A STUDY OF BATSWANA'S PERCEPTION OF ONE ANOTHER
Citizenship and National Identity in Botswana: Us and Them Dichotomy

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Abstract

Botswana's economic prosperity and its political stability have attracted people of different races into the country, some of whom have acquired Botswana citizenship, rendering the *Motswana* identity a somewhat pluralistic and multicultural label. However, within this broad national identity of a Motswana, several identities are often contested in the social arena in the form of labels that are used to describe and distinguish the different *Batswana*. These labels include *Motswana* (a citizen of Botswana) which is categorized into *Motswana tota* (real/genuine Motswana) or *Motswana wa pampiri* (naturalised Motswana). Others are described as *Lekgoa* (a white person), *Motswakwa* (foreigner) and *Lekwerekwere* (foreign African). We investigate the uses and inherent meanings of these labels using a questionnaire consisting of 12 main items administered to 156 Batswana in five different locations. Our findings show that these terms are used inclusively and exclusively to delineate prototypical Batswana from the outsiders, who also have graded membership and varied levels of acceptability based on social, cultural and economic factors. Our study has affirmed that the term "Motswana" describes groups of "peoples that mix but do not combine", "living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit."

Keywords: National Identity, immigrants, Motswana, ethnicity, prototypes

1.   Introduction

The label *Motswana*[2] is generally used to refer to either a native speaker of Setswana (the national language of Botswana) or a citizen of Botswana. Despite the fact that Botswana has never been ethnically or linguistically homogenous, linguistic and historical evidence suggest that Batswana have always, from time immemorial, been guarded in their use of the label. In Setswana traditional societies, immigrants from non-Setswana tribes or countries living amongst Batswana seldom attain full membership of the tribe and become "full" or "real" Batswana. In historic times, they were referred to as *bafaladi* (those who have fled) or *batswakwa* (foreigners) regardless of their length of stay within a particular Setswana tribe (See Tlou & Campbell 1997). We believe that it is this insular perception of seeing themselves as belonging and others as intruders that has given rise to the way Batswana categorise and label one another.

    At independence in 1966, Botswana was ranked amongst the poorest countries in the world with very few educated people and very few formal jobs. Education and job opportunities could only be found outside the country, which

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made Botswana a big migrant donor. However, things changed after independence, especially after the discovery of diamonds which enabled the Government to set up large scale education, health, transportation, management and technology programs. Botswana not only became Africa's fastest growing economy but also the preferred destination for many skilled and educated migrants from all over the world who flocked to it to share in her economic boom. In this way, Botswana changed from being a migrant donor to a migrant receiving nation, something that was initially extolled for propelling development, but later decried by the emerging increased and educated citizen labour force for the main reason of unwanted competition. It is basically competition for jobs with the better skilled, highly experienced and well paid expatriate workers that has widened the gap between Batswana and others, as well as heightened xenophobia sentiments and the urge to protect the country's national sovereignty.

In Botswana, as in many countries, nationalists are torn in their desire to protect or defend their national borders and identities on one hand and embrace the freedom of movement and belonging that is fostered by globalisation on the other. The creases and wrangles of national identity are expressed and reflected by the different labels that categorise Botswana citizenry. The labels, it would seem, put a Motswana "native" at the centre (*Motswana tota* (a real/original Motswana) as opposed to a *Motswana wa pampiri* (naturalised Motswana) or *Motswakwa* (foreigner), *Lekgoa* (white person), or *Lekwerekwere* (foreign African) who is seen as encroaching into the national space and identity. It is in the context of this torturous relationship, fostered by nation building and identities, that the study reported in this paper examines the concept Motswana. Specifically, the study addresses three questions: First, what does the identity label "Motswana" mean and second what are the different categorisations of this broad label? Third, which groups of Batswana are considered core and which ones are considered periphery?

2.   Theoretical issues

Botswana's national identity, just like that of many countries, confirms an argument by Msimang (2014) that "societies are melanges, a delicious brew of art and culture and intellect. They draw the best from near and far and make them their own." Here, Msimang (2014) likens migration to multiculturalism and multilingualism which are a consequence of the mingling of people from different cultural and geographical backgrounds to create pluralistic and multinational societies. Migration makes the existence of pure identities, which are unaffected by others, impossible in today's world. Eze (2014, p. 239) in fact argues that "the African is a mutt and to acknowledge her muttness is to concede the presence of the other in her life…."

Batswana's perception of national identity in many ways mirrors identities

born out of the African struggle and liberation as well as perceptions of political sovereignty. Goh (2008, p. 233) reasons that it is "the legacies of colonial racialisation that continue to shape and structure contemporary politics of identity and claims to national citizenship…" He maintains that the historically or colonially structured racialization, constructed in the context of European exploration, colonial expansion and scientific development, now reflects and drives social realities. He explains further that this colonial racialisation and borders that have eroded the simple solidarity of pre-colonial and customary societies by imposing upon them modern market and economic relations and competitions, have resulted in the atomisation of the society and the collapse of the shared tribal or village life. Rex (2004, pp. 134-135), cited in Goh (2008, p. 237) opines that the current political units now form crowds instead of communities.

Although nationalist consciousness was meant to foster affiliation and connection among citizens in opposition to those considered to be outside the national identity, it has nevertheless, alongside nation building, become a problematic concept. Both concepts were conditioned and developed, through colonial and racial knowledge, along ethnic lines. Goh (2008, p. 237), for example, indicates that in nation building, "outsiders are juxtaposed against insiders" and similarly "the nationalist elites who inherited the legacies of colonialism also inherited a racial state..." The argument above suggests that though nationalization was and is politically relevant as an instrument by which Africans were liberated, the problem with it is that "it does not have within it the means to extend the vision of the world" beyond the essentialist territory of pure identities (Eze, 2014, p. 237). It is therefore imperative that colonial racialisation and national identity, as social constructs and categories of analysis, are re-examined within the framework of our specific historical context and social institutions. For many African nationals, however, how to go beyond the vestiges of insular identity that is associated with colonial struggles, which are embedded in our national and tribal loyalties and identities, is an uphill task. The challenge for many nations is to find ways in which they can create and foster universal solidarities that can accord their citizens freedom of identity regardless of their geographical background or ancestry. This is necessary in the context of globalisation which has engendered new migration patterns and identities.

2. 1   *Globalisation*

The term globalisation has been defined in various ways. For example, Giddens (1990, p. 64) defines it "as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant locations in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa". A definition by Mazrui (2004, p. 1) focuses on "exchange of peoples, ideas, goods, services and traditions" as inherent characteristics of globalisation. According to Szeman (2003, p. 94), globalisation encompasses

"the moment of mass migration, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism". This definition focuses on the instantaneous nature of globalisation which involves large movement of people and culture. The Canadian Government (2005) conceives the term as "increased mobility of goods, services, labour, technology and capital throughout the world," thus emphasing the nature of globalisation as a process. Whether globalisation is considered as instantaneous or as a process, one of its consequences as Appadurai (2001, p. 5) notes, is that it has enabled increased flow of "ideas and ideologies, peoples and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques". Even though it is expected that this increased flow of people will lead to intermingling of cultures, there still seems to be a pervading sense of the "us versus them" dichotomy in many societies.

In recognition of the ways in which globalisation is changing national identities, Mbeki (1998) supports the view that modern African identity should be multi-layered, consisting of many identities. In his Renaissance Speech, he declares:

> I owe my being to the Koi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the greatest expanses of the beautiful Cape… I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their actions, they remain still, part of me. In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. I come from those who were transported from India and China (In Eze, 2014, p. 237).

The essence of Mbeki's speech is that language, geography, culture and ancestry are no longer exclusive markers of identity. Eze (2014, p. 237) asserts that "rigid cultural and ideological boundaries between the first, second and third worlds have been questioned… There is an increased movement of people, goods and ideas between nations. The world grows smaller everyday due to changes brought about by forces of globalization…" For Eze (2014, p. 240), Mbeki's view supports the concept of Afropolitanism by Gikandi (2010, p. 9) which is "prompted by the desire to think of African identities as both rooted in specific local geographies but also transcendental of them. To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, languages and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity - to be African and other worlds at the same time" (Gikandi, 2010, p. 9). The import of all of the above is that national identity can no longer be understood in oppositional terms.

In as much as globalization has shrunk the world, it has also indirectly encouraged fundamentalist thinking and behaviour as people seek to protect their cultural heritage that is at the risk of being destroyed by external forces (Eze, 2014, p. 237). Notwithstanding, as Eze (2014, p. 242) notes, to be a citizen of the world does not necessarily require that one gives up one's history, one's membership in a particular ethnic abstraction. Rather, global identity should be viewed as an encompassment

of many concentric circles, which move from the self to the immediate family, to neighbours, to fellow city dwellers and to fellow countrymen. The circles are not independent; they mesh and intermingle with others. In this way, national identities should encompass all the connections that are created by international networks of the globalising economy which have created new contact zones.

2.2 Citizenship in Botswana

Before we highlight the major provisions guaranteed in the 1998 Botswana Citizenship Act, it is important to provide a brief account of citizenship in Botswana. Citizenship was largely governed by the Botswana Constitution and the 1982 Act which accorded citizenship to anyone born before December 31, 1982 and who had been so recognised. Section 4 of the 1982 Act states that:

> a person born in Botswana shall be a citizen by birth if at the time of his or her birth, he or she does not acquire the citizenship of another country by descent through his or her father. If a person is born outside Botswana, he or she shall be a citizen of Botswana if, at the time of his or her birth: (a) his or her father was a citizen of Botswana; or (b) in the case of a person born out of wedlock, his or her mother was a citizen of Botswana.

The Act was reviewed in 1984, 1985 and 1995 and finally replaced in 1998. Two major issues appear contentious which must have necessitated the reviews of the Act. First is the apparent discrimination against Batswana women whose foreign husbands could only become citizens after a minimum of ten years in comparison with Batswana men whose foreign wives were eligible for citizenship after two and half years. Second is the issue of dual/multiple citizenship which was cancelled to guard against split loyalty. With the 1998 Act, prohibition of dual citizenship for persons of 21 years and above was sustained. Interestingly, when other countries are moving towards extricating dual citizenship, the Botswana Citizenship 1998 Act is currently being reviewed to accommodate dual citizenship under some circumstances as a means of responding to some emerging needs in the country.

There are six stipulations for Botswana citizenship under the Citizenship Act of 1998: birth, descent, settlement, adoption, president's prerogative and naturalisation. It stipulates birth (for persons born in Botswana to a father or mother who is a citizen of Botswana); descent (to persons born outside Botswana to a father or mother who is a citizen of Botswana) and settlement (for persons who settled in Botswana before independence and have lived and have been accepted as ordinarily members of a particular tribe or community) as requirements for citizenship. The Citizenship Act (1998) also stipulates adoption (for children under three years old adopted by a citizen father or mother); president's power (for persons that the president may

have cause to honour in that way); and naturalisation (for persons of full age deemed qualified under section 13 for naturalisation, and having taken the oath of allegiance to be a citizen of Botswana by naturalisation) as other prerequisites for Botswana citizenship.

Although the Botswana Citizen Act seems to present an accommodative and all-embracing identity of a Motswana, the reality is different. At the social level, the Motswana identity undergoes further classification in which some Batswana are seen as real Batswana (*Motswana tota*), *Lekwerekwere* (African foreigner) or *Lekgoa* (white person). On the one hand, some of the labels, *Lekwerekwere* and *Lekula* for example, are discriminatory and prejudicial. As Otlogetswe (2012, p. 252) explains, *Lekwerekwere* is a disparaging word used by locals to refer to a foreigner from certain African countries. Foreigners from neighbouring countries (such as South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland) are not ordinarily referred to us *Makwerekwere3*. Otlogetswe offers a linguistic explanation for the creation of the word, citing Batswana's inability to decipher foreign African languages as the reason for the label. Whatever the origin of the word, it is now used pejoratively to refer to darker-hued Africans or Africans fleeing political turbulence and economic meltdown from their countries such as Zimbabwe and Zambia in Southern Africa, Tanzania and Kenya in East Africa and Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa. Some labels, on the other hand, are ameliorative and positive. *Lekgoa* (literally meaning the one who has been spit out of the sea or ocean) for example, refers to a white person, especially of a European decent (Otlogetswe, 2012, p. 249). The word originates from Batswana's belief that white people came out of the sea or were spit out by the sea, a perception that was formed when they first saw the white people arrive on the African continent in ships. *Lekgoa* is also used in everyday conversation to refer to a boss, an educated, rich or beautiful person and as our data will show, someone described as a *Lekgoa* is often more favourably viewed.

2.3 Prototype theory and identity

Different theories have been propounded to explain how concepts are assigned meaning. One of such is to explain a concept "as a summary of representation of some sets of things in terms of conditions that are singly and jointly sufficient for determining membership in that set" (Hjørland, 2009, pp.1520-1521). Viewing concepts as sufficient and necessary conditions leads to mutual exclusivity "which requires that an item cannot partially be a member of a set or a member of two sets simultaneously" (Fox 2011, p. 153). The prototype theory, which focuses on "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein 1988) or core tendencies, is another way of explaining concepts. The notion of core tendencies entails that concepts are interpreted based on

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[3.]   The plural form of *Lekwerekwere* is *Makwerekwere*

the extent to which they are typical of a certain category. This kind of classification can be viewed in terms of semantic prototype in which "there is a central or nuclear sense of a word, a prototypical kernel with blurred edges and fuzzy boundaries and degrees and different weights of category membership" (Lipka, 1986, p. 85-86). The phenomenon involves seeing something in terms of "more or less rather than all or nothing". According to Lipka (1986, p. 86), "in human categorization, members of a category which are most prototypical are those that have most attributes in common with other members of the same category". Prototypes are, therefore, the objects which carry the most obvious features of the attribute and most strongly reflect it. Categories can then be explained and divided in terms of the clearest cases which are the prototypes and the non-prototype members. Because prototype theory provides for graded membership of categories, it is more amenable than sufficient and necessary conditions in understanding social categories such as identity (Fox, 2011, p.153).

Rosch and Mervis (1975) and Adajian (2005) however warn that prototypes are complex and abstract representations of a category. They represent only those categories that subjects may judge as belonging to a particular category. Adajian (2005, p.231) states that membership to a category "is a matter of being similar enough to - having enough of the properties of – prototypical members of the class". The theory therefore assumes that speakers possess the ability to judge the degree to which different objects match the prototype. Adajian (2005) further argues that the categorization is basically a mental judgement by which people decide, correctly or incorrectly, whether or not things belong or do not belong. The other weakness of the prototype theory is that "concepts with prototype structure often fail to cover highly atypical instances and incorrectly include non-instances, for example, people often judge pinkish gold to be non-gold and fool's gold to be gold" (Adajian, 2005, p. 234). Basically, the prototype theory fails to account for ignorance and error by people involved in the categorisation.

The weaknesses of the prototype theory notwithstanding, to a large extent, the placement of people within a particular identity construct follows a prototypical arrangement which starts at the core and weakens as it moves out. This implies that different language communities put people and objects into certain compartments and categories based on certain features or qualities that the people or objects share or do not share. In this study, we consider historical, linguistic, racial, social, geographical and economic determinants as fundamental in defining the boundaries between one identity and the other. In fact, as our analysis shows, the prototype theory seemed prominent in defining and safeguarding the Batswana national identity, with the Setswana speaking groups, who are considered *Batswana tota,* at the core. Thereafter, the gradations move outward to outsiders (*Batswakwa)* who are

also graded according to their linguistic, historical, racial and economic affinity to the core.

3.   Methodology

The meaning of the label 'Motswana', just like many other identity labels, is pluralistic and complex. This study answers three research questions. First, what does the identity label 'Motswana' mean, second, what are the different categorisations of this broad label? And third, which groups of Batswana are considered core and which ones are considered periphery? Our relations and co-existence with others are very much influenced and dependent on the labels we use to refer to ourselves and others. In order to answer these research questions, a questionnaire (see appendix) was administered to purposively and randomly selected respondents. Though the selection of participants was random, an effort was made to get participants from different age, gender, and educational backgrounds. Our choice of a questionnaire is supported by the fact that it is considered a very vital and reliable tool for soliciting information on different aspects of human behaviour. Our questions regarding definition of terms were simple, direct and open ended, which enabled respondents to freely express their understanding of each of the term. That the questions were open ended also implied that the researchers were not in a position to influence the responses of the participants.

       The targeted population for the study comprises Batswana, that is, people who label themselves thus. The locations where the questionnaires were administered were purposively selected mainly for ease of access while the respondents in those locations were randomly selected to ensure that the sample is representative of the population of Batswana in such locations. To draw up the sample population of the respondents, places of residence comprising Gaborone4 and three villages in its proximity; Molepolole, Mochudi, Kumakwane5, were selected as follows 28 (17.8%); Molepolole 26 (16.7%); Mochudi 28 (17.9%) and Kumakwane 23 (14. 7%). While on the one hand Gaborone is urban and Molepolole and Mochudi are semi-urban; Kumakwane on the other hand is rural. The University of Botswana (UB) was also considered a key location in view of its cosmopolitan population. The respondents from within the University of Botswana comprise twenty five students, five each from the departments of Law, English, Computer Science and Chemistry, and twenty five academic and support staff members. In all, 51(32%) respondents from UB completed the questionnaire. Though the number of participants is small and therefore not representative of the populations in these locations, this is not considered a problem because the study is explorative in nature, aimed at discovering

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[4.]   Gaborone is the capital of Botswana

[5.]   Molepolole, Mochudi and Kumakwane are villages within 50 kilometre radius of Gaborone.

the meanings and uses of the term Motswana and its categories.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section comprises questions aimed at obtaining demographic information on age, gender, education and place of residence from the respondents. Such information, in addition to their random selection was considered important in ensuring that respondents were fairly distributed across the broad spectrum of the society. The second section of the questionnaire is made up of seven terms or labels which are commonly used to describe citizens of Botswana. Respondents were required to define each of these labels. In the third section of the questionnaire, respondents were presented with a list of seven towns in Botswana and twenty countries spread over Africa, Europe, North America and Asia and they were required to match the appropriate terms/ labels from Section B with each of the towns and countries in Section C. The list was not arranged in any particular order so as not to give the impression that specific towns or countries have an edge over others in terms of their position in the list.

In all, one hundred and fifty six respondents consisting of 79 (50.65%) males and 76 (48.75%) females completed the questionnaire. In terms of their educational background, respondents fell into the following groups: no education 2 (1.3%), primary education 7 (4.5%), secondary education 49 (31.4%), diploma and first degree, 68 (43.6%) and higher degree, 28 (17.9 %). Age wise, the respondents came from the following groups: below 30, 38 (24.4%); 31-40, 59 (37.8%); 41-50, 37 (23.7%) and 51 and above, 22 (14.1%). The researchers were cognisant of the subtle influence of age, educational background and gender on research of this nature. Hence, attempts were made to ensure that the respondents were fairly distributed across these demographic boundaries. Bearing in mind that the respondents were required to define and/or explain seven terms and then match the labels and the towns/ countries, we consider their responses which are both qualitative and quantitative respectively sufficiently adequate to reveal the perceptions of one another harboured by Batswana.

In order to analyse the definitions of the seven labels provided by the respondents, we categorised and rated them as follows: neutral (1) approving (2), derogatory (3) and not approving (4). Definitions which were favourable or accepting were rated as approving. Those which were impartial or dispassionate were considered neutral while those which were pejorative or disparaging were rated derogatory. We considered definitions that had stereotypical undertones as not approving. Based on these ratings, the definitions were entered into the SPSS. The labels were also coded as follows: *Motswana* (1), *Motswana tota* (2), *Motswana wa pampiri* (3), *Lekgoa* (4), *Lekula* (5), *Motswakwa* (6), *Lekwerekwere* (7) and others (8). The respondents' categorisation of people from each of the seven towns and 20 countries were also entered into the SPSS. The results of the frequency count,

presented in simple percentages, were then used to answer the research question "which groups of Batswana are considered 'core or us' and which groups of Batswana are considered 'periphery or them'?

4.0   Results: Findings and discussions

4.1   *Which groups of Batswana are considered 'core or us'?*

A general assessment of the labels, *Motswana, Motswana tota*, *Motswana wa pampiri*, *Motswakwa*, *Lekgoa*, *Lekula* and *Lekwerekwere* suggest that these terms are used inclusively and exclusively, in which case some citizens are considered inside members and therefore 'us' while others are considered outsiders and therefore 'them'. With respect to the group considered as inside members, the definitions indicate that it is both homogeneous and heterogeneous. The group of inside members comprises people labelled *Batswana* and *Batswana tota* and to this extent it appears homogeneous. Thus the respondents apparently delineate two categories of *Motswana* such that the term *Motswana* is a more inclusive category in that it refers to any citizen or national of Botswana who was born in Botswana, carries a national identity card or whose parents are Batswana. However, a prototypical *Motswana* is categorized as a *Motswana tota* (real, genuine Motswana) and he/she has the following features; was born in Botswana, speaks Setswana6, comes from one of the eight Setswana tribes and both his parents are born in Botswana. The following definitions of *Motswana tota* provided by some respondents are instructive:

> One whose citizenship is beyond question.
>
> Someone born in Botswana, respects Setswana culture; defends Setswana values and norms".
>
> One of Tswana parents and Tswana descent.
>
> A real mother-tongue speaker of Botswana; a real citizen of Botswana, born (sic) and so too his or her ancestors.

Since a prototypical Motswana, that is a *Motswana tota* is considered of a pure stock, his/her identity is not questionable and in addition he/she has respect for Setswana culture. Suffice to say that these attributes have very strong ethnic undertones, an issue that will be discussed in detail later.

Our respondents were required to provide their own definitions for each of the labels. The ratings for their definitions of *Motswana, Motswana tota*, and *Motswana wa pampiri* are presented in Table 1:

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6.   Setswana is the national language of Botswana.

Table 1: Frequency of the ratings: Definitions of labels

Ratings in % of definitions	Motswana	Motswana Tota	Motswana wa pampiri
Neutral	144 (92.3%)	106 (67.8%)	138 (88.5%)
Approving	11 (7)	42 (26.9%)	1 (0.6%)
Not approving	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.3%)	2 (1.3%)
Derogatory	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (7.1%)

Motswana tota recorded the highest number of approving definitions, 42 (26.9%). One obvious inference from the inclinations of the definitions is that to be considered *Motswana tota* is an indication of one's membership of the group that is prototypical of Motswana. In essence, *Motswana tota* is the preserve of only a certain group; that is people of Setswana speaking ethnic group who are represented in this data by residents of Serowe, Mochudi and Kanye. The frequency of respondents' categorisation of Batswana from these towns is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Categorisation of Batswana from the Setswana speaking ethnic Groups

Terms	Serowe	Mochudi	Kanye
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Motswana	86 (55.1%)	95 (60.9%)	90 (57.7%)
Motswana Tota	62 (39.7%)	56 (35.9%)	50 (32.1%)

The categorisation reflects the respondents' view expressed in their definitions of *Motswana tota* which entail that one who is qualified to wear that label must be of "Tswana descent", "must respect and defend Setswana culture", and "must be a mother tongue speaker of Setswana." In spite of the apparent separation between *Motswana* and *Motswana tota*, the data show that the two categories share a rather indistinct boundary that is penetrable and leaky particularly because the decision to categorize one as either of the two is highly subjective and not based on a list of criteria that one must satisfy in order to be a member of one but not the other category. Though it is believed that Botswana is monolingual, the contrary is the case because based on their linguistic and cultural orientation, Batswana can be classified along three clines: the Tswana speaking group, those whose languages are related to and mutually intelligible with the Tswana speaking group and those whose languages are completely different from the Tswana speaking groups. The Tswana group is made up of eight tribes: Bamangwato, Batawana, Bakgatla, Bangwaketse, Bamalete, Barolong and Batloka tribes.

With respect to the label *Motswana*, more than 50% of the respondents consider people who originate from Ghanzi, Zwenshambe, Masunga and Bokspit as

Motswana as shown in Table 3 below. These towns represent non-Setswana speaking groups such as Bakalaka, Basarwa, Wayeyi, Hambukushu, Baherero, Basubiya, Baciruku, Bakgalakgadi, Bakgothu, and Banabjwa.

Table 3: Categorisation of Batswana from the Non-Setswana Speaking Ethnic Groups

Terms	Masunga	Zwenshambe	Ghanzi	Bokspit
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Motswana	108 (69.2%)	109 (69.9%)	117 (75%)	104 (66.7%)
Motswana Tota	28 (17.9%)	19 (12.2%)	23 (14.7%)	15 (9.6%)

Since a greater number of our respondents ascribe the label *Motswana tota* to people from Serowe, (Bangwato) Mochudi (Bakgatla) and Kanye (Bangwaketse) which are three of the eight Tswana speaking tribes, our data seem to corroborate the notion of exclusivity of identity amongst Batswana based on their ethnic orientation. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that those who originate from the other cities and therefore members of the non-Tswana speaking group, Masunga (Bakalaka), Ghanzi (Bakgalagadi), and Zwenshambe (Bakalaka) are considered less prototypical of *Motswana tota* but more prototypical of *Motswana*. Thus the term *Motswana* is inclusive of every citizen of Botswana irrespective of their linguistic and cultural background, whereas the term *Motswana tota* is exclusive to those who belong to the Setswana speaking group. Our finding corroborates the submission by Adajian (2005, p. 232) that in prototypical theory "not every member is equally central to our understanding of a given category. Some members are cognitively more central in our understanding of a category than others". The data above show that a Motswana national who originates from Serowe, Mochudi and Kanye (Setswana speaking towns) is considered to be more cognitively central than one from Masunga, Bokspits or Ghanzi which are non-Setswana speaking locations. The finding further supports the argument by Rosch and Lloyd (1978, p. 1) that "though we tend to view most categories as being separate and clear from each other, most of them do not have clear cut boundaries."

4.2 Which groups of Batswana are considered 'them or periphery'?

This question has to do with the following remaining terms: *Motswakwa*, *Lekgoa*, *Lekula* and *Lekwerekwere*. Citizens who originate from outside Botswana are generally categorised as *Motswakwa,* literally meaning 'one who comes from outside'. However, these outsiders fall into four categories; *Motswakwa, Lekgoa, Lekula and Lekwerekwere*. In this group of outsiders, *Lekula* and *Lekwerekwere* are often derided for their skin colour and low economic status and they bear the brunt

of racial discrimination.

The term *Motswakwa,* defined by most respondents as a foreigner or immigrant who originates from outside Botswana, recorded 132 or 84.6% of neutral definitions which implies that the respondents believe that the term has no undertones in that it merely suggests that the one so named originates from outside the country. However, when it comes to labelling nationalities, the term is more frequently applied to immigrant citizens from South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland than immigrants from other African countries as shown by the frequency of the use of the term in Table 4:

Table 4: Categorisation of Immigrants from Southern Africa

Country	Frequency of Motswaka	Frequency of Lekwerekwere
South Africa	90 (57.7%)	6 (3.8%)
Namibia	82 (52.6%)	32 (20.5%)
Lesotho	75 (48.1%)	4 (2.6%)
Swaziland	66 (42.3%)	19 (12.2%)

South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland are Botswana's neighbours though Botswana has closer cultural and linguistic ties with South Africa and Lesotho than the rest of its neighbours. Setswana, the dominant language in Botswana, is closely related to Northern and Southern Sotho languages which are spoken in Lesotho and South Africa. But most importantly, South Africa has many more speakers of Setswana than Botswana (see Janson and Tsonope, 1991, p. 73). In fact, in our data, 13.5% and 23.1% of the respondents also described South African immigrant and Lesotho immigrant citizens respectively as *Batswana*.

Janson and Tsonope (1991, p. 72), commenting on the economic and cultural ties amongst Southern African countries, indicate that the ties are much closer between Botswana and South Africa than all its other neighbours, namely Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia because the modern economy of Botswana is, to a very high degree, dependent on South Africa. Botswana buys more than half of its consumables from South Africa. The two countries also share a common cultural and historical background. According to Parsons (1982, p. 294), the boundary between Transvaal and Botswana does not in any way symbolize a cultural or linguistic boundary; it simply goes through a territory that is wholly dominated by Batswana on both sides. For much of the colonial period, South Africa treated Bechuanaland as one of its homesteads and expected it to be annexed to it. So, for these reasons, Batswana and South Africans share some kind of empathy which probably compels Batswana to see

them as their kin living in another country. These linguistic, cultural and economic affinities between the two countries explain the reasons that South Africans who have naturalised in Botswana are considered *Motswakwa*.

While South Africans are equally empathetic to Botswana, they are not to other African countries such as Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In recent years, South Africans have repeatedly discriminated against and attacked immigrants from these countries in their xenophobia (dubbed afrophobia) campaigns against African immigrants. Msimang (2014) believes that the apartheid system has conditioned South Africans to see other Africans "as animals and as part of a deluge of the poor and unwashed people who have come to take their jobs and women." Similarly in Botswana, these Africans are simply not immigrants and outsiders (*Batswakwa*) but are darker, exploitative and poor Africans. In essence they are *Makwerekwere*.

Categorization of people is neither predictable nor a function of component constituents, and as Adajian (2005, p. 234) argues, "prototypes often lack an adequate account of conceptual combination" more so that "judgements vary interpersonally and across time, intra-personally." The findings discussed above confirm that national identity is neither exclusively determined by geography, blood nor culture. It is understood in relational but not oppositional terms (Eze, 2014, p. 235) and this is probably why immigrant citizens are categorised as *Motswakwa*, *Lekgoa*, *Lekula or Lekwerekwere* depending on their country of origin. *Batswakwa7* is a more neutral term that is considered appropriate for those African immigrants who have closer ties with Botswana.

African immigrants who are distant - linguistically, culturally and socially - are *Makwerekwere*. As indicated earlier, *Lekwerekwere* is a disparaging word used by locals to refer to a foreigner from certain African countries (Otlogetswe, 2012, p.252). In our data, 99 (63.4%) of the respondents found the word to be derogatory and not approving. The features of *Lekwerekwere* include; unintelligible language, dark skin and unstable political and economic situation of country of origin. In fact, some respondents state that a *Lekwerekwere* comes from a corrupt African country that has no economic and political stability while another set of respondents associate the term with an African with a very dark complexion and ugly features. Some other respondents indicate that a *Lekwerekwere* is an African who speaks a language that is not intelligible to Batswana. Immigrant citizens from such African countries as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, and Angola are labelled as such by the majority of the respondents as shown in Table 5 below. As Adajian (2005, p. 234) notes "concepts are organised around prototypes" and our data indicate that immigrants from Zimbabwe are more prototypical of *Lekwerekwere* since they

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^{7.}   Batswakwa is the plural form of Motswakwa

constitute more economic risk to Botswana.

Table 5: **Categorisation of Immigrants from other African countries**

Country	Frequency of Motswakwa	Frequency of Lekwerekwere
Zimbabwe	17 (10.9%)	110 (70.5%)
Nigeria	19 (12.2%)	107 (68.6%)
Zambia	28 (19.7%)	95 (60.9%)
Ghana	30 (19.2%)	91 (58.3%)
Angola	40 (25.6%)	82 (52.6%)
Malawi	23 (14.7%)	80 (51.3%)
Sudan	40 (25.6%)	60 (38.5%)
Tanzania and East African countries	20 (12.8%)	83 (53.2%)

Evidently, *Lekwerekwere* is used pejoratively to denigrate and despise dark skinned Africans who come from poor and politically unstable African countries. This kind of attitude to fellow Africans has also been noted in South Africa. Msimang (2014) argues that "the darker-hued these aliens are, the less likely South Africans are to accept them. Even when black African foreigners attain citizenship or permanent residence, even when their children are enrolled in South African schools, they remain strangers…" In this respect, Batswana on the one hand are like South Africans who "see themselves as different from other Africans, are lighter in complexion than them and have different features, …they are an island of prosperity where migrants only come to take but not give anything back" (Msimang, 2014). Goh (2008, p. 237) on the other hand sees such discrimination as an indication of the degree of erosion of the simple solidarity that existed in pre-colonial and customary societies. His perception, that the imposition of modern politics and competitive economic manoeuvres has led to the atomization of the society and the collapse of the shared tribal or village life, may be the reason that Batswana have opted to distinguish citizens in order to maintain a core group (the prototypical group) that can be considered a community instead of the overcrowded atomised political unit (Rex, 2004, pp. 134-135), cited in Goh (2008, p. 237).

As was indicated earlier, the label *Lekgoa* (literally the one who has been spit out of the sea or ocean) which refers to a white person, especially of a European decent (Otlogetswe, 2012, 249) unlike *Lekwerekwere*, is positive and more ameliorative. In the current data 79 (50.6%) of the respondents found the term neutral whilst 20 (12.8%) approved of it and 57 (36.5%) disapproved of it. Among the defining features for *Lekgoa* are; white, of European or American descent, speaks English, has good looks, is rich or of high status. Respondents' definitions of *Lekgoa* include the following: a person who speaks English or is rich, a person who comes from

England or who has money and a person from developed countries who holds an important job. Table 6 shows the frequency of the use of *Lekgoa* and *Motswakwa* in the data.

Table 6: Frequency of Occurrence of Lekgoa and Motswakwa

Country	Frequency of Lekgoa	Frequency of Motswakwa
Britain and other European countries	128 (82.1%)	11 (7.1)
USA and other North American countries	123 (78.8%)	12 (7.7%)
Australia and New Zealand	107 (68.6%)	21 (13.5%)

The countries associated with the label *Lekgoa* as shown in Table 6 are Britain and other European countries, USA and other North American countries, Australia and New Zealand with 82.1%, 78.8% and 68.6% response rates respectively. As a former British colony, the majority of Batswana rates the British and Europeans as the most prototypical *Makgoa*[8]. Surprisingly more respondents, 13.5%, consider Australian and New Zealand immigrants *Motswakwa.*

The supremacy of white skin is believed to be one of the legacies of African colonization through which Africans were made to believe that white is beautiful, civilized and superior. Gwaravanda (2011) cites western philosophers such as Hume (1987), Kent (1974) and Hegel (1975) as propagators of Eurocentric views and white supremacy. Hume (1987, p. 270) posits that "there was never a civilized nation of any other complexion than the whites" (in Gwaravanda, 2011, p. 199). Gwaravanda (2011, p. 199) objects to the view held by Kent (1974) that:

> humanity exists in its greatest perfection in the white race, the yellow Indians have a smaller amount of talent, the Negroes are lower and the lowest are a part of the American people…the order in skin colour corresponds to mental and general abilities.

Such perceptions have had a negative effect on Africans and black people who are generally perceived as inferior and less intelligent. But more importantly they have also influenced how Africans view one another. As our data show, *Makgoa* obviously have much higher status and are more positively regarded than immigrant citizens from African countries.

The word *Lekula* is believed to be a loan from *coolie*, which according to The *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (1996, p. 315) refers to "an unskilled native labourer in countries of the Far East or to a person from the Indian subcontinent, that

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[8.]   Makgoa is the plural form of Lekgoa.

is, a person of Indian descent." Some dictionaries make a distinction between the old fashioned inoffensive meaning of an unskilled native labourer in India, China and some other Asian countries and the offensive meaning of unskilled worker who is paid low wages in parts of Asia. *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995) and *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (1996) however flag the word *coolie* as derogatory and offensive and therefore should not be used. In Setswana, the term *Lekula* is used as a racial slur for a person of Indian descent in Botswana and South Africa. Most respondents, 130 (83.33%), do not approve of the term while 10 (6.4%), rated it derogatory. The negative connotations attached to *Lekula* include miserly, greedy and cheap. Some of the definitions provided by our respondents include: a greedy person and a stingy mean person. Some others define it as a derogatory term which refers to a non-believer or heathen similar to kaffir or nigger. Immigrants predominantly associated with *Lekula* in our data are people from India and Pakistan, with 132 (84.6%) and 94 (60.3%) response rates respectively as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Frequency of Occurrence of the Term Lekula

Country	Frequency of Lekula	Frequency of Motswakwa
India	132 (84.6)	10 (6.4%)
Pakistan	94 (60.3)	22 (14.1%)

5.   Conclusion

Our discussion of the categorization of Batswana citizens, and the various connotations attached to each of the labels has affirmed the views held by Goh (2008, p. 236) that colonial racialization of people who now live in one country as nationals is nothing but institutionalized pluralism. The discussion has also shown that Furvivall's (1948, p. 304) description of such groups as "a medley of peoples that mix but do not combine, meeting only at the market place and living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit" is not unrealistic even in the context of modern day migration and globalisation. Even though immigrant citizens bring with them skill and expertise which contribute to national development, in the context of Botswana, they may never really become *Motswana tota* (prototypical Batswana), the Setswana speaking tribes who constitute the 'us'. They remain in the periphery and are therefore outsiders. They are and will remain 'them'.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

A STUDY OF BATSWANA'S PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER QUESTIONNAIRE
Citizens of Botswana have all kinds of geographical and ancestry backgrounds. Some of these people are described as Batswana or Batswana *tota* and others as *Makgoa*, *Makwerekwere* etc. This questionnaire seeks to find out what you understand by some of these labels. We appreciate your taking out time to fill

in the questionnaire.

A. Personal Information
1. Age Range: Below 30   31 – 40   41- 50
    51 and above
2. Education: No Education   Primary Education   Secondary Education
    Diploma or First Degree   Higher Degree
3. Place of Residence: Gaborone   Outside Gaborone (Please
    specify)
4. Gender

B. Please answer the questions below to the best of your knowledge of Setswana.
1. Who is a Motswana? Define the term **Motswana**?
2. Explain what the expression **Motswana tota or Motswana** means?
3. Explain what the expression **Motswana wa pampiri** means?
4. Define the term **Lekgoa**?
5. Define the term **Mokula?**
6. Define the term **Motswakwa**?
7. Define the term **lekwerekwere/mokwerekwere**?

C. Now, use the labels above (*Motswana, Motswana tota, Motswana wa pampiri, Lekgoa, Motswakwa, Mokula, Mokwerekwere*) **or any others that you know** to categorize the following <u>citizens of Botswana</u>

A CITIZEN OF BOTSWANA WHO ORIGINATES FROM OR HAS ANCESTRY FROM THE FOLLOWING PLACES	CATEGORY	REASON/COMMENT IF ANY
MOCHUDI		
MASUNGA		
SEROWE		
BRITAIN AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES		
NIGERIA		
ZWENGSHAMBE		
INDIA		
PAKISTAN		
SOUTH AFRICA		
SUDAN		
ANGOLA		
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN NORTH AMERICA		
GHANZI		
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND		
CHINA		

MALAWI		
KANYE		
ZIMBABWE		
NAMIBIA		
JAPAN		
BOKSPITS		
GHANA		
LESOTHO		
KOREA		
ZAMBIA		
SWAZILAND		
TANZANIA AND OTHER EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES		