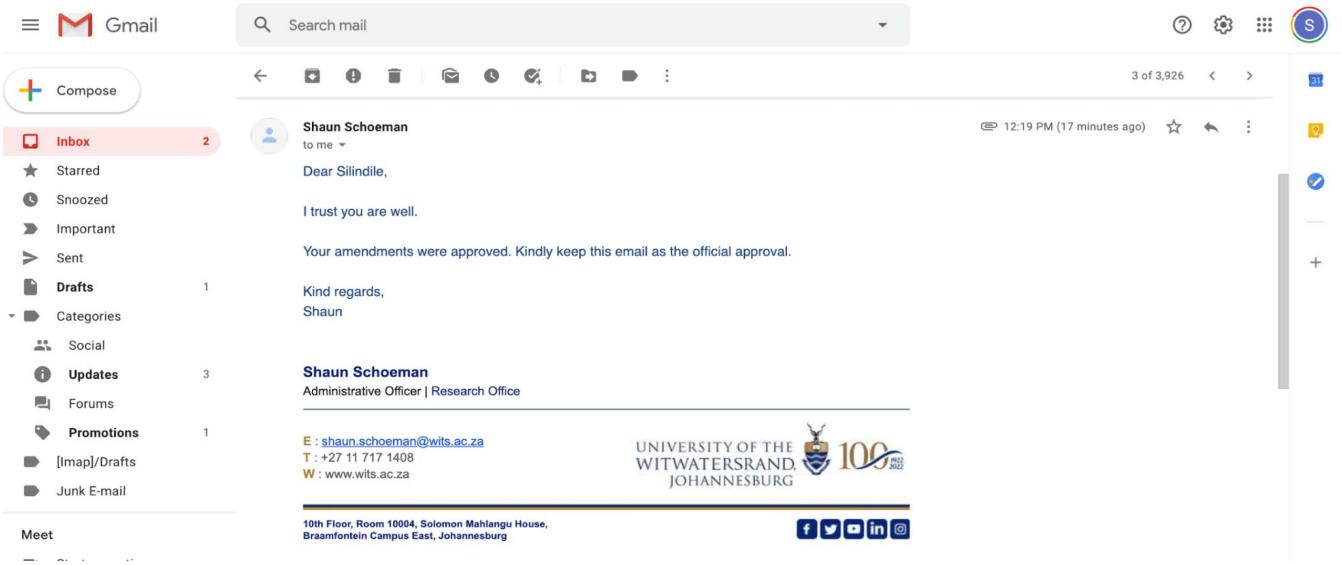
To be completed in duplicate and **A SIGNED COPY** returned to the Secretary electronically. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. **I/we agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low Risk studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.**

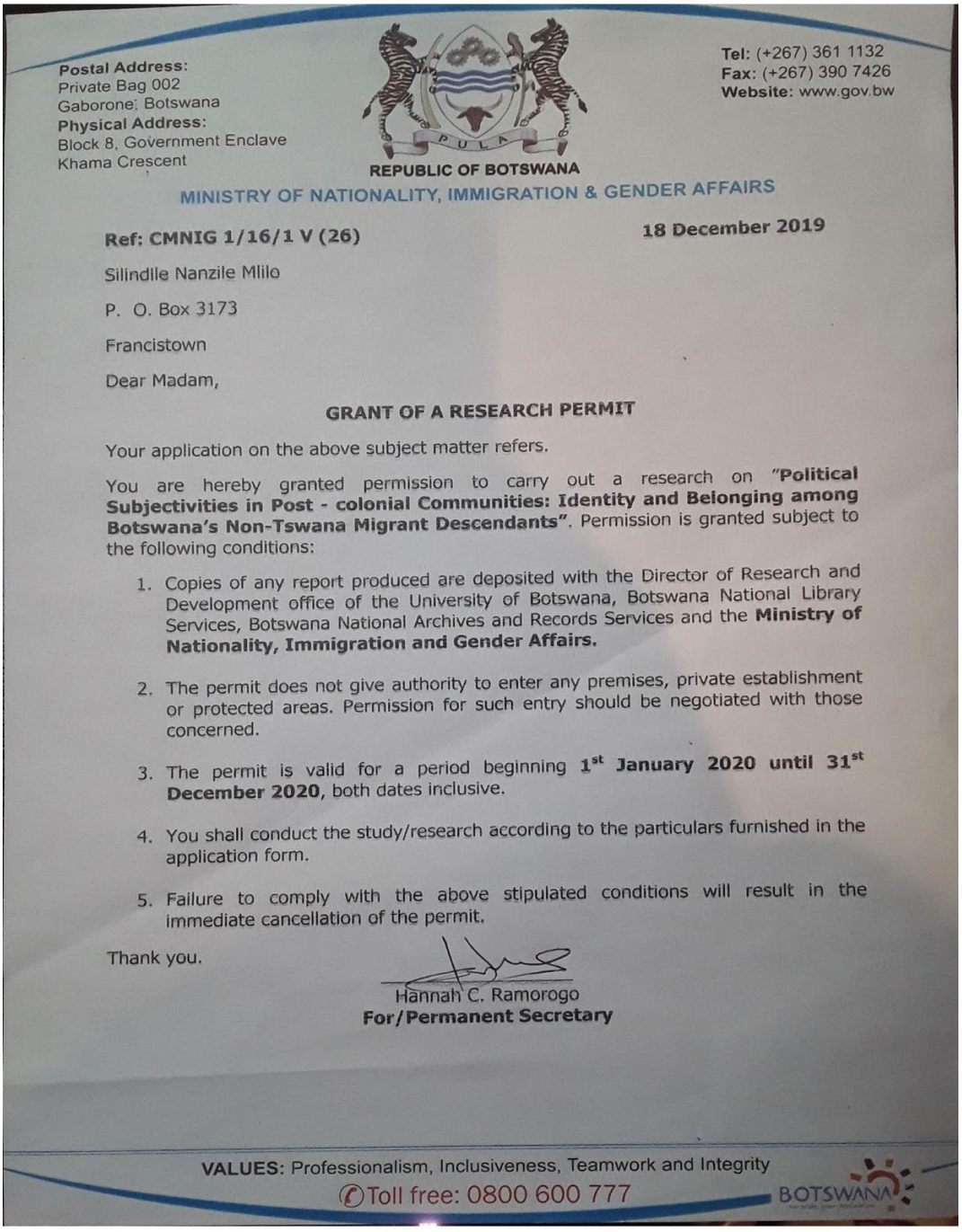
_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

9.2 Appendix B - Ethics Clearance Amendments Approval



9.3 Appendix C - Botswana Research Permit



Postal Address:
Private Bag 002
Gaborone, Botswana
Physical Address:
Block 8, Government Enclave
Khama Crescent

Tel: (+267) 361 1132
Fax: (+267) 390 7426
Website: www.gov.bw

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF NATIONALITY, IMMIGRATION & GENDER AFFAIRS

Ref: CMNIG 1/16/1 V (26) **18 December 2019**

Silindile Nanzile Mlilo

P. O. Box 3173

Francistown

Dear Madam,

GRANT OF A RESEARCH PERMIT

Your application on the above subject matter refers.

You are hereby granted permission to carry out a research on "**Political Subjectivities in Post - colonial Communities: Identity and Belonging among Botswana's Non-Tswana Migrant Descendants**". Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Copies of any report produced are deposited with the Director of Research and Development office of the University of Botswana, Botswana National Library Services, Botswana National Archives and Records Services and the **Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs.**
2. The permit does not give authority to enter any premises, private establishment or protected areas. Permission for such entry should be negotiated with those concerned.
3. The permit is valid for a period beginning **1st January 2020 until 31st December 2020,** both dates inclusive.
4. You shall conduct the study/research according to the particulars furnished in the application form.
5. Failure to comply with the above stipulated conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of the permit.

Thank you.

Hannah C. Ramorogo
For/Permanent Secretary

VALUES: Professionalism, Inclusiveness, Teamwork and Integrity
Toll free: 0800 600 777
BOTSWANA

9.4 Appendix D - Botswana Research Permit Extension

Postal Address:
Private Bag 002
Gaborone, Botswana
Physical Address:
Block 8, Government Enclave
Khama Crescent

Tel: (+267) 361 1100
Fax: (+267) 390 7426
Website: www.gov.bw

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF NATIONALITY, IMMIGRATION & GENDER AFFAIRS

Ref: CMNIG 1/16/1 VII (27) **16 December 2020**

Silindile Nanzile Mlilo

P. O. Box 3173

Francistown

Dear Madam,

EXTENSION OF A RESEARCH PERMIT

Your application on the above subject matter refers.

You are hereby granted permission to carry out a research on **"Political Subjectivities in Post - colonial Communities: Identity and Belonging among Botswana's Non-Tswana Migrant Descendants"**. Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Copies of any report produced are deposited with the Director of Research and Development office of the University of Botswana, Botswana National Library Services, Botswana National Archives and Records Services and the **Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs.**

2. The permit does not give authority to enter any premises, private establishment or protected areas. Permission for such entry should be negotiated with those concerned.

3. The permit is valid for a period beginning **1st January 2021 until 30th June 2021**, both dates inclusive.

4. You shall conduct the study/research according to the particulars furnished in the application form.

5. Failure to comply with the above stipulated conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of the permit.

Thank you.

Hannah C. Ramorogo
For/Permanent Secretary

9.5 Appendix E - Request to Access Archives

TEL: (00267) 3911820
FAX: (00267) 3908545

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MI NISTRY OF **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT,** SPORT AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT
BOTSWANA NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS SERVICES
P. O. BOX 239
GABORONE

REFERENCE NO: BNARS 6/2/8 I (119)

23rd December 2019
PHD Candidate
African Centre for Migration & Society
University of Witwatersrand

Attention: Silindile Nanzile Mlilo

REQUEST TO ACCESS ARCHIVES

Reference is made to your correspondence dated the 13th December 2019. Kindly note that permission is granted subjected to Botswana National Archives and Records Services Regulations, 2011: Part III-Reproduction of Archives, Section 11-14.Note:

1. That Botswana National Archives is acknowledged as the source.
2. In case you are going to use our photographs, make sure those photographs are solely used for the intended purpose.
3. The photograph can either be scanned or captured using a digital camera without flash light for preservation purposes.
4. A copy of our material is at a cost (Please refer to the attached sheet for our prizes).
5. Deposit a copy of your thesis with Botswana National Archives.

You are advised to visit Botswana National Archives and Records Services to identify materials and an archivist will assist you. In addition you are kindly informed that it is against our policy to make photocopies of the whole document for our clients.

Thank you for your interest on using our office.

Yours faithfully

botswana national archives and records services
Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture

BOTSWANA
Our pride, your destination

Letshidile Phiri

For Director

botswana national archives and records services
Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture

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9.6 Appendix F - Research Participant Information Sheet

Dear Sir /Madam,

My name is Silindile Mlilo and I am a PhD student in Migration and Displacement at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating – **Political subjectivities in post-colonial states: identity and belonging among Botswana's non-Tswana migrant descendants** under the supervision of Professor Loren Landau and Dr. Jean Pierre Misago. The aim of this research project is to explore the sense of identity and belonging of people with a migrant background, particularly, what their experiences tell us about evolving meanings of citizenship and national belonging in postcolonial states using Botswana as a case study.

I would like to invite you to take part in an online interview. This activity will involve a one on one interview over Zoom/Teams/Skype/Telephone and will take around 60 -120 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to record the interview. There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to.

The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely in my password protected laptop and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. The data collected from this research project will be stored in my password protected laptop and backed up on my Gmail account and will be kept for 10 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human

Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,
Silindile Nanzile Mlilo

Researcher:
Silindile Nanzile Mlilo, 738950@students.wits.ac.za , +27 789598283

Supervisors:
Professor Loren Landau, loren@migration.org.za, +27 (0) 11 717 4038
Dr. Jean Pierre Misago, jean.misago@wits.ac.za, +27 (0) 11 717 4093

9.7 Appendix G - Research Participant Consent Form

Title of project - Political subjectivities in post-colonial communities: identity and belonging among Botswana's non-Tswana migrant descendants

Name of researcher – Silindile Nanzile Mlilo

I, …….., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES NO

Participant:

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

Researcher:
…… (signature)

…… (name of person seeking consent)
…… (date)

9.8 Appendix H - Research Participant Interview Guide

The list of topics and questions are intended to guide the researcher during the interview. The interview schedule will not necessarily be adhered to systematically or completely as participant's responses will guide the questions depending on the flow of the interview. The aim of the interview is for participants to tell their story in detail, thus the research questions are to guide the discussion.

Demographic Information

Gender ..... Mother tongue .....

Ethnicity ..... Age group .....

Parents' country of origin ..... Professional Field .....

Self and family

- Could you tell me about 1)yourself, 2) your family?
- When did your parents immigrate to Botswana? Why did they move to Botswana?
- What is your citizenship? Are you naturalised, or a citizen from birth?
- Where have you lived and currently live in Botswana? In what way(s) has this shaped your life experiences?
- Do you have any experiences of your parents' country of origin?
- What connections do you feel you have with your parents' country of origin?

Social networks

- Can you tell me a bit about your friends/social networks?
- Do you feel you belong to a community or communities? How would you define your "community" or "communities" (i.e. friendships, ethnicity, religion etc.)
- What kind of connection(s) do you have with other people with a migrant background as yourself?

Identity and belonging

- How would you define yourself? What aspects of "who you are" do you think are important for this definition?
- How do you think your migrant background shapes who you are? If so, in what way and why?

- How important is it to you that other people know that you have a migrant background and why? Or do you avoid/hesitate to share this information? If so, why?
- Do you know some of the stereotypes/discrimination of people with a migrant background in Botswana? Have these stereotypes/discrimination ever affected the way you think about yourself/your family/or other people with migrant backgrounds?
- If someone asked you where you are from, what would you say? And why?
- Would the answer to the above question change if asked by a different person or in a different context, and why/why not?
- Do you feel a strong sense or connection to Botswana identity? How would you define this? In what way do you think this interacts with other people's aspect of you?
- What does being a *Motswana* mean for you?/ Do you think of yourself as a Motswana?/ Does it depend on the situation/place? How? When are you likely to and when are you not?
- What comes to mind when you think of *Tswana* identity/ What makes a person *Tswana*?
- Do you feel accepted by society at large and treated as one of them?
- Is Botswana home/feel like home? If yes/no, why?
- When do you feel like saying "We" when talking about *Batswana*/ Botswana/ Botswana history?

Political culture

- Does the political culture (local and national) of this society make you feel like you belong? Are your interests represented in politics?

Do you have anything else you would like to add that I have not asked you/you feel like sharing?