

# BATLOKWA CULTURE DAY: A CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AND PRIDE

Rosaleen O. B. Nhlekisana<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Since the United Nations declared May 21<sup>st</sup> as the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, Botswana has always celebrated culture day. National celebrations are held on a rotational basis every year, but this does not stop individual ethnic groups from celebrating their own cultures too. For this reason, in the past eight years, the Batlokwa have held their own celebrations to mark this day, which is characterised by various activities such as traditional music, dance, food and performances of certain rituals. In particular, this paper examines and outlines the events of the Batlokwa culture day held in the year 2012. The paper argues that in celebrating this day, the community did not only showcase its culture, but that it is also promoted it. The 2012 celebration made those who participated in it understand and appreciate Batlokwa culture and identity. Further, the use of technological devices to record the activities of the day and those of subsequent culture days helped to document and preserve them for future generations.

**Keywords:** Cultural identity, cultural pride, celebrations, rituals, Batlokwa

## 1. Introduction

In 2001, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and in 2002, the UN General Assembly, in resolution 57/249, declared May 21 the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. The day provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together better ([www.un.org/en/events/culturaldiversityday](http://www.un.org/en/events/culturaldiversityday)).

Botswana is a multilingual and multicultural nation. Every ethnic group in the country has its own distinct culture; however, there are similarities and differences among the various cultures. The National Policy on Culture states that “Botswana is an independent state comprising different ethnic groups which together represent a rich and diverse cultural heritage. This heritage must be preserved, nurtured and developed to foster a strong sense of national identity, pride and unity” (Republic of Botswana, 2001, n. p.). It has also been pointed out that “the similarities and overlaps in the cultures create a sense of a homogeneous national culture, but that the existing dissimilarities remind us that the considered national culture is a beautiful patch-work of different cultures” ([www.knowbotswana.com](http://www.knowbotswana.com)) (n. p.). Culture is a people’s way of life; it includes their belief systems, values, norms and traditions. It is also a form of identity for the group and plays an important role in shaping that identity (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007; Smith-

<sup>1</sup> Department of African Languages and Literature, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana.  
Email: [nhlekisana@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:nhlekisana@mopipi.ub.bw)/[nhlekisana@ub.ac.bw](mailto:nhlekisana@ub.ac.bw)

Shank, 2002; Lentz, 2001).

Cultural celebrations or performances are events through which communities or societies define themselves and reflect on their situations in a dramatic manner. They are also meant to revive and maintain local cultural traditions and, consequently, to make members of the community appreciate and respect their culture or identity, collectively. Such celebrations are also arenas for communities to showcase their cultural characteristics, such as their beliefs, values, food, forms of entertainment, artefacts and others (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007; Smith-Shank, 2002; Lentz, 2001).

For the past eight years, the Batlokwa have held their own celebrations to mark culture day. The day is characterized by various activities such as traditional music, dance, poetry, food and performances of certain rituals. This paper outlines and examines the events of the Batlokwa culture day held in June 2012. The event was held at the Tlokweg main *kgotla* (tribal meeting place). The main objective of the event was to showcase Batlokwa culture. The argument of this paper is that by celebrating this day, the Batlokwa are not only showcasing their culture, but are also promoting it. The celebrations made those present understand and appreciate Batlokwa culture and identity.

## **2. Brief History of the Batlokwa**

The Batlokwa of Moshaweng originate in South Africa. According to historical sources (Ellenberger, 1939; Schapera, 1946; Sillery, 1952), before arriving in Botswana, they occupied the large settlement of Marothodi, near Sun City. Marothodi was a copper and iron smelting centre and the capital of Kgosi Bogatsu Taukobong and his son Kgosi. In 1823, Kgosi was killed by the invading Bakololo. The Batlokwa broke up and dissipated, but Kgosi's son Matlapeng later returned to a place near Marothodi and finally settled at Letlhakeng, where Gaborone was born. When the Boers arrived, they clashed with Matlapeng. He then took his followers west to join Sechele's Bakwena at Dithejwane and followed them to Molepolole (Ntsweng). Later, after a falling out, Matlapeng and his people relocated east of the Ngotwane and settled at Tshwene-tshwene (inside the present Madikwe Game Reserve). In 1875, when fighting broke out between the Kgatla and the Kwena, the Tlokwa assisted the Kgatla. During the war, Matlapeng died and Gaborone succeeded him. The Kwena-Kgatla war ended in 1883, with the Kgatla having seized the eastern portion of Kweneng. The Batlokwa then moved to their final place of settlement after Gaborone paid tribute to Sechele, who in turn granted him Moshaweng (Morton, 2018). The Batlokwa currently reside in Tlokweg, a small village in the southeastern part of Botswana. Tlokweg is about ten kilometres (10 km) east of Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. The capital city is named after Gaborone, the chief of the Batlokwa.

## **3. Theoretical Perspective**

Since cultural celebrations are performative in nature, this paper will be guided

by performance theory. Performance, which is a mode of communication, is part of life because people are always engaged in doing something on a daily basis. Drewal (1991, p. 1) argues that:

in the broadest sense, performance is the praxis of everyday social life; indeed, it is the practical application of embodied skill and knowledge to the task of taking action. Performance is thus a fundamental dimension of culture as well as the production of knowledge about culture.

Performance theory is based on the understanding that every individual in a society in one way or another does some form of performance. This could be the way the person speaks, what they eat, what they wear and the rituals they enact. In addition, performance theory deals with the actual doing of things such as singing, dancing, storytelling and performing rituals. According to Bauman (1984, p. 4), this theory takes into consideration “the performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience, and setting ... which are basic to the development of performance approach”. Furthermore, the context in which a performance takes place is very crucial for its proper understanding. Bauman and Briggs (1990) argue that contextualisation involves looking at the way participants, that is, the audience and performers examine the performance and how it emerges as a result. Since this paper examines a cultural event, it is important to take into consideration who does what, when, where, why and how. If these questions are answered, then one can present a comprehensive understanding of the cultural event.

It is also important to note that, in order for performance to take place, there must be a performer and an audience. It is the responsibility of the performer to perform for the audience that, consequently, scrutinises and critiques what is performed for them. However, in some instances, the performer and audience are inseparable, and in others, they are two distinct entities. In the case of the 2012 Batlokwa culture day, they were separate; some people performed certain actions and others witnessed the performances. The latter learnt from the performances and were entertained as well. The study is also descriptive in nature, as it describes and explains what actually took place on the said day.

#### **4. Methodology**

The main methods of data collection were open-ended interviews and note taking during the culture day celebration. The researcher was also a participant-observer because she was one of the directors of ceremonies for the day. She interviewed members of the different committees, who were instrumental in organising and ensuring the success of this event, to find out their perceptions, views and opinions about the day. She also did follow-up interviews with some of the participants and performers to glean an insight into their performances and experiences of the day. Furthermore, she interviewed some members of the audience to solicit their thoughts and feelings about the day. The interviewees consisted of youths (boys and girls)

and adults (mature men and women) of various ages. Since the event was video recorded, the researcher was able to get a copy of the video-recordings which she transcribed and later analysed.

## **5. Cultural Celebrations and Festivals**

Generally, cultural celebrations are held at specific times during the year. They are usually held to showcase communities' cultures and to enable the communities to express their pride and identity. Most cultural celebrations and festivals usually consist of various events; thus, they attract a lot of people from all walks of life. Though the events entertain, they are informative and educational as well. Participants at the celebrations or festivals are made to appreciate and understand the cultures of the host communities. According to Crespi-Vallbona and Richards (2007, p. 103) "cultural festivals and events are increasingly becoming arenas of discourse, enabling people to express their views on wider cultural, social and political issues". They also note that cultural festivals and events function as public arenas where local cultural identities are articulated. According to them, they are also a means of generating people's pride and identity. Smith-Shank (2002) notes that festivity and celebration are important to both individuals and communities. She argues that "they provide relief from the day-to-day activities of human life and are welcome as events of fun, reward, hope, and order" (p. 60). In other words, people attend cultural festivals and celebrations to relax, but also to learn more about their culture and history and to interact with fellow community members. The celebrations give the attendees a sense of belonging and togetherness. Furthermore, Lentz (2001, p. 48) argues that "cultural festivals are thus also sites of cultural innovation and arenas where ethnic and local identities, national identity, popular culture, and culture staged by the state confront one another". Cultural festivals and celebrations can be interpreted as sites for contestations about power, gender, economics and politics. However, this paper focuses on the issue of identity. It argues that the main aim of cultural events is to showcase the community's culture and identity.

## **6. Celebration of Batlokwa Culture Day in June 2012**

For the past eight years, the Batlokwa have celebrated their culture. The day is characterised by various activities such as traditional music, dance, food and performances of certain rituals. The celebrations are always held at the main *kgotla* in Tlokweg. The Batlokwa held their first celebration in June 2011 and the second in June 2012. Thereafter, the event was moved to August to coincide with the month the chief was inaugurated. Since then, the day has served two purposes, namely, the celebration of the culture day and the celebration of the chief's inauguration. As indicated earlier, this paper focuses on the Batlokwa culture day celebrated in June 2012.

## 6.1 *Preliminary Issues*

### 6.1.1 Planning

The day was carefully planned months in advance by an organising committee. The committee was divided into sub-committees such as fundraising, catering, publicity, programme and entertainment. These committees held meetings on a regular basis to report on the progress they had made and/or the challenges they had encountered in executing their assignments. The organising committee indicated that publicising and advertising the event was of prime importance. Therefore, a month or so before the event, the publicity committee ensured that local newspapers advertised the Batlokwa day and radio stations enticed people through commentaries. Further, the Chairperson of the organising committee was interviewed on the national radio station. This ensured that the event was publicised countrywide in order to attract people from far places. A similar observation is made by Lentz (2001, p. 48) who says that “today cultural performances during these festivals are always witnessed by state television and by radio and newspaper journalists, as well as by private video cameras and cassette recorders. Local culture, therefore, is staged in a national context and is mediated by the mass media”. According to the organising committee, the planned activities of the day reinforced and communicated the values and identity of the Batlokwa.

### 6.1.2 Attendees

Most of the attendees were members of the community; however, people from other cultural or ethnic groups who live in Tlokweg also attended. The attendees were of different ages, socio-economic status, and political and religious backgrounds. Apart from community members, invitees included government officials, especially from the Department of Arts and Culture, Department of Tourism, Department of Museum, the District Commissioner, Chairperson of Tlokweg Landboard, and councillors from the different political parties. There were also chiefs from other ethnic groups in Botswana and chiefs of Batlokwa residing in South Africa.

### 6.1.3 Programme

There was a set programme which was followed throughout the day. The directors of ceremonies were responsible for calling out or announcing each segment of the programme and ensuring that the programme flowed accordingly. The celebrations started at the main *kgotla* at 0800 hours in the morning and ended in the afternoon around 1400 hours. The first part of the programme was characterised by formal speeches interspersed with traditional songs, dance and poetry. The first speech was given by the Chairperson of the organising committee who outlined the objectives and aims of the event. He said that the main objective was to showcase Batlokwa culture with the hope that the community would appreciate and respect its culture. The next speech was given by the Director of the Department of Arts and Culture whose organization also sponsored the event. His speech focused on the importance of communities taking an active role in reviving,

promoting and preserving their cultural heritage. He said that part of the mandate of his department was to encourage Batswana to take responsibility and ownership of promoting and safeguarding their cultural heritage. His speech was followed by a poem to usher in the Paramount Chief of Batlokwa, Kgosi Puso Gaborone, before he delivered his speech. The *kgotla* was buzzing with excitement, ululations and whistles as the people showed their love and respect for the chief. The chief emphasised the point that the Batlokwa should be proud of their culture and identity and that they should not abandon their cultural roots, values, norms and beliefs because these affirm their identity. He also stressed the importance of the preservation of Batlokwa culture for future generations. He assured the guests and audience in general that, at the end of the day, they would know and appreciate the culture of the Batlokwa. The guest speaker of the day was Kgosi Mosadi Seboko, the Paramount Chief of the Balete, one of the ethnic groups of Botswana. She reiterated the importance of communities being proud of their cultures and that the Batlokwa should promote, protect and preserve their culture through activities like the culture day celebrations. Borrowing the rhetorical structure of the first President of the Republic of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama's well known statement: "a nation without a *past* is a lost nation, and a people without a *past* is a people without a soul", she said that "a people without a culture is a lost people.

#### 6.1.4 Entertainment

There were different kinds of entertainment throughout the morning, such as the reading of poems and singing of songs. These forms of entertainment were performed either before or after a speech was given. The entertainment was performed by various choirs and traditional dance groups from different *dikgotlana* (wards) of the village of Tlokweg. Interestingly, most of the choirs had composed songs about the culture day. The songs talked about the relevance of culture day and the need to be proud about one's culture and identity. Furthermore, the organising committee had invited a *dithaka* (reed flute) group from Ramotswa to "spice" the day and entertain the attendees. Their performance was spectacular and exciting because of the apparent competition between the *dithaka* group of Tlokweg and that of Ramotswa. Interestingly, the two cultural groups claim *dithaka* to be theirs. So, every time they meet, they want to out-perform each other. The performances throughout the day left the audience shouting, whistling and dancing, thus showing that they were emotionally, mentally and physically engaged in the activities.

#### 6.2 Performance of Botsetsi and Patlo Rituals

The second part of the programme which was also the highlight of the day was the performance of two rituals, namely *botsetsi* (confinement of a mother after giving birth) and *patlo* (asking for a girl's hand in marriage). Rituals are the socially essential collective activities within a culture (Collins, 2004; Rappaport, 1999; Bell, 1997). The two rituals were performed by elderly people who were knowledgeable and had undergone the same. Due

to limitations of space, the rituals cannot be discussed in detail here. But, briefly, for *botsetsi*, the performers showcased, among other things, how a mother and her baby are cared for, the food the mother eats and her sleeping position. For *patlo*, they demonstrated the process from the beginning to the end. For example, they showed those, from both the boy's and girl's families, who took part in the negotiations. The culmination of the ritual was the uniting of the couple in marriage.

The intent of these performances was to display to those present what is socially and culturally expected and done during the two rituals. It should be noted that though the rituals are common to all cultural groups in Botswana, their performance differs from culture to culture. Therefore, they were performed to showcase and teach those present how they are done by the Batlokwa. The video recording of the performances were excellent, and, thus, helped the researcher in understanding, analysing and describing the rituals. The audience appreciated the performances and comments such as *Ehe go dirwa jaana* (Wow! So, this is how it is done) or *Ijoo! Rona ga re dire jaana ka se ga rona* (Ooh! We don't do it like that in my culture) were heard in the video recording. When the researcher interviewed some of the performers to solicit their views about their performance, they said they felt proud and satisfied that they had ably demonstrated what is, uniquely, Batlokwa culture. They also said their performance showcased their identity as a cultural group distinct from other groups in Botswana.

After the performance of the rituals, the guests were taken on a tour to see a display of Batlokwa cultural artefacts, utensils and foods. Immediately following the tour, lunch was served. The food prepared was typically that of the Batlokwa. After lunch, the official guests departed, but the entertainment continued until the day ended at around 1600 hours.

## **7. Characteristics of the Batlokwa Culture Day**

Batlokwa culture day is characterized by various activities that are considered unique to the Batlokwa. Some of the characteristics are food, song and dance, attire and artefacts. These characteristics portray and present the Batlokwa as hospitable, loving and caring people. They also help to express the values, customs, beliefs and norms cherished by the community. Below is a discussion of these characteristics.

### *7.1 Food*

Food is a form of identity and has been used as such across the world by different people (Sibal, 2018; Lyons, 2007; Paponnet-Cantat, 2003). In Botswana, every cultural group has its own way of preparing its food though the ingredients may be similar across the country. For the Batlokwa culture day, several dishes unique to the Batlokwa were prepared. For example, during the official part of the celebration, while the speeches were being given, attendees were served *kabu* (maize grains boiled in salty water) and *dithotse* (roasted watermelon seeds). At the end of the official programme, attendees

were treated to Batlokwa cuisine. Some of the dishes included *bogobe ba lerotse* (sorghum meal cooked with juice from melon), *legodu* (beans cooked with juice from melon), *mosuthane* (cooked sorghum with first coat removed), *letshotlho* (cooked dried maize), *morogo wa dinawa* (cooked bean leaves), *lebelebele* (millet) and *tshotlho* (pounded meat) commonly known as *seswaa* in other parts of the country. These dishes served to promote and preserve Batlokwa culture and identity. Ginger, a traditional drink made from ginger, was served as refreshment with the food. In addition, the different *dikgotlana* of the village prepared *bojalwa jwa Setswana* (traditional beer made from sorghum) which was served to those who preferred alcohol beverage after their meals.

### 7.2 Song and Dance

The Batlokwa have three distinct types of song and dance. They are well known for performing *dipina tsa ditlhaka* (reed flute songs). The men blow the reed flute and make spectacular moves while dancing in a circle. The women dance in front of the men also in a circle. The songs are usually accompanied by very few lyrics, but a lot of spectacular dance moves. The second type of dance is called *kgaselese*. This is a traditional dance performed by males and females. The men dance as if they want to suckle the women's breasts. The women on the other hand, raise their hands and move in circular motion dogging the men. The men usually dance holding very long and thin sticks. The third is called *dikhwaere* (choirs). This is performed by both men and women. They normally form three or four lines based on the notes they sing, that is, soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

The choirs usually cover various issues and topics such as nature, historical events and personalities in the songs which are usually accompanied by aesthetic coordinated dance moves. Choirs from the different *dikgotlana* of the village performed various songs for the audience who showed appreciation by ululating, whistling and making verbal remarks. In addition, various praise poets entertained the attendees by rendering their poems which also touched on various issues like need to preserve culture, praising the chief, presenting social ills and politics. The performances created a sense of unity among the performers and between the performers and the audience.

### 7.3 Attire

Cultural identity can also be expressed through clothing (Kwakye-Opong, 2014; Saucier, 2011; Pineteh, 2008). Since the celebration is held at the *kgotla*, it is mandatory that all women wear a dress or a skirt and shirt, *tukwi* (headscarf) and *tjale* (shawl/blanket). It should be noted that women are not allowed to wear trousers at the *kgotla*. Batlokwa women are well known for their unique attire which they wear at *patlo* (asking for a girl's hand in marriage) and *lenyalo* (weddings celebration). The attire is a blue *leteisi* (German print) skirt, white shirt, white shawl and a headscarf. During the culture day most women were dressed in this manner, thus asserting their

culture and identity. Other women wore beautiful dresses made from *leteisi* in different designs. With regard to men, it was mandatory for them to wear jackets at the *kgotla*. A few of them wore shirts made of *leteisi* and others wore trousers and jackets made out of animal skins. Almost everybody who was at this event wore something made from *leteisi* except for young boys and girls who wore their normal day to day clothes.

#### 7.4 Cultural Artefacts, Decorations and Utensils

The Batlokwa have many cultural artefacts. A *leobo* (a thatched enclosed area near the culture day venue) was where the cultural artefacts were put on display. Soon after the formal proceedings were over, the dignitaries and later the general public toured the *leobo*. Some of the artefacts put on display were *ditlatlana* (baskets), *kika* (mortar), *motshe* (pestle), *mogojwana* (wooden bowl), *lesho* (big wooden spoon used for stirring large pots), *leshwana* (small wooden spoon used for eating), *phafana* (calabash), *sego sa bojalwa* (gourd for traditional beer), *sego sa metsi* (gourd for drinking water) and *nkgwana* (container made out of clay used for keeping water or traditional beer) *motlhotlho* (sack for sieving traditional beer).

The Batlokwa have unique ways of decorating their huts and compounds. This is evident in the *ntlo*, (round hut) built with mud and roofed with grass. It is a short distance from the *leobo* and close to the entrance into the *kgotla*. The *ntlo* has a *lelapa* (compound) where the *leiso* (hearth) is also built. Cow dung is used to make beautiful patterns on the floor and the walls; this is called *lekgapho*. Next to the *ntlo* is what the Batlokwa call *segotlo* (enclosure). Inside it is *mfagole* (made of two logs crossing each other) where kaross, blankets and clothes are kept, and *sefatana* (made of four logs and small ones put on top of the big ones) where bags of sorghum are kept. There is yet another type of *sefatana*; this one is round and deep, and it is used to store sorghum or maize (traditional granary). Furthermore, there is a *serala* which is built using logs and is erected a few inches from the ground; this is where all the foodstuffs are kept. Next to the hut, but outside the compound, a *selei* (ox wagon) and a *mogoma* (used for ploughing) were also put on display. These two equipments are no longer used because people now plough using tractors and machines.

#### 7.5 Memorabilia

Lastly, because the culture day is held annually, there was a need to raise funds for the next one. In order to do so, certain artefacts and other commodities like t-shirts, mugs and car stickers were sold. Some of the commodities that were sold had the *thakadu* (antbear) totem of the Batlokwa engraved on them. The organisers said that the memorabilia also created a sense of belonging and identity for community members. One informant said she felt proud to have a *thakadu* sticker on her car because it made people know her ethnic identity. Another informant said that he felt proud to wear the t-shirt especially when he went outside the village because everybody will recognize and respect him because of his cultural identity. He also said he always felt proud when he

saw or met somebody wearing the t-shirt. Smith-Shank (2002) has observed that “celebration-specific signifiers such as bumper stickers and t-shirts are merchandised and sold to happy customers who want to spend money on concrete signs of their participation and loyalty to a community” (p. 60). Most of the people the researcher interviewed who bought the items that were on sale shared the same sentiments as Smith-Shank. They felt that the memorabilia and commodities kept the culture day alive in them throughout the year until the next one was celebrated the following year. The people selling the items said they wished more people could buy them, as this would help their fund-raising endeavours and publicise the event.

## **8. Emerging Themes from Batlokwa Culture Day**

Since the argument of this paper is that celebrating culture day is a way of showcasing Batlokwa culture and expressing their identity, what follows is a discussion of the themes that emerged from this event. Four themes were identified, namely: identity, community participation, integration and globalization (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007).

### *8.1. Identity*

According to the organising committee, the main objective of the cultural event was to celebrate the culture and identity of the Batlokwa. Van Binsbergen (1994, p. 95) defines identity as “the socially constructed perception of self as subsumed with a group membership”. Hall (1990, p.223) defines it “in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective one true self hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed selves of which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common”. He also argues that though there are similarities, there are apparent differences as well due to changes in people’s history. The organising committee argued that the young generation was ignorant and or careless about their culture; therefore, hosting the event was one way of ensuring that the young generation identified with their culture and became proud of it. The informants reiterated the fact that hosting this event is another way of instilling the importance of preserving and promoting culture in the minds of the Batlokwa.

Most of the older informants were concerned that many people, especially the children, were no longer interested in their own cultures but rather preferred to copy other cultures, especially those of the West. A similar concern is raised by Crespi-Vallbona and Richards’s (2007) informants. They said, “Our task is to make the traditional dances and costumes of Catalunya known, particularly in schools. We have to instill a love of things that are Catalan, of dance and music” (p. 111). This clearly shows that the behaviour of children or the young ones is a cause for concern when it comes to issues of culture and identity. The concern is exacerbated by the fact Tlokweg, the abode of the Batlokwa, the smallest Setswana speaking cultural group in Botswana, is about ten kilometres (10 km) east of Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. The close proximity of the village to the capital city has brought about more challenges than opportunities in terms of identity and culture.

This is because the population of the village is becoming cosmopolitan or pluralistic. Therefore, this cultural event, is viewed by the organisers and participants as an important tool for showcasing and reaffirming Batlokwa culture and identity.

### *8.2 Community Participation and Spirit of Communalism*

Another theme that emerged from the cultural event is community participation and encouragement of communal spirit. The Paramount Chief, by virtue of his position, is responsible for organising cultural events. However, he usually delegates the responsibility to the organising committee consisting of members of the community. Therefore, the community is involved right from the beginning of the planning process to the end of the celebration. There are many ways in which the community gets involved; some of them are serving in various committees, including fund raising, programme and entertainment. Unlike in Ghana where “the preparation for a festival, the selection of the festival committee, and the programme planning can become an arena for contested power between the paramount chief and his immediate followers” (Lentz, 2001, p. 58), among the Batlokwa this is not the case. There was no visible power play, and if there was, it was not noticeable. Members of the community indicated that they felt duty bound to take part in the preparations. They also said they were guided by one goal, which was not to disappoint their Chief in front of dignitaries and all the people who attended the event.

Clearly, the success or failure of the event was dependent on the cooperation of members of the community. In order to succeed, the organising committee members attended meetings to plan and discuss ways of making the day a success. They also took part in choosing the performers, the artefacts they wanted to display and the food to be cooked. They also cooked and served the food themselves. This kind of involvement is summed up well in Crespi-Vallbona and Richards (2007, p. 112): “the idea of the fiesta as a transforming moment in society is underlined by the extent to which fiestas are seen as a means of developing community spirit and participation”. They further observe that “the celebration of the fiestas creates cohesion in the community, but it also makes contradictions evident, reaffirms relations between the members of the community and generates a group identity” (p. 112). That the community members actively took part in the planning of the event, worked together and ultimately attended the event is an indication that there was good social relationship amongst them. It also united them and made them feel proud of their culture and identity.

### *8.3 Integration*

Because it is becoming cosmopolitan, due to its close proximity to Gaborone, expatriates and people from various ethnic groups in Botswana live in Tlokweng. The people have little or no clue about the culture of the Batlokwa; therefore, a celebration of this nature is seen as a way of integrating them into Batlokwa culture. The organisers indicated that not only was the event

a showcasing of the culture, but that it was also a means of preserving and promoting it. They strongly believe that if other people are informed about and integrated into Batlokwa culture, it would ensure its longevity and preservation. Crespi-Vallbona and Richards (2007, p. 113) state that:

the use of festivals as tools for social integration may in some ways be seen as the obverse of the identity issue. Whereas the use of festivals to shape identity is essentially a process of cultural distinction, the need to create a cohesive community around such identities implies a lessening of social and cultural differences within the local community.

According to Smith-Shank (2002), community celebrations are an important socialising force, not only for newcomers to a community, but also for children. She argues that, “through their participation in community celebrations, children learn to participate in the construction and the consumption of their culture. They learn social expectations. They learn to delay gratification” (2002, p. 60). In other words, such celebrations help people, especially the young generation, to recognise and honour their culture and, consequently, to preserve it for their own good and wellbeing. Knowing the values and norms of a people’s culture can help them to trace, appreciate and understand their roots and identity. The organisers of the event emphasised the need to integrate people from other cultural groups and nations into Batlokwa culture, so that they are not just residents in the village, but that they have a sense of belonging to the community. In the end, according to the informants, this would lead to peaceful and mutual co-existence in the village.

#### 8.4 Globalisation

Globalisation is loosely used here to mean a process whereby people from different nations and cultures interact; they share ideas, values and beliefs. It is usually driven and aided by technology. Globalisation is a process that can affect communities positively or negatively. On the one hand, it has the potential for enhancing and disseminating cultures, and, on one hand, it has the potential for destroying other cultures if it is not properly monitored. Based on this observation, the organisers and the community felt an urgent need for the Batlokwa to strengthen, promote and preserve their culture. As mentioned earlier, they were also concerned that the young generation seemed not to care about their culture, but, rather, preferred to imitate and adopt Western cultures. The organisers indicated that the only way to deal with this problem was by hosting events like the culture day. As the Catalunyas put it, “we have to do more to re-affirm our identity ... we can’t allow ourselves to lose our cultural identity, or allow our culture to disappear...” (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007, p. 115). There is a general concern that communities should defend their cultures against globalisation. However, globalisation can also be viewed positively because, in using technological devices and the media, different cultures can be made known to the rest of

the world. This is why the organisers of the culture day felt it necessary to advertise it on national television. By so doing, Batlokwa culture as well as identity was spread across the entire nation and in the SADC region because some neighbouring countries like Zimbabwe and Namibia can also view Botswana television. In addition, there were a lot of journalists and radio news presenters who also helped to disseminate the information nationally through their various media outlets.

## 9. Conclusion

The United Nations, in particular UNESCO, has to be commended for encouraging nations to celebrate their cultures. The declaration of 21<sup>st</sup> May as the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development has revamped and revitalised the importance of culture in different communities. Through the celebration, the Batlokwa do not only affirm and strengthen their culture and identity, but they also affirm their pride and identity. In addition, cultural celebrations and festivals do not only benefit the individual communities, but they also contribute to nation building. They promote acceptance and respect of different cultures within the country since Botswana is a multi-ethnic culture (Republic of Botswana, 2001). Furthermore, the visibility and sustainability of the ethnic group is enhanced through such cultural activities. Indeed, cultural identity is a resource that can help the Batlokwa deal with the challenges of globalisation. In view of the apparent lack of interest by the young generation in their culture, this paper concludes and recommends the use technological devices to record the activities of the day in order to document and preserve such cultural events for posterity.

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