

# Understanding the Social Studies Teachers' Experiences: Conceptions of Citizenship in Botswana

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## Abstract

The advent of globalization problematizes and challenges the notion of bounded citizenship as conceptualized and perceived among established democracies and nations of the world. It threatens to undermine the key characteristics of the nation-state such as sovereignty, autonomy and democracy. The major purpose of this study was to explore the social studies teachers' conceptualizations and experiences on citizenship through the teaching of social studies in primary schools in Botswana. Anchored within post colonial theory, the study was qualitative and employed the naturalistic inquiry paradigm. Qualitative methods were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using grounded theory through the constant comparative technique. The findings of the study revealed that social studies teachers' conceptualize citizenship in multiple ways. The findings lead to the conclusion that citizenship in Botswana is fluid and not homogeneous as one might have thought given the national aspirations of social harmony, unity and nation building that were adopted at independence in 1966. The study recommends that citizenship be re-imagined in schools in an effort to deconstruct the master narratives that are often western oriented.

**Keywords:** Citizenship Education, Social Studies, Globalization, Naturalistic Inquiry, Post Colonial Theory.

## INTRODUCTION

Social studies is referred to in some countries as social education and in other countries it is taught as citizenship education (Ross, 2006). Numerous scholars in the field of social studies are in concert with regards to the role of social studies as being citizen preparation (Mhlauli, 2010; Ajiboye, 2009; Evans, 2006; Ross, 2006; Thornton, 2005). There is a widely held view that not all countries have policies requiring students to have instruction that prepares them to be citizens. Some countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia and Netherlands did not have any programs in their education systems that were deliberately aimed at teaching 'political education' or preparation of citizens (Hain, 2001). The author further extols that in contrast, countries such as Denmark, Germany and USA have educational policies that are aimed at developing informed and participating citizens. However, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the citizenship education initiative is embraced globally. For example, the year 2005 was designated as the year of European citizenship through education. Furthermore, there is increasing interest in the discourse of citizenship education in Asia, in countries like Japan, China and Pakistan (Davies & Pike, 2009). In Great Britain, citizenship education is a contentious issue and still at its embryonic stages as it was officially introduced in 2000 and became mandatory at secondary school level from September, 2002 (Crick, 2007; Figueroa, 2004).

Historically the notion of citizenship was not recognized by the British Government until the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the United States and the "Riots" in England in June 2001 (Figueroa, 2004). These incidents though taking place in different parts of the world (USA and England) acted as a wakeup call and a catalyst towards the rethinking of citizen preparation in Great Britain. Denmark on the other hand has an interesting program on preparing citizens in a democracy (Hahn, 1999). They have what is called the *folkskole* law which basically requires that schools should model democracy and students have weekly meetings where they discuss and resolve class problems, plan class trips and select topics for investigation in the class titled "contemporary studies". Of recent "contemporary studies" has been replaced by "social studies" in Denmark schools (Hahn, 1999).

Citizenship education has always been regarded as a western concept within the African continent (Abdi, 2008; Mautle, 2000). This has exacerbated the narrow view that citizenship education is new as its approach in schools is often western oriented. In Botswana, the question of citizenship is a complex one as there are tensions brought about by the traditional and cultural make up of the society complicated by the advent of globalization and modernization that have permeated the society (Nyamnjoh, 2006). A citizen in Botswana can be identified by the legal documents such as *Omanang* (Identity Card) which distinguishes him or her from foreigners. Furthermore, a citizen of Botswana has certain entitlements which include the right to obtain land for free and vote from the age of eighteen (Nyamnjoh, 2006; Preece & Mosweunyane, 2004). A citizen of Botswana has duties and responsibilities and these include being patriotic, respect for the constitution, paying taxes, participating in national activities, obeying and upholding laws of the country, protecting your country from enemies and voting during elections (Mhlauri, 2010). This legal conception of citizenship characterizes citizenship as understood within the school curriculum and is based on the western interpretations of citizenship, hence the need to decolonize knowledge to reflect our own ways of knowing.

Nyamnjoh (2006) provides a vivid picture of the state of affairs in relation to citizenship, identity and the politics of difference in Botswana. He argues that though there are legal provisions of equality of citizenship to all men and women in principle, in practice there are inequalities in citizenship as there is a hierarchy of citizenship that is fostered by the political, social and cultural inequalities. This hierarchy has resulted in some Batswana (people of Botswana) being of lesser Batswana than others. Running in parallel to this hierarchy is the acceptance and treatment of foreigners and immigrants as not all of them are welcome or accorded similar status, respect, privileges or rights. The tendency has been to scapegoat and label other Black Africans as *Makwerekwere*, a situation that denies them of a name of their choice. Their presence is as well dependent on the degree and is subject to renegotiation in different circumstances.

Nyamnjoh (2006) reminds us that being a rights-bearing *Motswana* (Citizen of Botswana) is dependent on the degree and power relations that one has, therefore indicating that nothing is fixed, not even the rhetoric of rights as they are dependent on context and issues at stake. The contention is that like many countries in Africa, Botswana is one of those countries where ethnic citizenship and belonging has almost disappeared in favor of a single political and legal citizenship and nation-building. As a result of globalization there are growing tensions of belonging and identity politics that are matched by a growing urge of differentiating between " 'locals', 'nationals', 'citizens', 'autochthons' or 'insiders' on the one hand; and 'foreigners', 'immigrants', 'strangers' or 'outsiders' on the other, with the focus on opportunities, economic entitlements, cultural recognition and political representation" (Nyamnjoh, 2006, p.3). In recent years, Botswana has experienced tensions as marginalized ethnic groups have sought for equity, better representation and more access to national resources and opportunities. This scenario to some extent demonstrates not only the paradoxes and contradictions of globalization but also the limits of bounded notions of citizenship and belonging informed by the 'nation-state' and its hierarchies.

Social studies as citizenship education seek to provide students with the knowledge, skills, values, dispositions and attitudes which will enable them to actively participate as citizens in a democracy (Ajiboye, 2009). Since its introduction in the primary school curriculum in Botswana in 1969, there have been doubts as to whether the subject is achieving its major goal of developing good citizens. These doubts emanated from recent trends and evidence from studies that suggest that products of schools are exhibiting behaviors that are not in tandem with good citizenship as encapsulated in the social studies curriculum (Ajiboye, 2009; Preece & Mosweunyane, 2004). The National Commission on Education (1993) also documented an outcry from the Botswana public about the moral decay prevalent among the youths that was not aligned to the *Setswana* culture hence negating the efforts of developing good citizens that are ideal to Botswana.

The social studies teachers' understanding of educating students for citizenship in a democracy is crucial to the achievement of the major goal of social studies since they are the ones at the frontline of any curriculum implementation and have a moral and social obligation of preparing future citizens. This view is in line with Thornton's (2005) characterization of teachers as curricular-instructional gatekeepers which basically reflects their well known role as controllers of what is taught and how that is taught in their classrooms. Sim (2008) reinforces the teachers' role by

asserting that a large part of how teachers tend the gates hinges on how they understand the subject, and in this case citizenship. Like in many developing countries, the discourse on citizenship education in Botswana is still to be implemented by teachers, yet very little is known about what social studies teachers' think and say and their understandings of citizenship within the Botswana context. It is therefore, critical that subject specialist teachers of citizenship and in this case social studies teachers understand what it means and be in a position to explain what they do best regarding citizenship. To explore the identified problems, this study sought to:

1. Explore the social studies teachers' understandings, ideas and conceptualizations of citizenship.
2. Find out from the social studies teachers what their experiences on citizenship are?
3. Find out what curricular implications can be drawn from the study?
4. Make recommendations pertaining to citizenship in schools.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following broad research questions guided the study:

1. What are the social studies teachers' understandings and conceptualizations of citizenship as national identity?
2. What are the social studies teachers' understandings and conceptualizations of citizenship as participation?
3. What are the social studies teachers' understandings and conceptualizations of citizenship as responsibility?
4. What are the social studies teachers' understandings and conceptualizations of citizenship as self reliance?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this article I use the post colonial lens to understand the teachers' ideas, conceptions and experiences on citizenship in their classrooms and to query how mainstream academic knowledge continues to suppress and marginalize other ways of knowing and knowledge construction. Mainstream academic knowledge is explained as knowledge that "reinforces traditional and established knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences, as well as the knowledge that is institutionalized in the popular culture and the nation's schools, colleges and universities" (Banks, 2008, p. 135). It is the form of knowledge that is seen to reinforce the status quo, perpetuates inequalities and the dominant power relationships in society in that it often carries with it the 'codes of power'.

Post colonial theory advocates for a number of issues in relation to education that range from "decolonizing knowledge and the production of transformative knowledge, mapping out the manifestations of the power of the west to the rest, and locates how the dichotomous representation of the world establishes a rigid division between local/global, citizen/foreigner, civilized/uncivilized, and also challenges the discourse of nationalism" (Subedi & Daza, 2008, p.2). This querying nature of post colonial theory makes it undoubtedly an invaluable tool for understanding the social studies teachers' conceptualizations and experiences on citizenship within the Botswana context.

I further use Banks' (2008) idea of transformative academic knowledge to interrogate the teachers' ideas, experiences and conceptions about citizenship. "Transformative academic knowledge consists of paradigms and explanations that challenge some of the key epistemological assumptions of mainstream knowledge" (Banks, 2008, p.135). It is said to challenge mainstream knowledge that seem to perpetuate and expand the historical and literary canon. Transformative academic knowledge is content that when presented challenges the traditional interpretations that are seen as universalistic and unrelated to human interests (Marri, 2008). It enables students to acquire information, skills, and values to challenge inequality within their communities, nations and the world; to develop cosmopolitan values and perspectives; and to take actions to create just and democratic multicultural communities and societies (Banks, 2008).

In studying transformative academic knowledge one is inclined to conclude that it is related to Said (1978) notion of contrapuntal criticism. Contrapuntal criticism is associated with a musical term for literary criticism and further emphasizes the issue of knowledge construction and how it impacts students (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006; Merryfield & Subedi, 2006). This view holds that students need to understand knowledge construction, the politics of mainstream academic knowledge, post-colonial efforts to rewrite or resist master narratives and the inheritance of imperial worldviews (Willinsky, 1998). It is this knowledge that is often viewed as the truth without any consideration of how it affects the recipients that needs to be unpacked and debunked. The idea of deconstructing western imperialist knowledge is in concert with Said's (1978) idea of hybridity and contrapuntal criticism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theories of Citizenship

Theories of citizenship as espoused in the literature on citizenship education tend to reflect a certain level of ambiguity and differences. Van Gunsteren (1998) identifies four theories of citizenship that seem to differ in terms of orientation and practice such as; *Liberal, Communitarian, Civic-Republican and Neo-Republican theories*. The first theory is that of liberal citizenship which is rights –based; civic republicanism which is responsibilities-based; the communitarian citizenship which is collectivist; and lastly the neo-republicanism which combines elements of civic republicanism and liberal views of citizenship (Evans, 2006; Van Gunsteren, 1998). According to Van Gunsteren (1998) the Liberal-Individualist theories view a citizen as a calculating holder of preferences and rights. Within this theory, citizenship is conferred on an individual by a state or nation. There exist a relationship between an individual and the state which includes both rights and responsibilities (Van Gunsteren, 1998). In the case of a democracy, the rights of an individual include the right to be heard and participate in their governance, equal protection of the law, the right to basic freedoms such as religion, speech and press. The responsibilities of the citizen include respect for the law and participation in activities of governance such as voting and joining interest and political parties (Engle & Ochoa, 1988).

Communitarian theories of citizenship view citizenship as more than a matter of rights and strongly emphasize that being a citizen involves belonging to a historically developed community (Van Gunsteren, 1998). Therefore, indicating that citizenship in the communitarian sense emphasize participation and identity (Preece & Mosweunyane, 2004). For communitarians a citizen acts responsibly if they stay within the limits of what is acceptable within the community. The community is seen as a representation of unity and the absence of community indicates conflict. The community is well respected as it denotes a cultural resource that fosters people’s relationships. It is this type of citizenship that promotes voluntarism, self reliance and a commitment to each other. It operates at micro level and simply implies community responsibility (Preece & Mosweunyane, 2004).

Civic-Republican theories of citizenship place a single community, which is the republic community, at the center of political life. This means that it places more responsibility on the civil society. It recognizes the republican virtues of courage, devotion, military discipline and statesmanship and shows too little appreciation for characteristic values and diversity of other communities (Van Gunsteren, 1998). Putman (2000) contends that a strong civil society leads to a stronger state through the promotion of active social action which privileges the state by not challenging the status quo.

Lastly, the neo-republican conception of citizenship includes elements of all the other three theories, communitarian, republican and liberal-individualist thinking. The elements of neo-republicanism can be summarized into three concepts: the public realm, organizing plurality, and action (Van Gunsteren, 1998). The belief is that the duty of citizens is “to transform a community of fate into a republic that can be willed by all who are involved as citizens” (Van Gunsteren, 1998, p. 27). To them citizenship is created and recreated by citizens in action. Citizens have to possess competence, a repertoire of skills, goodwill, consensus on norms and values, tolerance and respect, and good judgment (Van Gunsteren, 1998). Nevertheless, these theories provide a conceptual guidance and indicate the contradictions inherent in terms of the conceptual understanding of citizenship as they show the binaries created in terms of individualist versus collectivist; political rights versus social rights; as well as local versus global (Evans, 2006).

### Teachers’ Perspectives on Citizenship Education

Anderson et al (1997) conducted an excellent study of how elementary and secondary teachers define citizenship education. As a result of this study four perspectives emerged as; critical thinking perspective, legalistic perspective, cultural pluralism perspective, assimilationist perspective. These perspectives are in tandem with Barr, Barth and Shermis’ (1977) traditions in which they describe contrasting approaches to social studies as; teaching social studies as citizenship transmission, teaching social studies as social science, teaching social studies as reflective inquiry. According to the critical-thinking perspective, teachers who hold this view believe that citizenship education should help students question the status quo, develop critical thinking and questioning skills and encourage open-mindedness and tolerance (Anderson, et al, 1997). This perspective is aligned to Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) tradition of teaching social studies as reflective inquiry in that it emphasizes the analysis of values, development of skills and dispositions and decision making. Banks (2008) refers to this model as the transformational model in that it views citizenship as a process of socialization and counter socialization.

The legalistic perspective contends that citizenship should stress obedience to the law, teach the basic structure of our political systems and inform students about their rights and responsibilities (Anderson, et al, 1997). This perspective dovetails with the tradition of teaching social studies as a social science since it puts emphasis on teaching knowledge as it

is structured within the disciplines and on discovery and inquiry activities (Brophy, 1990). Teachers who fall within the cultural pluralism perspective define citizenship education as the celebration of diversity and pluralism. They believe that rather than teach about the basic structure of our political institutions, citizenship education should expose students to a range of ideologies (Anderson et al., 1997).

Teachers within the assimilationist perspective hold similar views with those of the legalist in that they explicitly reject the current ideas of "political correctness" and want to transmit to students the dominant values of the society. This perspective resonates well with the tradition of teaching social studies as citizenship transmission with emphasis on the inculcation of traditional values (Brophy, 1990). This perspective is similar to the transmission model as explained in Weistheimer (2007) where students are encouraged to learn about the structure and function of the government, rights and responsibilities of citizenship and participate in non threatening civic activities. He argues that this model is shared by the assimilationist and legalists and is the most common model of citizenship education presented in elementary schools. In assessing the various conceptual frameworks of citizenship education as offered by various scholars (Van Gunsteren, 1998; Anderson et al., 1997; Weistheimer, 2007), it becomes apparent that there is a lot of complexity and ambiguity surrounding citizenship education. However, these varied conceptions of citizenship education though conflicting at times offer understanding about what it means to educate for citizenship in a democracy.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was qualitative in its approach and employed the naturalistic inquiry paradigm. Naturalistic inquiry is said to demand a natural setting (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further elaborate on the essence of a natural setting, that naturalist inquirers begin their research with the belief that constructions of realities cannot be separated from the world in which they occur or are experienced therefore emphasizing the relationship between time and context to understanding the phenomena under study. This study was undertaken among eleven social studies teachers in six primary schools in one of the big villages in the central district in Botswana which in this study is referred to as *Marethweng* village (pseudonym). Of the eleven teachers four were males and seven were females. The teachers' age ranged between 30 and 55 years; where four teachers were between 30 and 35 years, three were between 36 and 45 years, two were between 46 and 50 and two were between 51- 55 years. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. The major aim of purposive sampling also referred to as theoretical sampling is to "select information-rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 1990, p.169). The naturalistic inquirer prefers purposive sampling because it allows for the increase of the scope and range of data and the likelihood that a full array of multiple realities will be uncovered; it also maximizes the researcher's ability to devise grounded theory that "takes account of local conditions, local mutual shaping's, and local values" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 40). In this study I used a type of purposive sampling known as snowball sampling to select the social studies teachers who participated in the study (Patton, 1990). These teachers were chosen on the basis that they are experts in their area of concentration which is social studies and are in a better position to explain what they do best.

Individual interviews, participant observations and focus groups were used as methods for data collection. The individual interviews were used to solicit more in depth ideas on their conceptualizations and experiences on citizenship; this was used to inform the observations and further interviews. Interviews have their own limitations, for instance, I interviewed teachers during break, lunch or after school. This at times made me rush over the interviews as teachers would either be in a hurry to go to the next class or tired after a long day of teaching. I observed the social studies teachers in different settings such as; classrooms and other outside activities in debate clubs, sports activities, staffroom and traditional music practices in an effort to understand what they do and why they do what they do in relation to citizenship development and to listen to their 'normal' chats and gossips. The data obtained through observations was used to construct follow up interview questions and vice-versa. Focus groups were used to enable both the participants and researcher to see the group dynamics and how the individual responses contributed during discussions differ from or reinforce those of peers. Focus groups have their limitations in that they compromise confidentiality. At times teachers were not free to say what they would have said if interviewed individually. However, they enabled me to get the socio-cultural aspects of the study in that I was able to observe them when they are together on issues they agree or disagree on.

Data were analyzed inductively using grounded theory and employed the constant comparative data analysis technique (Merriam, 1998, Patton, 1990) where I collected the data, transcribed, coded and categorized them in order to inform the next interviews and observations. In explaining constant comparative analysis it is stated that it "combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed and coded" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.256). Data analysis took place at the same time with data collection and I constantly used the questions raised during transcription to shape the questions for the next interviews. This process allowed me to mine the data

thoroughly in order to exhaust all possible gaps. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The findings from this study indicated that teachers conceptualize citizenship in multiple ways as: national identity, active participation, collective responsibility and self reliance. There are a number of reasons that may explain why teachers conceptualize citizenship in multiple ways among them the notion of bounded citizenship and nation building, globalization and the economic realities of the nation itself. Firstly, it should be borne in mind that at independence in 1966, Botswana like many African nations emerging from colonialism opted for a form of citizenship that was political, legal, bounded and geared towards nation building as opposed to ethnic citizenship and belonging which was viewed as divisive. However, Nyamnjoh (2006) asserts that in recent years the country has experienced tensions of belonging and identity politics as various ethnic groups have sought equity, better representation and more access to national resources and opportunities. These identity politics tend to reject and query assimilationist policies of bounded national citizenship in favor of more differentiated ideas of citizenship which distinguishes between insiders and outsiders (Nyamnjoh, 2006).

Secondly, globalization with its accompanying agents of accelerated capital flow of goods, electronic information, diminishing borders and international migration have impacted Botswana negatively as they have exacerbated the insecurities and anxieties of both local and foreigners hence bringing about greater obsession with citizenship and belonging. This has led to the re-actualization of boundaries and differences; and the questioning of previous assumptions about nationality and citizenship (Nyamnjoh, 2006). Thirdly, since independence, Botswana's development has been guided by the national principles of democracy, development, unity and self reliance. The government of Botswana has been the main provider of education and employment. However, with the advent of the ongoing economic recession in the country and world, growing unemployment rates and lack of a diversified economy, it has become very clear that the government can no longer sustain such aspirations hence the need for citizens to seek alternative ways of survival. It is against this backdrop that there seem to be a shift of emphasis from a dependency on the government to self reliance initiatives.

Lastly, Botswana as a country since independence has experienced rapid economic growth and as such has attracted immigrant communities from different parts of the world such as Africa and Asia. The exodus of foreigners from other parts of the world has led to competition for jobs and this has also heightened the citizens insecurities as they believe that foreigners take up high profiled jobs in their country. This has provoked undesirable attitudes towards foreigners which have sparked notions of xenophobia. The economic realities of some of the neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe have also exacerbated the situation as their citizens come to Botswana illegally and create tensions and problems of illegal immigration. All the aforementioned accounts intersect to make the notion of citizenship complex and not a cut and dry situation. The findings are categorized according to research questions (RQs) and the themes generated are discussed below as: national identity, active participation, collective responsibility and self reliance.

### **RQ1 Citizenship as National Identity**

All the teachers who participated in the study conceptualized citizenship as national identity. The teachers real names were not used for this study instead pseudonyms (Nkwe, Kabo, Kgabo, Kubu, Morubisi, Batho, Lorato, Neo, Mpho, Thato, Tau) were used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. National identity was explained in terms of belonging to a nation, possession of national documents and having pride in national symbols. During my initial interviews with teachers, I asked them "when you hear the word 'citizenship', what comes into your mind?" The teachers' responses varied and the results are as presented below.

#### ***Belonging to a Nation***

All the teachers who participated in this research perceived citizenship as a sense of belonging to a particular nation or country as well as identity and being proud of whom you are as a Motswana. In explaining the meaning of citizenship Ms Kubu had this to say:

It means nationality, where you come from. But generally it means belonging to a certain country or nation. I believe as Botswana, we should be proud of who we are, that is our identity. We do not have to go around copying other people's cultures to the extent that we forget about who we are.

Ms Kabo defined citizenship as laid down in legal documents and had this to say:

The word citizenship and what it implies in my mind is that we are talking of individuals who belong to a certain state or country or they are members of the country by descent, origin or naturalization. If you are a foreigner and you adopt to become a citizen of Botswana you become a member of Botswana.

However, it was interesting to find that national belonging does not begin at national level as teachers felt that for one to belong to a nation they have to belong to a certain tribe or ethnic group in the country. This was interesting in that their conception of national identity and belonging was exclusionary as it totally left out 'foreigners' or 'expatriates' (as they are usually referred to in the country) who have naturalized as citizens. To emphasize the notion of national belonging as preceded by belonging to a tribe or ethnic group in Botswana Ms Lorato mentioned that:

But generally it means belonging to a nation or country by birth or origin. It should be understood that one becomes a citizen of Botswana because he/she belongs to a particular ethnic group in Botswana.

Mr Nkwe shared the same sentiments that:

A citizen of Botswana has to be defined as someone who is originally a *Motswana*, she has been born within any territory of Botswana and has lived there, went to school in Botswana.... you belong to a certain area of Botswana like your tribe is in Botswana, for example; I am a *Mokalaka* (ethnic group) because I have lived to be a *Motswana* because I belong to the central district which is an area controlled in the past by *Bangwato* (Ethnic group).

The findings on national belonging as an element of citizenship and national identity clearly indicate that teachers view national belonging as emanating from ones' ethnic group or tribe. To them ethnic belonging precedes national belonging, therefore, indicating that for one to be a citizen of Botswana (*Motswana*), she/he should first be a member of one of the ethnic groups in Botswana. These views are not surprising given the recent appeals made by some ethnic groups who have been marginalized as they are now seeking equity and recognition.

#### *National Symbols*

The findings also revealed that teachers were in unison in seeing national identity as being expressed through national symbols such as the national anthem, the flag, the coat of arms, national colors. These national symbols to them are a form of national identity and express a sense of pride in who they are. Mr Morubusi in weighing on national symbols and citizenship had this to say:

In my teaching I require my students to bring national symbols such as the flag, t/shirts with national colors, coat of arms to basically show who they are and develop some pride in their country. I encourage them to show support to the national football team by wearing national symbols when they go to watch games. I believe doing so teaches the learners about who they are and develop some pride in their country.

Ms Kubu also talked about the significance of national symbols to national identity and said:

They (citizens) must have respect for the national anthem, you find that at times people just take things for granted where you find that children can use the national anthem during their play –this is not right. It should be respected because it identifies us as a nation and country from the rest of the world.

They also saw national symbols as a unifying factor in terms of citizenship since people belong to different ethnic groups. Ms Lorato expressed the importance of national symbols to national identity and mentioned that:

Right now in our country we are from different ethnic groups and there is a flag which has got three colors that represent the country that we are living in. The blue color represents the sky that we Batswana (people of Botswana) depend on rain because it is unreliable, the white color represents the white people that are also found in our country and black color represents Batswana and other Black Africans who live in our country.

It is not surprising that these teachers saw national symbols as national identity because they represent national unity and nation building as conceived at independence.

#### *National Documents*

National documents were also identified as elements of national identity. They mentioned that national documents such as *Omanq* (National Identity Card), passport, birth certificate and drivers' license identified who you are. During their focus groups, Ms Neo emphasized the importance of having national documents and acquiring them through the right procedures in order to guard against corruption and nepotism and said that:

...You know, even national documents such as National Identity (*Omanq*), people should not take it for granted that people will hear me speaking that I am a Motswana, carry it all the time and produce it when it is needed because these things are important. They show your identity, who you are, where you come from. These things can speak for you, you don't have to tell a person that you are a *Motswana*; you just take out these things and show them. Having a drivers' license, they should know that there are no short cuts to having such documents, procedures should be followed.

Having national documents was also related to being a responsible citizen who obeys the laws and this was echoed by Mr Kgabo during focus groups when saying:

Being responsible, obeying your country's laws, following the constitution of the country and being responsible in whatever you do. Caring and loving your country. By being responsible according to people is for them to have national identity, passport whatever. They should do what is wanted by the law and not do things that are improper.

The possession of these national documents was also seen as a form of national identity in an effort to be able to differentiate between the nationals (Insiders) and foreigners (Outsiders). It appears they also see national documents as being able to help tell authentic from non authentic citizens. Ms Kabo in relating national documents to the politics of difference had this to say:

Citizenship means being a Motswana. As a Motswana you should have an identity card (*Omanq*). The person must be born in Botswana and be able to speak Setswana. You have to belong to one of the ethnic groups in Botswana "*O seka wabo o le Motsebele hela jaaka o ntse fa o bo ore o Motswana*" (when translated means that: "You should not be a Ndebele (ethnic group in Zimbabwe) as you are seated here and call yourself a Motswana (Referring to me)")

According to Ms Kabo possessing national documents was a way of differentiating between real Batswana (born and belonging to the main ethnic groups in the country) and non real Batswana that is those Batswana who might have acquired citizenship through naturalization like me and do not belong to anyone of the recognized ethnic groups in Botswana. In fact Ms Kabo gave me a reality check in that she used me as an example of a non authentic Motswana and for the first time I came to realize that I am not regarded as a *Motswana* in my own country of birth.

## **RQ2 Citizenship as Active Participation**

All the teachers who participated in the study conceptualized citizenship as active participation and this involved taking part in political, community and national activities. In their view participating in various activities was related to 'good' citizenship and nation building.

### *Political Activities*

Political activities were viewed in relation to elections and voting for the government of their choice. Teachers expressed the importance of participating in elections as a way of expressing their wishes and a sign of belonging. Talking about participation, Ms Mpho had this to say:

Taking part in elections, it is their own way of expressing themselves by choosing their leaders. Take part in activities that you are asked to take part in as long as they are the ones that will build your nation.

Ms Kuba equated participation in political activities to good citizenship as she saw it as an important aspect of decision making and self expression which basically qualifies someone to be a good citizen at the same time developing national pride and she had this to say:



Even when it comes to elections, its high time everybody stands up to choose the government she wants because at times things are changing. We do not have to be saying the one in power is mine so I don't need to vote. This makes you a proud citizen and knows that you have voted and were part of those who chose the government.

Ms Kubu was very critical about people who do not participate during elections and lamented on voter apathy as a negation of good citizenship. Mr Tau saw participation in politics as a gateway to leadership positions. He mentioned that:

Citizenship requires that as citizens we should participate in elections and vote for our leaders. As teachers we should teach our students good citizenship by encouraging them to aspire for higher positions and should not be afraid to take up leadership positions. If you are an adult, you are 18 years and above, you should be seen to be participating in elections, vote and be voted as members of the council or parliament.

However, the findings in this category took me by surprise to realize that teachers conceptualize political activities narrowly in terms of elections and voting. There was no mention of participation in political organizations for the youth, attending freedom squares and debating on issues of national interest or engaging in associations that are geared towards political education.

### ***Community Activities***

Active participation was also seen in relation to taking part in community or local activities that would help others. This would involve taking leadership positions that would benefit the community that they live in. Community activities that were mentioned included attending *kgotla* meetings, participating in village development committees (VDC's), Parents Teachers' Associations (PTA's), attending funerals and weddings, Drought Relief Projects (*Ipelegeng*) and crime prevention groups (*Twantsho borukuthi*). Teachers saw participating in such activities as ways of making one to belong to a certain community. Ms Thato had this to say when talking about community activities:

Citizens in Botswana should take part or participate in community activities like weddings, funerals and community projects such as drought relief projects (*Ipelegeng*), village development committees (VDC's) and Parents Teachers' Associations (PTA's). As they are to be good citizens they have to take part, say out their views, make their own decisions, so that they know and feel that they belong, they are part and parcel of the community.

Mr Tau had this to say:

Citizens must be seen to be participating in community services, attending *kgotla* meetings to see activities done and issues discussed. It is important to attend *kgotla* meetings in order to make decisions in the area you are living in, the ward, and the village. We should be peace loving society. If there are community issues to be discussed at a *kgotla* meeting, we should be raising them peacefully without any confrontations.

It was interesting to find that the community activities that the teachers discussed ranged from development activities such as VDC's and PTA's to social activities such as weddings and funerals. Botswana are popularly known for their kinship ties and associations and it was not surprising to find that funerals and weddings were mostly mentioned as important community activities because that is where social networks are created, and kinship ties rekindled and failure to attend renders one an outcast in the society and no one wants to be seen in that way. The notion of discussing issues properly, peacefully without any confrontation is an interesting one as it is pivotal to our understanding of the teachers' interpretations of participation, citizenship and democracy in Botswana.

### ***National Activities (Volunteerism)***

Active participation was also described in terms of being involved in national activities. Though teachers emphasized the difference between national and community activities it was quite difficult to draw a distinction between the two. In expressing their views on citizenship, active participation and national activities, Mr Kgabo insisted that:

Citizenship involves participating in national activities such as referendum, population census, conduct of elections on election day, have knowledge about the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and participate in its activities, how it operates, they must know about these things. They must engage in national drama groups that represent the country outside.

Ms Kabo shared the same sentiments when she elaborated on national activities that:

Citizens in Botswana should take part in national activities like national elections where they vote for their national leaders such as Members of Parliament, referendums to make decisions concerning their lives, crime prevention groups at national level. We should participate in national events like culture day...

Teachers also associated active participation with national activities and volunteerism which they saw as important aspects of good governance. Ms Batho had this to say:

Citizenship calls for responsible citizens and as a good citizen you must ascribe to good governance like if there are elections, elect those you feel should be elected. Volunteer a lot. We are also expected to participate in the national activities, for example, national elections, cleaning campaigns or voluntary work. We are also expected to say out our views through councilors and members of parliament.

The findings on citizenship as active participation did not surprise me as they depict a clear picture of how democracy and citizenship are practiced and understood within the Botswana context where elections and voting are seen as the most important aspects of good citizenship. These forms of citizenship follow the liberal model of citizenship which advocates for citizens rights and civic duties. This narrow conception of active participation being related to elections and voting maybe attributed to the confusion emanating from the understanding of democracy as it is not clear whether democracy should be taught from a Eurocentric view or Tswana traditional view or a combination of the two. Therefore, the way democracy is understood and practiced may be related to the confusion that surrounds the notions of citizenship in Botswana.

### **RQ3 Citizenship as Collective Responsibility**

All the teachers spoke about citizenship as a collective enterprise involving the family and community as promulgators of moral and societal values and behavior. They saw citizenship in terms of moral values, peaceful coexistence and societal values and these were expressed in the form of *botho* as a source of collective and mutual interest within the family, community or nation.

#### ***Moral Values and Behavior***

Moral values and behavior was expressed in terms of *Botho* and the family, school and community were seen as the main actors in inculcating the values of *botho* among children. Values associated with *botho* were articulated as compassion, cooperation, respect, and love for one another, sympathy, being open, peaceful and good behavior. Being asked to define *botho*, this is what teachers had to say:

Ms Lorato was quick to say that:

*Botho* means being honest with yourself, being honest with other people, self respect and respecting other people. Love for our country and respecting other people's rights. Respect for people young and old

Mr Tau said:

...*Botho* is where we have to respect each other, care for one another, love one another and protect one another. Yes, *botho* relates to good moral values. We should display *botho* as this is what makes us to be who we are, being tolerant, peaceful and patriotic comes from the fact that we are taught to display *botho* wherever we go. *Botho* and social harmony are vital in our society.

The findings in this category clearly show that *botho* is regarded as an embracing concept that describes and embodies the attributes of an ideal Botswana. It is associated with virtues of humanness and compassion hence it is one of the pillars of the nation.

#### ***Peaceful-Coexistence and Unity***

Citizenship was viewed in line with living peacefully and being united. Teachers emphasized that the notion of their country being regarded as peaceful lies in their ability as a nation to be able to tolerate one another. They believed that

students should be taught to be tolerant at an early stage in order for them to be able to live peacefully and maintain the prevailing peace and stability in the country

Alluding to living in peace Ms Neo said:

I want to develop citizens who have tolerance, live in harmony, peace in order to maintain peace and stability that we have enjoyed over the years. We are known to be a peaceful country and we need to teach our children to preserve it.

Ms Mpho also emphasized the need to teach children good behavior and tolerance and her explanation was that:

What is typical about Batswana lies in their behavior, most Batswana are well behaved. One researcher once said that he was so surprised to see that Batswana are not arrogant, he was interviewing small children and they were well behaved, polite and used proper language. They like to solve problems peacefully rather than fighting. Batswana are peace-loving. They believe that "*Ntwakgolo ke ya molomo*" meaning that "It is better to jaw-jaw than war-war".

Ms Kubu opines that:

Though we want peace, we should also be tolerant and accept that we are different but united. We should unite and reinforce development because "*Setshwarwa ke ntsa pedi ga se thata*" (Setswana proverb) meaning that, "when we are a joint effort in carrying out a certain task, it will be completed well in time". In our communities we should participate in activities that promote peace.

The findings in this category not only speak to the notion of maintaining peace and unity but also about recognizing diversity in unity. This is an important feature in Botswana as the ideas of citizenship have always centered on national homogeneity as opposed to diversity. This marks a departure from national citizenship towards the politics of difference and identity. The other interesting point that keeps coming up is that of solving problems peacefully without any confrontations, this raises questions of complacency and good citizenship where people tend to accept views without challenging them in an effort to maintain peace.

### *Societal Values (helping each other)*

Citizenship was also viewed in terms of communal responsibility where each one of the community members depended on the other in times of need. Teachers felt that students need to be taught the spirit of sharing and caring for one another which is entrenched in the Setswana culture. They also felt that students should be taught *botho* as it reflects one's identity in the family and community. In expressing the need to help one another Ms Lorato had this to say:

As Batswana we should be just and caring, not look for support from you but to contribute in caring for others. We should be seen to be contributing towards helping other citizens. In our culture if I happen to have many cattle and my neighbor does not have any, culturally we borrow those without cattle some cattle to milk and plough with them in order to survive, this is called the "*Mafisa System*". I would not like to see my neighbor suffering. We support those in mourning by making contributions and staying with them in times of need.

The notion of caring for other people was well expressed by Ms Kubu when saying:

In our communities there are needy people in different forms such as orphans due to HIV/AIDS, old people, terminally ill and the poor. As a good citizen you have to find out if you can be of assistance to your neighbor more so that our culture is a culture of extended relations. Know what is going on within your relatives. If one of your relatives is sick or dead, know that you have to assist with funeral arrangements.

Teachers also felt that children should be taught *botho* as a collective enterprise and this is what Ms Morubisi said.

A citizen of Botswana is somebody who has *boitho*, somebody who values other people. *Boitho* must begin at home because it is said that "charity begins at home". The way you greet, talk, or carry yourself around should reflect who you are and the values of your family and community or society.

To further explicate the notion of collectivity in citizenship, Ms Kubu expressed her view thus:

*Boitho* is one of the things that we expect a Motswana child to exhibit where ever he/she is. It is part of our culture and calls for one to behave in a certain manner in or outside the country. It is something that must be there in you, to know that the same respect that I give to my parents; I should accord it to any adult person in the community, meaning that children must know that they do not have to respect their parents only and that every adult is your parent.

The findings in this category reflect citizenship as a community enterprise as it focuses on behavior as determined by the family and the community. It is clear that an individual is viewed as a representative of the community she/he lives in and whatever they do mirrors the society they come from. Being a member of a particular community or village is very important in Botswana as one always identifies with where they come from and the notion of extended family is very crucial for everyone's survival more especially in times of need. No matter how wealthy or successful someone is in life, they still have to maintain family and extended relations within the community that they come from. This view of citizenship marks a departure from the individualistic and autonomous view of citizenship that is usually fostered within the liberal democratic nations (Van Gunsteren, 1998) and provides an alternative view of citizenship.

#### **RQ4 Citizenship as Self Reliance**

Not all teachers in the study viewed citizenship as self reliance. All of the four male teachers and three female teachers associated citizenship with self reliance as they felt that the time has come for Botswana generally to start reducing their dependency syndrome on the government. They believe that citizens should be empowered and encouraged to develop entrepreneurial skills in order to generate self employment and produce commodities like food in their own country.

##### ***Citizen Empowerment***

Citizen empowerment was listed as one of the important aspects of self reliance. Teachers felt that citizens need to empower themselves through getting the relevant education in order to develop skills that can sustain their livelihoods. Talking about empowerment Mr Tau who appeared very passionate about the issue had this to say:

In the Botswana context we are talking about empowerment, whereby people are taught how they can make a living rather than relying on the government, they are taught self reliance. It is one of the concepts that were brought by a man called Patrick van Rensburg when he brought up the idea of education with production. Whatever they have learnt must go and apply in their everyday life. However his ideas were not taken on board as they believed that he was a member of the opposition party.

Mr Tau further elaborated on the issue of self development by saying that:

Citizens of Botswana should develop themselves. Know what the country expects of them, it looks like most people are looking at the government to do something for them in order to develop. They need to develop themselves academically, find out what their abilities are so that they can bring more money into the country. They need to benchmark with other people who are doing very well, so that when they engage in projects, they have the background of such projects.

Mr Kgabo maintained that education should target people's capabilities and be specialized rather than being mass production.

People need to understand that they need to develop themselves after identifying their abilities. You find that most of us do so many subjects at a go and at the end of the day we benefit nothing out of them. Probably if people are good at engineering, they must do engineering so that at the end of the day we have engineers and other people doing different jobs, we have people doing electrical and other stuff. That is why I was talking education with production...

Ms Kubu weighed in by emphasizing the need for citizens to align their activities to the national principles as they guide citizens on what to aspire for. She said that:

As citizens we should respect the national principles. We should live and abide them because these things are important. The principle of Self Reliance, you will find that Batswana now do not want to do anything; they want to rely on the government hence it becomes very difficult for the government to fend for everyone. People should go out and plough, find jobs, work and help the government to pay for their school fees ...

The findings on citizen empowerment and self reliance provide a synopsis of the teachers concerns on the type of education that is provided in Botswana. They shed light on concerns about education that does not provide students with the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes hence the lack thereof to develop and sustain themselves without over-relying on the government to do everything for them, a situation that they believe should change.

#### ***Entrepreneurship and Education with Production***

In discussing the issue of self reliance and entrepreneurial development, teachers felt that it was high time students were taught skills that will help them engage in small scale self help projects for commercial and subsistence purposes. In discussing the importance of developing entrepreneurial skills among students in order to reduce the citizens reliance on the government Mr Tau had this to say:

I encourage them to discuss issues of personal development whereby they develop themselves, self reliance so that they help in the production of food as suggested by Van Ransburg and his idea of education with Production. For students to be self reliant they need to read, learn how to manage finances and minimize getting loans.

Mr Morubisi emphasized the need for students to be taught to be independent and cautioned people on the overreliance on the government and urged them to be innovative and hard working said:

Yes, self reliance, where they have to be independent and help themselves and not to depend on the government as we are facing this era of recession. As good citizens we should help the government to develop this country by starting projects and creating employment for our fellow citizens rather than thinking that the government can do everything. We should be found to be putting effort into making our lives better through creating self employment and engaging in activities such as in agriculture and tourism. We should learn to be self reliant.

Ms Batho brought up an interesting point as she related self reliance to the global market that:

The world is a small village and people have to develop themselves basing at the abilities so that they can fit in every market not being confined to Botswana only. For this to happen it is important for these kids to have learned leadership skills so that they can be able to make decisions and informed decisions for that matter.

Teachers emphasized the need to equip learners with entrepreneurial skills as way to develop their country by providing self employment, engaging in food production and relieving the government from having to provide everything for its citizens. It is interesting that teachers brought up the idea of education with production which they believe has been ignored for political reasons. The notion of education with production in Botswana founded on the national principle of self reliance is an old one, however it is noteworthy that, 44 years since independence, it is still very shady and has not been aggressively taken on board as primary schools no longer provide vegetables through gardening like they used to in the past. Furthermore, Botswana is still insufficient in food production as it still imports most of its food from the neighbouring countries, more especially, South Africa.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The discussion in this article revealed how citizenship is understood, perceived and interpreted within the Botswana context indicating that Botswana is not immune to the influences of globalization and how it is shaping citizenship and identities imagined or real. There is a clear indication that citizenship in Botswana is hierarchical and affects individuals and communities differently as informed by ethnicity, class and geography. Therefore, citizenship in Botswana is fluid and not homogeneous as one might have thought given the national aspirations of *kagisano* (social harmony), *popagano* (unity) and nation building that are purported to form the cornerstones of citizenship in an emerging nation like Botswana.

These national aspirations and their product of national citizenship founded on a legally bounded citizenship and belonging are facing the greatest challenge in Botswana today as they have been viewed to be exclusionary and discriminatory against certain *Merafie* (ethnic groups). From these findings it can be discerned that citizenship as understood and interpreted by the social studies teachers is complex, not homogeneous and fluid. This is evidenced by the way teachers conceptualize citizenship as national identity, active participation, collective responsibility and self reliance. The study therefore, suggests the following recommendations for consideration by the teachers, teacher educators and policy makers:

1. The fact that Botswana is experiencing globalization resulting in identity politics nationally and also considered part of the global society there is need to conduct research to explore the extent to which teachers are conversant with the notion of global citizenship and whether or not they are taking it on board.
2. A study on an evaluation of social studies' teacher education programs is needed urgently to find out if they have incorporated mega trends on citizenship education as a field of study in an effort to insure that they prepare teachers who can compete globally.
3. Teachers need to be provided with workshop and engage in conferences on citizenship development to insure that they are up to date with information and trends in the social studies area.

### IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This study provides valuable information on citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana and has the potential to influence practice, research and policy formulation on social studies as a subject within which citizenship education is taught. The findings in this study have implications for teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers and the public. The study lays a foundation on citizenship education and provokes teachers to engage in action research in order to solve their day to day theoretical and pedagogical problems. Furthermore, the study is probably the first of its kind at this level of education in Botswana, therefore, forms a baseline for the re-conceptualization of citizenship education and its pedagogy among teachers and student teachers in general.

The study provides empirical evidence that is hoped to challenge teacher educators to revisit their curriculum to see the extent to which it has incorporated mega trends in the area of citizenship and global education if indeed they aim to develop teachers who can compete in a globally interconnected world that they live in today. This is important in light of the fact that the discourse on citizenship education has broadened in scope and focus from national bounded citizenship to global citizenship. The findings of the study reflect serious flaws in the way citizenship is perceived, conceptualized and interpreted among social studies teachers. Therefore, this study serves as a constant reminder to policy makers that democracy is not genetically inherited, it has to be learned, cultivated and practiced for it to prosper (Harber & Serf, 2006) and citizens do not spring from nowhere as they need to be taught desirable attitudes, values, beliefs, skills and knowledge requisite for them to become effective citizens in a democracy. The study further sets the platform for the rethinking and understanding of citizenship education within the Botswana context for the public as whole.

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