

## NOTES

# Place and Street Names in Tlokweng Over Time

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## Introduction

Batlokwa ba Moshaweng permanently settled in Tlokweng under the leadership of Kgosi Gaborone in the 1880s. The name Tlokweng itself signifies that it is the land of Batlokwa. Indeed, there are several other Batlokwa villages and wards in Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho with the name Tlokweng. These villages and wards are distinguished from each other by indicating their location, eg. Tlokweng ko (at) Moshaweng (Gaborone), Tlokweng ko Kolontwane (Motlhaputseng), Tlokweng ko Letlhakeng, Tlokweng kwa ga Montsana, Tlokweng ko Mokhotlong (in Lesotho), Tlokweng kwa ga Molatedi, Tlokweng ko Ntsweng (Tlokweng ward in Mochudi) etc. The Setswana name for Potchestroom in the North West Province of South Africa is Tlokwe indicating that Batlokwa settled in the area. The area inhabited by Batlokwa in Limpopo Province of South Africa is referred to as Botlokwa.

Typical of Setswana villages, the original Tlokweng in Moshaweng (Gaborone) is made up of clan/family units referred to as *makgotla* (*Kgotla*-singular) staying in individual family/clan homesteads (*malwapa*) surrounding a communal semi-circular meeting place built with wooden poles (*mapako*) also referred to as *kgotla*. Adjacent to the *kgotla* there is usually a communal cattle kraal (*lesaka*). Meandering routes interlinked *makgotla*. Agriculture was originally the mainstay of the Batlokwa's economy and continues to be an important economic activity for many households. Long before independence of Botswana in 1966, Tlokweng already had drift fences separating ploughing areas (*masimo*) from livestock areas (*meraka*). Different *makgotla* have their separate ploughing areas. *Mekgoro* (farm shelters) and *masaka* are mostly outside the drift fences except in Mabutswe areas where *mekgoro* and *masaka* are within the drift fences. Cattle have to be withdrawn outside the drift fences immediately after ploughing until the end of the harvest period.

The Setswana saying that '*ina lebe seromo*' emphasizes the significance of assigning appropriate and meaningful names to people and places. From South Africa, Tlokweng is the gateway to the capital city of Botswana as well as to the country. The country's capital city, which is separated by the Notwane River from Tlokweng, is named after the great Kgosi Gaborone of Batlokwa.

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**Figure 1: Statue of Kgosi Gaborone at the current main Kgotla in Tlokweng**



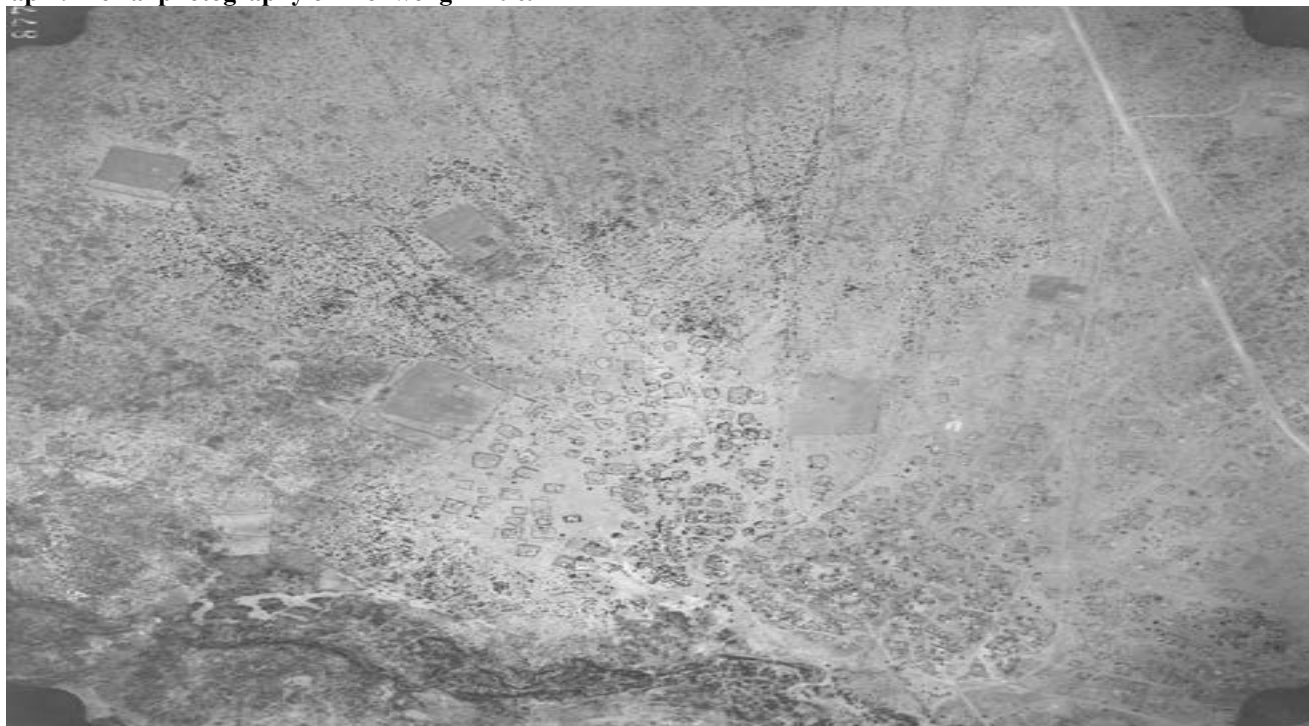
*Source:* courtesy of Boikhutso Pilane

Aside from protecting and preserving heritage sites, Tlokweng can also enhance itself as a tourist attraction by naming some streets and other places of interest to depict its historical connection with the rest of the country as well as the Southern African region. For instance, a street named Tobane would make a connection between Batlokwa of Tobane in the northern part of Botswana and those of Tlokweng. Another street named Mokhotlong or Mmanthatisi would immediately ring a bell to a visitor from Lesotho making him/her feel at home and attract them to explore the rest of the village. For historical relevance some streets could also be named after significant places Batlokwa traversed before permanently settling in Tlokweng eg. Nata, Kedia or Nkandla. The latter is in the KwaZulu Natal Province of South Africa and it is also the home village of former President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. The historical interconnection of communities in Botswana and Southern Africa is not only true of Batlokwa but extends to all other *merafe* (tribes or ethnic groups). Hence, we as Batswana must not shy away from highlighting our historical connections and oneness with our brothers and sisters in the region.

### **Place Names for the Old Part of Tlokweng**

Tlokweng, like other Batswana villages, is a composite of several *merafe*. Place names for the old part of Tlokweng can be broken into three groups. First, there are the *makgotla* made up of Batlokwa whose totem is Thakadu (antbear). Secondly, *makgotla* and *makgotlana* of Batlokwa whose origins are traced to other tribes/ethnic groups including some in South Africa. Thirdly, there are names for *masimo*, *meraka*, dams and natural features as well as roads. Map 1 below indicates how small Tlokweng was in 1969, just after Botswana gained independence in contrast to modern day town it has become.

**Map 1: Aerial photography of Tlokweng in 1969**



*Source:* Department of Surveys and Mapping

The first group of *makgotla* has ancestral relationship with the mother ward, Kgosing, and their totem is thakadu (antbear). As the name Kgosing denotes, it is the Chief's ward.

**Figure 2: Old main (Kgosing) Kgotla 2023 (surrounded by the royal household)**



*Source:* Courtesy of Boikhutso Pilane

Amongst these *makgotla* are Monneng, Dipswega, Mafatswa, Magwadi and Thethe. Of late an offshoot from Magwadi ward was established and named after Kgosi Taukobong from whom Ba-Magwadi trace their origin and venerate him in their praise poem in which they refer themselves as ‘Barwa Taukobong a Mokgwa’.

The *kgotla* name Monneng is common in a number of Tswana *merafe* such as Bakgatla, Bahurutshe, Bakwena and others. In Tlokweng villages of Gaborone and Kolontwane (Ba-ga-Bogatsu) it is one of the senior wards. Similarly, it is a senior ward in Pella/Matlhako, a village of Bakwena-ba-Modimosana in the North West Province of South Africa. As for Dipswega there is uncertainty about the origin of the ward name. One version is that the Dipswega ward is named after Kgosi Bogatsu’s second wife who was a Mosotho. An investigation with several Basotho and a Google search for Sesotho names gives the nearest name to Dipswega as Litseho (common for man) or Litseoane (lady) which in Setswana would translate to Ditshego (laughter) or Ditshegwane. Hence, she would probably have been called MmaLitsheho or MmaLitseoane. This makes sense because the Dipswega ward members trace their origin from Kgosi Bogatsu and to date they retain the surname Bogatsu. They proudly refer to their ward as ‘Dipswega tsa Mma Bogatsu’. The other version is that members of this ward had cattle which were prolific breeders producing calves regularly. People compared that to a flow of diarrhoea experienced by cattle particularly resulting from fresh grazing green grass after the first rains. To put it in Setswana ‘*Di ne di sa tsale di ne di pyswega*’, thus Dipswega ward.

The story about Mafatshwa is that a lady from this ward was married by a prince from Kgosing ward who paid *bogadi* (bride gift) with cattle, all of which, had a similar colour pattern of black and white referred to as phatshwa (for male) and phatshwana (for females). It is a nice colour mixture more or less similar to that of Friesland dairy cattle or that of male ostriches. Members of this ward proudly refer to themselves as ‘mpyse mfatshwa’ meaning black and white ostrich. They are very proud of their *kgotla* and they decorate it nicely as depicted in Figure 1 below while Figure 2 depicts their *kgotla* and cattle kraal:

**Figure 3: Entrance to Late Headman Thekiso Magetse’s Homestead at Mafatshwa**



Source: Courtesy of Thabiso Matsetse

Figure 4: Mafatshwa Kgotla and Kraal



Source: Courtesy of Thabiso Matsitse

There is also a sub-ward (*kgotlana*) under Mafatshwa called Maswaana. The story about the name Maswaana (whitish colour) is that members of the clan were known for tidiness and keeping their traditional wooden bowls (*megopo*) spotlessly white by regularly washing them with lime (*leshaba*). Their ladies were very impressive and distinctive with their wear.

The ward name Magwadi was adopted from a ward of the same name in Mochudi, the capital of the Bakgatla ba Kgafela, where a Motlokwa man named Matsitse had settled.. His cattle post was at Lekwatsing in the present day Kgatleng District where he joined the Bakgatla of Magwadi ward in a borehole syndicate in 1939 around the Lekwatsing water pan. The syndicate has stood the test of time and to this day Bagwadi (Mogwadi singular), as they proudly call themselves, peacefully graze their cattle in Lekwatsing. It is in recognition of this peaceful co-existence with ‘Bagwadi’ from Kgatleng that when Matsitse was allowed to have his ward (*‘a fiwa leiso’*) he named it Magwadi. He even named his son, my own grandfather, Magwadi. Unfortunately, my effort to trace the origin of the name Thethe has been unsuccessful.

Under some of the above *makgotla* there are *makgotlana* with their *makgotla* (meeting places) where they transact their sub-clan ceremonial and other activities such as weddings, funerals etc. These *makgotlana* are in some cases sub-clan or offshoots of the main wards. As alluded to above, Taukobong is one such ward which developed as an offshoot of Magwadi ward. In other cases, sub-wards would be made up of family clans of immigrants from other *merafe* or ethnic groups who would have been assigned to a particular ward until they graduate to ward status. It should be noted that the Land Board system has disturbed the logical and traditional evolution and development of *makgotla* because people are now allocated plots anywhere in the village without regard to their family clans. Members of new wards or village extension areas are not allocated plots and grouped together on the basis of family clans. They are even assigned headmen who do not necessarily have ancestral relationship with them. Otherwise, some

of these *makgotlana* would by now have graduated to be fully fledged *makgotla* with their traditional *dikgosana* (headmen). Furthermore, recent immigrants are overtime going to lose their identity as they are not assigned to any of the original wards as single family units or clans. These sub-wards are as follows (Table 1 and Table 2):

**Table 1: First Group of Main Wards and their Sub-wards in Tlokweg**

Main Ward	Sub-wards	Origins
Kgosing Ward	Letlhakeng	Letlhakeng are Batlokwa and part of the Ramonnye group who settled in Mochudi. Their leader was Seame Maotoanong. There are numerous families under this sub-ward but currently there is no designated headman for it. As is the case in other wards there are traces of members of this ward who originate from other tribes such as Bakwena.
	Tlhakong	Tlhakong are Batlhako who originate from Tlhatlaganyane in the North West Province of South Africa.
	Mmotso	The Mmotso people trace their origin as being Basotho and their totem is tau (lion), hence Bataung
Mafatshwa Ward	Mmamotlo	These are Batlokwa
	Maswaana	These are Batlokwa mixed with some Batlhako
	Raditsagalla	They are Bataaote with pelo (heart) as their totem
Dipswega	Ramfurwa	These are Barolong. Their surname is Seitshiro
	Konyana	Baga-Konyana settled in Tlokweg coming from a ward by the same name in Serowe and their surname is Modise
	Rampedi	It is made of immigrants from Rampedi ward in Mochudi their surname is Nkwe. Their families still maintain close connection with relatives who are also found in Odi Village
	Kgatleng	It is made of Bakgatla of Tlagadi (surnames Mfolwe and Motlhabai) and Madibana (surname Mooketsane) wards in Mochudi
	Mothapa	Mothapa sub ward members are connected to Konyana ward and they too settled in Tlokweg from Serowe. Indications are that they share common origin with Baga Konyana. They use surnames Sera and Tuma-gole
	Mosu	Bakgatla from Kuruman area in present Northern Cape Province of South Africa

Monneng	Kgakangwe	They came to Tlokweg from Shoshong and are said to have Ndebele origin with totem <i>Mmutla</i> (rabit)
Thethe	Moshamung	Bakwena by origin

**Table 2: First Group of Main Wards and their Sub-wards Where Applicable in Tlokweg**

Main Ward	Sub-wards	Origins
Mashibitswana/Ga Rasegokgo		From their main surname Segokgo is made up of members who are Bahurutshe by origin. They still maintain their relationship with their cousins across the border in North West Province of South Africa and have in recent years started re-union gatherings. This 'Segokgo' surname should not be confused with Segokgo surname of 'babina thakadu' of the main Dipswesa ward

I have made an attempt to insert original ward names in Map 2 below obtained from the Department of Town and Regional Planning and drawn in 1977.

**Map 2: Tlokweg Land Use Plan, 1977**



Source: Department of Town and Regional Planning (1977)

### Names Derived from Geographical Features and Wild Animals

The third group of names is for village extension areas, *masimo*, *meraka* and roads. There are names derived from geographic features such as terrain, streams, hills as well as flora and fauna of the place. These are Sefoke, Maratadiba, Ramokobetwana from the streams in the places. Other place names named after geographical features are Maboana (flat lands), Mathothwana (undulating land), Boshibidung (red sand), Metlhabeng (sandy area), Selokwaneng (clay soil area). Mabutswe, Lemonyana, and Ntswaneng are named after the hills in those areas. Letlapeng is named after a dolomite rock found at the area.

Tamo-e-Ntsho and Tamo-e-Khibidu are named respectively on the basis of black and red soil where the dams are located. Diphiring and Mantswe-a-Dikgokong (which refer to hyenas and wildebeests) are hills named after the animals found around them and by extension the outlying area adopts the same name. Ledubeng, Lesunyaneng, Lenganeng, Kgononong are named after types of trees in the location.

### Names Derived from People and Events

Some place names were derived from persons who had *masimo* (fields) or *meraka* or were the first to settle in an area. For instance, there is Kwa-ga-Rapapodi, Papodi being the son of Segokgo and hence Segokgo is Rapapodi. There is Mmaratang –Ratanang being the daughter of Kgosi Molefe and mother to the late Difatlho ‘Speaker’ Seame, an outspoken man of Mochudi and activist of the radical Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) who originated from Tlokweng. Other such names are Ratumelo and Raseipati. There are also names like Matlakana which refers to Kgosi Matlala’s many cattle thus Matlakana Lands and *meraka* area. In terms of hierarchical order of the royal family the senior group was Matlakana followed by Diratakgoši and lastly Motshitshi thus Lephala la Motshitshi.

Road (*tsela*) names derived from persons who initiated and or developed the given road such as Tsela-yaga-Bogale, Tsela-yaga-Rasegolongwane, Raseipati, Maotoanong, Rapapodi etc. There are also names influenced by events leading to relocation of people to the specific area. For instance, there is Botshabelo (place of refuge/sanctuary) resulting from the residents of Botshabelo having to relocate from banks of Notwane river area due to the flood in 1945. Khaekholo is a name that came about when Kgosi Kgosi moved his headquarters from the Old Kgosing ward to the present main *Kgotla* area. The place was called Khaekholo (Khayakhulu) after a Xhosa village in the North West Province of South Africa and denoting that the area had become the new seat of the Paramount Chief.

Figure 5: Kgosing (Main Kgotla) 2023



Source: Courtesy of Boikhutso Pilane



## Street Names and Critique of Street Naming Consultation Report for South East District Council

The idea of formal street naming system is new to traditional Setswana villages which were originally rural settlements with no modern services such telephones, postal services, power and water supplies, sewerage interconnections etc. Tlokweng has grown from a population of below 4,000 people in 1964 to over 35,000 people in 2011. It has transformed from a traditional village into a modern town with several shopping centres/malls, industrial areas, schools, clinics etc. Households have also increased several folds with the village area extending to areas which were previously *meraka* and *masimo* areas. In recognition and anticipation of the developmental trends of the village government decided to declare Tlokweng a planning area in terms of the Town and Country Planning Act. Prior to the Act, Tlokweng Land Board had been established in terms of the Tribal Land Act of 1970 which was subsequently amended to allow all citizens to apply and be allocated land anywhere in the country. The Act basically took the control and allocation of land from the *morafe* through the *Dikgosi* and *Dikgosana* to the Land Boards. The effect of this move, amongst others, is that tribesmen could no longer be allocated plots according to their clans/family groupings (*Makgotla/Dikgoro*). People are allocated plots anywhere there is serviced land regardless of their family origin. The concept of *kgotla* has changed to a 'ward' denoting breakdown of villages and towns into zones. This has broken the cohesiveness of *kgotla* as a family cohort and a village building block.

A street name exercise was undertaken in Tlokweng starting in October 2012. It was coordinated by the South East District Council within which Tlokweng falls, spearheaded by the Roads and Physical Planning Sections of the Council which produced a report entitled Street Naming Consultation Report for South East District Council, September 2017. 'The purpose of the exercise was to ensure that street names were allocated logically and in a consistent manner without confusion', it was said. Consultation proceedings involved meetings with various *Makgotla* (wards). The guidelines stipulated that 'Some Streets would be named after famous or distinguished individuals and leaders who were no more alive. Some would be named after animals and plants'. The full list of adopted street names are contained in the document entitled 'South East District Council Street Naming Consultation Report for South East District Council – September 2017'.

Hitherto, only a few roads and streets had ever been named leaving numerous roads and streets unnamed. Consequently, when the exercise took place there was less care to be selective about names to be adopted. However, the selection of proposed persons' names does not seem to have conformed to the criterion above, that is naming roads and streets 'after famous or distinguished individuals'. The justification as captured in the document referred to in the above paragraph is so casual and cursory that even where an individual were obvious candidates for the honour their achievements were not adequately documented. To demonstrate this, some notable village achievers have been left out just because none of the persons who attended *kgotla* consultations knew or thought about them. Some of these individuals have actually been awarded Presidential Honours and their curriculum vitae (CV) are available in the Presidential orders files at the Office of the President and other documents such as Botswana's 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary awards document. I will avoid comparisons between the deserving and not so deserving individuals because comparisons can be invidious.

Amongst individuals which, in my view, ought to have been selected for street names are: Teachers such as Thomas Tokela Makepe, Victoria Namane, Tshire Pilane, Masiela Masire, Kedibonye Segokgo, and Leboeng Mogwe etc. Carpenters include Disang Otsheleng, Ratsie Seakgosing, and Pheko Katse among others. There are also shoe makers such as Moji Magetse and Kagiso Lekoko while dress makers consist of citizens such as Kelebileng Molefe and Mmedi Gaborone. Christian Churches has role models among whom are Susan Sechele (Catholic Church), MmaNtsho Matlapeng (London Missionary Society-

LMS now called United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, UCCSA), AMC Moabi Pule, Mr Mokgolokgana and Lota Meswele. There is also the village's official traditional doctor by the name Magwadi Molefe. Whilst comedians of no significance have been honoured people with disability, who played a significant role in the upliftment of the village, such as Thomas Tokelo Makepe (a renowned teacher, school inspector, councillor, and footballer of repute) is not honoured. Another such person is Mpiti Gaborone, who though blind, was able to carry out cattle herding duties without assistance. We also have Disang Otsheleng, Ratsie Seakgosing, Pheko Katse, Mpiti Gaborone, and Japane Mapogo among others. The above individuals have indeed contributed immensely and in several ways to Tlokweng. The list is in no way exhaustive and only consists of persons known to the writer. Resumes of their individual contributions can be a subject of a separate document on heroes and heroines of Tlokweng.

Another observation about the committee work is that since it was spearheaded by the Sub-District Council officers originating outside Tlokweng they could not even identify glaring errors and omissions. It would have been advisable to have a Reference Group made up of Batlokwa senior citizens, elders and other individuals knowledgeable on the history and geography of the village to go through the names submitted by *makgotla* with a fine comb. There was, therefore, need for a balanced advisory community committee to verify the names before final approval. The committee would also have acted as a think tank Committee to consider names of wider historical significance. For instance, names of villages or even Batlokwa Chiefs in South Africa could have been used. Only one such name appears in the list. The purpose of the exercise would not be elimination of some proposed names but to assist in proper documentation of the names. The Reference Group would thereafter discuss their final recommendations with the *Bogosi* (Chieftaincy) before final submission to the District Council.

Furthermore, the guidelines were themselves restrictive. Consequently, names of historical significance such as *Mephato ya Batlokwa* (Batlokwa regiments) were not adequately covered. These Mephato names are important because when Batlokwa ultimately return to the cross roads and consider reinstituting *mephato* they may need to reuse some of the names for posterity's sake. Furthermore, the naming of *mephato* had historical significant behind them. The names which come to mind are Matsie, Mankwe, Magata, Matsaakang, Maakathata, Maganelwa etc. There are also Dikgosi tsa Batlokwa (Batlokwa Chiefs) from old whose names could have been adopted for street names.

There are obvious errors such as use of persons' unofficial names such as MmaAupa instead of Sedulo Gaborone and Mmatlape instead of Mmatsiane Mogome. Another concern is duplication of some persons in street names such as Bogale and BR Matsetse which is one and the same person, use of first names of individuals is meaningless and disrespectful to say the least, for example Matlhodi. One would have to go to the main document do discern which Matlhodi is being referred to. Similarly, there are names like Kema which could have two appropriate options, ie. either to say Kema Gaborone or Kgosi Kema. There are also instances of replacing original names without realising the loss of valuable history by doing so such as in the replacement of PF Brink with Raphephe Matsetse. According to my memory, in the 1950s or even earlier the road to Brink's farm had a name sign Notwane East PF Brink imprinted on cast iron material. Off Brink's road there is a road which could appropriately be named Raphephe Matsetse as he initiated it and it leads to his homestead and St Engenes ZCC branch he established.

### Conclusion

It is important for historical reasons to maintain the existing names of localities where the village expands to. Such names contain a wealth of traditional, cultural and other historical value and indeed, do *tell a story*. Whilst the Tlokweng Sub-District Council through its Physical Planning Section retained some existing names of original *meraka* and *masimo* where the village expanded to as ward names, there are instances

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where they have adopted new names at the expense of original names, for instance, Kwa Lelotong has been replaced by Masetlheng, Rasenkgotswana is referred to as Discovery, a name copied from a suburb in Gauteng Province of South Africa which has no relevance to Tlokweng and its history.

Similarly, Sodoma, a derogatory name appears in some maps instead of Kholwane. Kgononong name is no longer used for official purposes and the area is just lumped with the general Sefoko area thereby losing its locational specificness. Worryingly, place names such as Kwa-ga-Tatedi, Kwa-ga-Tshidi, Magaragara, Matebeleng, Maboaadinku, Feleting are fading away. Therefore, it is suggested that any naming of places should be subjected to a more rigorous assessment by a Reference Group of senior citizens, elders and other persons knowledgeable about Tlokweng history and the land area itself.