

## The Paradox of Teaching Citizenship Education in Botswana Primary Schools

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The major purpose of this study was to explore the social studies teachers' perceptions and understandings of citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana. The study adopted a post colonial lens by using the notions of the pedagogy of imperialism and contrapuntal criticism to interrogate the teachers' perceptions of citizenship education. The study was qualitative in nature 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 perceived teaching about Botswana as citizenship education. The paradox lies in the teachers' view that knowledge about Botswana's cultures, histories and politics constitutes citizenship education. Therefore, the study recommends that citizenship education be re-imagined to take into account both the local and global trends on citizenship education. Furthermore, teachers have to be cognizant of the politics of mainstream academic knowledge and work towards knowledge construction devoid of imperialist ideologies.

Keywords: Citizenship Education, Botswana, Primary Schools, Post Colonial Theory, Knowledge Construction, Teachers' Perceptions, Social Studies.

### Introduction

Botswana is situated in the heart of Southern Africa and is bordered by South Africa to the South, Namibia to the South West, Zambia to the North and Zimbabwe to the North East. Botswana has been referred to in many quarters as a shining example of democracy in Africa and the world, and is viewed as a homogeneous society, a position adopted at independence geared towards national unity rather than diversity (Saugestad, 2001). The population of Botswana is around 1.9 million of which 79% are *Tswana* speaking, 11% are *IKalanga* Speaking, 3% are *Basarwa*, and others including *Bakgalagadi* and the whites make up 7% (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2000; Wagner, 2006; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/bc.html>). The statistics given clearly indicate that there is diversity in the composition of the Botswana society, an issue that has been either ignored or avoided over time.

Botswana's development is guided by the five national principles of Democracy, Development, Unity, Self Reliance and "*Botho*" which translated means "being humane". Botswana has a diverse population which is made up of approximately nineteen ethnic groups (Botswana Primary Active Learning Atlas, 2007). These ethnic groups comprise of *Setswana* (major ethnic groups) and *Non-Setswana* (minor ethnic groups) speaking groups. The diversity in the ethnic groups, cultures and languages calls for attention and the need for a curriculum that has more emphasis on global citizenship education. The idea of a mono-cultural society adopted at independence can no longer be sustained as the nation grows and pertinent issues of diversity and equity become inevitable.

According to Wagner (2006) at independence in 1966, the Government of Botswana declared that its people will be called “*Batswana*” regardless of their ethnicity in view of developing a unified nation with one identity. The decision was largely influenced by the history and practices of the then apartheid regime in South Africa that had torn the ethnic groups in that country apart and followed a policy of segregation that divided people on the basis of race (Wagner, 2006). However, Nyathi-Ramahobo & Chebanne (2004) refute the notion that Botswana is a homogeneous society and contend that Botswana is a multicultural society with more than twenty-six languages spoken in the country. However, the post colonial ideology of national unity has led to the marginalization of the other ethnic groups and their languages resulting in the spread of *Setswana* as a *lingua franca* in the country and subsequent suppression of other languages and cultures by deliberately adopting assimilationist policies that characterize post independent Botswana (Nyathi-Ramahobo & Chebanne, 2004; Maruatona, 2005), a position that can no longer be sustained in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. UNESCO (1995) emphasizing on issues of diversity argues that attempts at ‘nation building’ through making groups homogeneous are neither desirable nor feasible.

In Botswana citizenship education is not taught as a separate curriculum subject but it is embedded within the social studies curriculum. There is consensus in the Social Studies literature that the major goal of social studies is citizenship education (Ajiboye, 2009; Adler & Sim, 2008; Ross, 2006; Hahn, 2001). In some countries social studies and citizenship education are regarded as one thing. Social Studies has been identified as the subject within the school curriculum that is used as a vehicle for developing citizens by equipping students with the requisite knowledge, skills and values, attitudes and dispositions relevant for producing functional and effective citizens in a democracy (Mhlauli, 2010). However, it is not known whether teachers know what citizenship education means and how they perceive it as part of the school curriculum. It is against this backdrop that teachers’ perceptions and understandings of citizenship education need to be interrogated and explored within the Botswana context if indeed social studies is to achieve its major goal of developing citizens who are knowledgeable, skilled and equipped with desirable attitudes and values. The major research question was: What are the social studies teachers’ perceptions of citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana? In asking this question the study sought to explore the teachers’ ideas and understandings of citizenship education within the Botswana context.

### **Purpose of Study**

The major purpose of the study was to explore the social studies teachers’ perceptions and understandings of citizenship education in primary schools within the Botswana context.

### **Research Questions**

The following broad research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the social studies teachers’ perceptions of citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana?
2. What social knowledge should students learn on citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana?
3. What political knowledge should teachers teach to students in primary schools in Botswana?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This article is anchored within post colonial theory and uses the idea of the pedagogy of imperialism (Merryfield, 2001) and the notion of contrapuntal criticism (Said, 1978). In discussing the theoretical ideas of application in social studies classrooms Merryfield (2001) argues that there is need to examine

the pedagogy of imperialism. The contention is that through examining the pedagogy of imperialism students need to inquire about relationships between empire-building and knowledge construction and how the legacy of imperialism shapes mainstream academic knowledge today (Merryfield, 2001). Pedagogy of imperialism allows me to unpack the teachers' subtle understandings and perceptions of teaching citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana as framed within western imperialist frameworks.

Contrapuntal criticism is associated with a musical term for literary criticism (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006). It is suggested that "the European culture needed to be read in relation to its spatial and political relations to empire, as well as in counterpoint to the works that the colonized people themselves produced in response to colonial domination" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006:301). These further query the notion of school knowledge as perceived in educational settings. The authors further provide a justification for contrapuntal knowledge that it was based on the fact that "all cultures are involved in one another, none is single and pure; all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (Said, 1993: p. xxix).

Related to contrapuntal criticism is the call for knowledge construction within post colonial scholarship. Willinsky (1998) emphasizes the issue of knowledge construction and how it impacts students' epistemologies. Knowledge construction holds the view 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" (Merryfield & Duty, 2008, p.85). 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. Post colonial theory becomes an invaluable tool to help us understand the teachers' understanding of citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana since most of the definitions used are drawn from western thoughts and their ways of knowing.

## **Literature Review**

### **Citizenship Education: An International Perspective**

Scholars in the field have asked pertinent questions with regards to knowledge that citizens need to possess within a democracy (Pace & Bixby, 2008; Ross, 2006; Engle & Ochoa, 1988). Such questions revolve around; what basic knowledge does the citizen in a democracy need? (Engle & Ochoa, 1988); what social knowledge is most important? (Ross, 2006); what kind of knowledge is required of citizens? (Pace & Bixby, 2008). In answering these questions scholars in the field provide varied responses as discussed below. The role of social studies has been articulated as being to help students acquire and understand knowledge, develop skills and values necessary in a democracy (Evans, 2006; Ross, 2006; Thornton, 2005). I want to argue that citizens need both mainstream academic knowledge and transformative academic knowledge (Banks, 2008); Democratic enlightenment (Parker, 2008) and Contrapuntal knowledge (Merryfield, 2001; Said, 1978) if they are to become knowledgeable and effective citizens in a democracy who can function in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Banks, 2008; Marri, 2008).

#### *Mainstream Academic Knowledge*

Banks (2008) explains mainstream academic knowledge as that 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" (p. 135). It is the form of knowledge that is seen to reinforce the status quo, perpetuate inequalities and the dominant power relationships in society in that it often carries with it the 'codes of power'. Banks (2008) argues that this type of knowledge puts emphasis on memorizing facts about constitutions and

other legal documents, learning about various branches of government and developing patriotism to the nation-state and is the dominant form of social studies knowledge found in most social studies classrooms in the United States (Banks, 2008). Hahn (2001) on the other hand alludes to the fact that citizens in a democracy should have knowledge about liberty and pluralism, citizen rights and responsibilities and the rule of law. She further asserts that students in a constitutional democracy must abhor demagoguery, discrimination, oppression and military rule.

The observation made by Banks (2008) is supported by the findings of an IEA cross-national study in six western democracies that was conducted by Hahn (2001) among 14-year-old students in the US on democratic understanding. Through student and teachers' interviews and content analysis of textbooks, it was found that these students are likely to learn about: representative democracy, three branches of the government (legislative, judiciary and executive), three levels of government, the political history of the United States. The same results were found in Germany and Italy where students also study about the structure and function of government, political history of democracy, and anti-democratic elements in the country (Hahn, 2001). The study reports reflected that in all the countries that participated in the study, schools and classroom climates were more authoritarian as opposed to being democratic (Hahn, 2001).

Engle & Ochoa (1988) provide a list of ideas on basic knowledge that students need to know as democratic citizens. They argue that first of all, democratic citizens should be able to see their nation, state, and locality in relation to the physical and social relationship to the world and the universe. This is what Merryfield et. al (2008) in arguing for the development of a world minded citizen would refer to as knowledge of global interconnectedness, that citizenship in a global age revolves around interconnectedness to people, issues, world geography, earth science, art, music and world literature so that students can see the relationships across regions and time spaces. They need to understand the environment, resources and population problems that the world is faced with and such understanding must be drawn from the different fields such as geography, geology, astronomy, biology, ecology, anthropology in order to understand the earth.

Secondly they need to understand the history of social institutions such as economic, governmental, legal systems, the family, religious institutions and democratic institutions and how they have come about. Thirdly, they need to understand the nature of cultural differences over time, accommodate other cultures as well. Merryfield & Wilson (2005) see the knowledge and acceptance of different cultures as pivotal to the development of world-minded citizens as it creates an appreciation and awareness of the values and issues of other cultures and communication with people of different languages and nationalities. They see the promotion of intercultural knowledge as essential for citizenship. Fourthly, students need to appreciate the struggle of people throughout and the values of justice, fairness, equality and freedom in a democracy (Engle & Ochoa, 1988).

The ideas discussed by Engle & Ochoa (1988) of what knowledge a democratic citizen must possess are in tandem with the notion of mainstream academic knowledge as articulated by Banks (2008), as practiced, and taught in schools. In a study conducted by Evans (2006) among secondary school teachers in England and Canada on 'educating for citizenship', he found that teachers emphasized knowledge acquisition as one of the learning goals in citizenship education and this involved understanding core concepts like rights and duties, civic duties and being informed about issues related to civic life. However, they varied on which core concepts and public issues were to be given priority. Scholars (Banks, 2008; Evans, 2006; Engle & Ochoa, 1988) agree on the fact that social content knowledge, what Banks refers to as 'mainstream academic knowledge' is necessary but it is insufficient for the development of democratic citizens. Scholars are critical about mainstream academic knowledge arguing that it does not help students understand their multiple and complex identities, how their lives are influenced by globalization and their roles in the global world and does not

emphasize critical thinking skills, decision making, and action (Banks, 2008; Marri, 2008). The issue of national identity has also been raised by Hahn (2001) in her IEA cross-national study where she found that in Hong Kong, the issue of national identity is avoided in school. Whereas, students in focus groups in the United States recalled studying about presidents, military leaders, and civil rights leaders. They spoke with pride about their national heritage. The students showed that they were “knowledgeable about past incidents of oppression and the story they had learned was one of progress and American exceptionalism as they associated being American with freedom” (Hahn, 2001; p.17). This further confirms the notion of mainstream academic knowledge that characterizes social studies classrooms in the United States.

### *Transformative Academic Knowledge*

According to Banks (2008) citizenship education needs to be reimagined and transformed to effectively educate students to be able to function in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order for citizenship to do this, there must be a paradigm shift from mainstream academic knowledge to transformative academic knowledge. However, Marri (2008) contends that teaching for informed citizenship requires teaching that combines both transformative and mainstream academic knowledge. “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 purportedly expands the historical and literary canon. Transformative academic knowledge is seen as content that when presented challenges the traditional interpretations that are seen as universalistic and unrelated to human interests (Marri, 2008). Transformative academic knowledge “enables students to acquire information, skills, and values to challenge inequality within the 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, p.135). In studying transformative academic knowledge one is inclined to conclude that it is similar to Said (1978) notion of contrapuntal knowledge, however, I discuss this idea separately in this paper as shall be seen later.

In conducting a study among skilled social studies teachers on their enactments of an approach called “Classroom-based Multicultural Democratic Education (CMDE)” in some US classrooms, Marri (2008) found that some teachers incorporated transformational knowledge in their curriculum. He uses an example of a teacher who he refers to as Mr Sinclair who when teaching about Rosa Parks made students understand that segregation in the United States was not just a historical event as it is often referred to in history textbooks. By so doing he was trying to debunk and confront some of the stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions that students hold (Merryfield & Wilson, 2005) that Rosa Parks was not just a tired seamstress who decided to just sit in the bus but that students learn that she trained at High-Lander school and her actions were part of a larger plan to fight segregation. This is what Merryfield and Wilson (2005) would refer to as confronting misconceptions and misinformation as part of the decision making process those teachers make. In another study on pre-service teachers’ ideas about the role of multicultural teacher education conducted by Mathews & Dilworth (2008), it was found that even though teachers accept transformative academic knowledge as content knowledge, they are reluctant to incorporate this into their thinking about their classrooms and curriculum. The findings of this study suggest that even when teacher education programs are designed around goals of multicultural citizenship education, transformative social studies pedagogy may not make it into K-12 classrooms (Mathews & Dilworth, 2008). The authors recommend that pre-service teachers be followed into their first year of teaching to see if they apply what they have learned.

The two studies discussed above present two conflicting findings on the state of transformative knowledge in the US schools hence the need for further investigation to establish the current state of affairs in social studies classrooms in the US. Banks (2008) further argues that transformative citizenship education needs to be implemented in schools if students are to attain clarified and reflective

cultural, national, regional and global identifications and understand how these identities are interrelated and constructed. Such knowledge is pivotal for the development of effective citizens in a democracy.

### *Democratic Enlightenment*

Parker (2008) advocates for a form of knowledge which he argues is important in the development of citizens in a democracy. Parker opens this discussion on democratic knowledge by arguing that “democratic citizens need both to *know* democratic things and *do* democratic things” (p.65). Democratic enlightenment according to Parker (2008) refers to “the knowledge of the ideals of democratic living, the ability to discern just from unjust laws and action, the commitment to fight civic inequality, and the ability and commitment to deliberate public policy...” (p.69). The author further argues that democratic enlightenment allows political engagement which is necessary in a democracy. Political engagement involves voting, contacting public officials, deliberating public problems, campaigning and engaging in political protests (Pace, 2008).

Pace (2008) elaborates on democratic enlightenment that it therefore, means understanding and embracing democratic ideals such as freedom and justice for all people. In studying about what is being taught and learned in “discussion –based 12<sup>th</sup> grade government classes”, Pace (2008) found that there is a gap between research and practice in that all the classes observed emphasized acquisition of knowledge. The author further opines that none of the classes took a systematic approach to the discussion of controversial public issues which have been widely advocated for (Hess, 2004). The findings of this study confirm earlier studies by Hahn (2001) who found that controversial issues are infrequently discussed in classes yet teachers say that they discuss them.

From the discussion in this section, it can be argued that democratic enlightenment is a prerequisite for political engagement and both of them work in tandem to produce political enlightenment. Parker in advocating for democratic enlightenment is critical about the conservative and progressive models of citizenship. Even though he supports the progressive aim of developing intellectually able citizens who participate directly in political affairs as opposed to the conservative aim of transmitting knowledge and values to future voters, he argues that both camps are ignorant of critical issues related to social and cultural diversity and inequality (Pace, 2008).

### **Citizenship Education: An African Perspective**

African scholars have argued that citizenship education has been part and parcel of the total education of the young in inducting them into the society through the teaching of good citizenship, civic responsibility and human relationships of the African way of life (Mafela & Mgadla, 2000; Preece & Mosweunyane, 2004). Therefore, the production of socially responsible and culturally acceptable members of the society was fostered through a curriculum that comprised knowledge of social values, norms, etiquette and morality (Ali, 2008; Adeyemi, 2000; Asimeng-Boahene, 2000; Otiende & Oanda, 2000). Scholars further contend that citizenship education has evolved through three phases: the pre-colonial, colonial and post independent eras within African societies of which Botswana is a member (Adeyemi, 2000; Asimemeng-Boahene, 2000).

#### *Pre-Colonial Era*

Citizenship education in past African societies was defined as “an integration of all history, culture, values, and beliefs, in short, the customs of the family, community, and ethnic group” (Department of curriculum development and evaluation, 1990). During the pre-colonial era citizenship education was practiced in two ways; through the informal and formal ways where children were socialized

into the norms, traditions and cultures of their communities by the elderly. Children did not have to go to school to learn to be citizens (Adeyemi, 2000). Informally, young people learned aspects of their respective societies through contact and association with the older members of the community as well as through examples and reprimand (Mafela & Mgadla, 2000). For example Boys learned the skills to carry out duties in their respective communities through herding calves, goats and sheep before graduating to herd cattle while girls learned by imitation and associating with the womenfolk such as mothers, aunts and sisters. Mafela & Mgadla (2000) further contend that this situation was not peculiar to Botswana but was a common feature among African societies.

Another informal method of educating citizens identified was that of teaching mores and values through both examples and reprimand. Young people learned citizenship through lullabies, riddles, proverbs, folklores, oral literature and myths (Adeyemi, 2000; Asimeng Boahene, 2000; Mafela & Mgadla, 2000; Preece & Mosweunyane, 2004). A child belonged to the community and any parent could discipline a child if they saw him/her doing anything perceived to be against the norms of the society (Adeyemi, 2000; Ali, 2008). These informal ways of education provided a platform through which the youth were able to learn about the expectations and obligations of their societies.

In Botswana one distinct formal way of citizenship education was practiced through initiation ceremonies. Mafela & Mgadla (2000) are quick to defend their position that initiation ceremonies were formal in that: “in their operations they had formal and trained instructors, an established time span, place and content of instruction, which was mostly oral” (p. 2). During these ceremonies young people learned about the laws governing their society and other responsibilities that ranged from family to national duties (Mafela & Mgadla, 2000). These initiation ceremonies were conducted through traditional initiation schools known as *Bogwera* and *Bojale*.

*Bogwera* was for young men who when they reached puberty were taken for training and initiation into manhood, they learned various rules of conduct, ethnic songs of war and triumph as well as the necessary skills in the respective fields to meet the demands of society. *Bojale* was for young women, who were also taken for training to be initiated into womanhood and how to take care of a family (Mafela & Mgadla, 2000). Preece & Mosweunyane (2004) further remind us that this form of cultural knowledge was very rich and was shared from one generation to another. That cultural knowledge is not static and often reflect and represent the connectedness of spirituality centered wisdom and cultural practices that are embedded within the African indigenous knowledge systems. The most important thing about citizenship education in the Tswana traditional society was aimed at communal achievement where the “good” citizen’s goal was to fit into and share the benefits of the society (Department of curriculum development and evaluation, 1990).

### *Colonial Era*

Asimeng-Boahene (2000) contends that citizenship education took a different turn during the colonial period as it introduced the type of formal education that prepared individuals for a higher obligation and loyalty beyond the family, village, ethnic group and the nation. Thus, the colonial phase of citizenship education was tailored along the metropolitan model and was not adapted to the African environment. This citizenship education fostered a concern for and an obligation toward individual achievement and other values that accompanied western civilization (Department of curriculum development and evaluation, 1990). Therefore, citizenship education was directed at western values and beliefs as dictated by the colonial administration and missionaries.

Therefore, colonial citizenship education was not intended to foster nation building but was rather meant to encourage a belief in the European interpretation of the western world (Asimeng-Boahene, 2000; Ali, 2008; Ali, Ellis & Sizha, 2005). The colonial curriculum required students to learn such topics as the kings, queens, princes and princesses of Britain, River Thames, the Coal of New

Castle and the British Isles (Adeyemi, 2008). Mautle (2000) shares the same sentiments as the aforementioned authors as he contends that colonial education in Botswana, then called Bechuanaland Protectorate, was foreign and had no relevance to the learners' local environment.

### *Post-Colonial Era*

Citizenship education is not taught as an independent subject but it is rather infused in the social studies curriculum. It is the social studies curriculum that is entrusted with citizenship education as it has to inculcate necessary skills, values, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for developing responsible citizens (Ajiboye, 2008). The Botswana social studies is modeled around both the traditional village integrated citizenship education and the demands of a modern nation. Therefore, indicating that the curriculum is in agreement with the principles of social studies around the world as “*citizenship education starting with a country's own cultural identity, integration of subject content, and the development of decision-making skills*” (Department of curriculum development and evaluation, 1990, p. 7).

Citizenship education is a multi-faceted concept; it is fairly new within the Botswana primary school curriculum as it has existed for approximately forty-one years (Ajiboye, 2008). Its meaning is debatable and as such it is still not clear on what it is supposed to cover (Mautle, 2000). Citizenship education after independence focused on what it means to be a citizen of Botswana, that is, the experience of the traditional family, ethnic group, and the nation. This new citizenship education required students to discuss the nation's problems, effects of the nation's development and change on itself and other nations (Department of curriculum development and evaluation, 1990). Citizenship education is defined as “educating children from childhood to become clear thinking and enlightened citizens who can participate in decisions concerning society. Generally, it deals with components of rights, duties, participation and identity” (Ajiboye, 2008, p. 127).

However, the current approach to citizenship education in most African countries of which Botswana is part of, draws largely from the position articulated by the United States National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) that social studies should focus on helping young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally varied, democratic society in an increasingly interdependent world around the American (NCSS, 2001).

### **Research Methodology**

The study was qualitative in its approach and employed the naturalistic inquiry paradigm. Naturalistic inquiry is said to demand a natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Naturalistic 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 (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). 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 *Maretlweng* 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 perceptions and understandings on citizenship education; 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 education and to listen to their 'normal' conversations and dialogues. 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.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study had its limitations. The research was prone to the researcher's cultural biases as I am a Motswana and teacher educator within Botswana. The use of multi-site posed some challenges as I could not be in all the schools at the same time. This inability to be in all schools at the same time affected my data collection at times. For instance, during the commonwealth day celebrations I was unable to observe what was happening in all the schools due to time constraints and the distance between the schools. The school time-table also provided some challenges as it was not flexible enough due to the fact that it was centralized and as such social studies was taught at the same time in all the schools that participated. This posed some challenges as it was often difficult for me to hop from one school to the other.

The introduction of subject specialization also posed problems for teachers as it was confusing for them and they were unable to afford any flexibility with the time-table or topics taught which often affected our schedules for interviews and observations. I observed teachers in their classrooms teaching twice, at the beginning and towards the end of the study and this on its own did not allow me the opportunity to observe various lessons in session in order to get clear insights of the phenomena under study. My interviews with the teachers were also conducted at break time, lunch time or after school, and as such were more often rushed because the teachers were often in a hurry to do some other things

or tired after a long day of teaching. At times I had to reschedule the interviews due to the teachers' request citing burnout.

### **Findings and Discussions**

The findings under this study indicate a complex scenario where paradoxically, teachers perceive teaching about Botswana as citizenship education. The teachers real names were not used for this study instead pseudonyms (*Nkwe, Kabo, Kgabo, Kubu, Morubisi, Batho, Lorato, Neo, Mpho, Thato and Tau*) were used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. To these teachers, citizenship education revolves around teaching students about Botswana such that they are conversant with their cultures and country, Botswana. There was consensus among the teachers that citizenship education is the type of education that prepares an individual to be a real *Motswana* (citizen of Botswana). Teachers perceive citizenship education as having knowledge about the culture of the different ethnic groups, knowledge about the country and political or democratic issues in the country. These findings are not surprising given the history of African nations and colonialism. It should be borne in mind that when African nations of which Botswana is a part decolonized, their first project was nation building and citizenship development, and education was viewed as the key to attaining such national aspirations. With nation building and the development of good citizens came numerous educational reforms among them were the provision of basic education, promulgation of educational policies and Africanization of the social studies curriculum which was meant to align the curriculum to the needs and aspirations of the African people (Mhlauli, 2010) and in this case Botswana (citizens of Botswana). The findings are discussed below according to the research questions (RQs).

#### **RQ 1: Teachers' Perceptions of Citizenship Education**

In an interview with the teachers, I asked them to define citizenship education and what follows is an excerpt of what some of the teachers said. In responding to the question Ms Kabo had this to say:

Citizenship education includes teaching pupils about the cultures in Botswana, other peoples' cultures, their values- they learn about the tribes within the country i.e. *Baherero, Bangwato* and many others; learning about differences among different ethnic groups. I believe in developing citizens who have good moral values, citizens who believe in who they are and are proud of their own culture and nation. I believe in producing informed citizens. An informed citizen is a citizen who will be able to make his or her decisions, is knowledgeable about his country and what is going on around him/her. Such a citizen must respect the culture, the customs and the beliefs of his/ her country.

Ms Batho defined citizenship education in terms of teaching citizens about their country and its people and this is what she had to say:

Citizenship education in the Botswana context is education that teaches its citizens about their country, the governance, the constitution, the people and what is expected of them, Some initiatives, its relationship with other countries, its culture and even though we have different cultures, there is the umbrella culture. I would say so because as a *Motswana* you have to know the ethnic groups that are in your country, their values, their norms their cultural practices and their modern practices, the way they associate, their

heritage, their shelter and by so doing you will begin to have a clear picture of a real Motswana somebody.

Ms Lorato who is a strong advocate of culture and cultural heritage saw citizenship as education that teaches learners about their history, heritage and identity with an emphasis on their ethnic groups. An excerpt from her interview follows below:

Citizenship Education teaches the learners about who they are, where they come from and what their country aspires for. It teaches learners to be proud of their culture and promote it. Culture is an important aspect of our lives and makes us who we are. Citizenship education teaches children about their identity and to be real Batswana. We should let our kids to know their culture, the values and norms of the ethnic group they come from. They should also be taught to tolerate other people's opinions. They should be taught the Setswana proverbs used in their culture because they are the ones that mould us to know who we are and be aware of other peoples thinking and it will prepare us to be pure Batswana.

Mr Tau saw citizenship education as developing an individual into becoming a proud Motswana and had this to say:

Citizenship Education is that curriculum that allows the individual to understand how the people around him live, his culture, norms, values and customs that make him to be a proud Motswana. It teaches students to understand that they do not live in isolation but are part of a group and as such should have a common understanding. Democracy and citizenship cannot exist in isolation.

Teachers not only saw citizenship education being aimed at the development of a "Real Motswana" but also believed that it should equip learners with knowledge about their culture, country and political issues in the country. This among other things augments the notion of Africanizing the curriculum in order to align it to the needs of the people it serves (Mhlauli, 2010).

## **RQ 2: Social Knowledge that Students' should learn**

Teachers believed that citizenship education should teach children about their indigenous cultures, the history of their cultures and issues of unity and cultural diversity. Knowledge about their culture was specifically understood to mean knowing about the cultures, values, norms and history of the different ethnic groups in the country.

### *Cultures, Values, Norms and history of different Ethnic Groups*

All the teachers felt that students should know who they are first before learning about other people and this meant understanding and having knowledge of their own culture and that of the other different ethnic groups in the country. There was emphasis on learning also on learning *Setswana* culture which is embracive of other cultures through the use of proverbs. It should be understood that oral traditions like proverbs are essential elements of indigenous knowledge systems and wisdom as they are viewed as a vehicle for transmitting shared cultural knowledge from one generation to the other. However, it is also important to note that these oral traditions have been impacted heavily by both religion and education imported from Europe as they seem to be barbaric and outdated. Speaking about the importance of teaching students about their culture Ms Lorato had this to say:

We should let our kids to know their culture, the values and norms of the ethnic group they come from. They should also be taught to tolerate other people's opinions. They should be taught the Setswana proverbs used in their culture because they are the ones that mould us to know who we are and be aware of other peoples thinking and it will prepare us to be tolerant people.

Mr Nkwe who comes from one of the so called 'minor' ethnic groups felt that it was important that he knows about his own culture and said:

Let them know their culture, values, norms, their traditions, beliefs as a group. The group that they belong to as a *Nkalanga, Mongwato, Motswapong*, like me as a *Kalanga*, I should understand where I am coming from first before I can become a *Motswana*.

Mr Morubisi who comes from one of the so called 'major' ethnic groups believed that as a *Motswana* you need to have knowledge of the other ethnic groups in the country and said:

...because as a *Motswana* you have to know the ethnic groups that are in your country, their values, their norms their cultural practices and their modern practices, the way they associate, their heritage, their shelter and by so doing you will begin to have a clear picture of a *Motswana* somebody.

It is quite interesting that all the teachers cited above do agree that students need to have knowledge about "their" culture yet they differ in terms of "whose" culture they referred to as "their" culture. Ms Lorato and Mr Nkwe who belong to the so called 'marginalized' ethnic groups believe that students should learn about their ethnic group culture first before learning about the *Tswana* culture in general therefore, arguing for the politics of difference and identity, which is a clear departure from hegemonic ideas of national identity. Whereas, Mr Morubisi who belongs to one of the so called 'principal' tribes (major ethnic groups) believes that to be a real *Motswana* you should have knowledge about the ethnic groups in the country but does not emphasize knowledge about your own ethnic group first primarily because theirs is the mainstream culture.

These findings basically show the salient tensions between the so called "minor" and "major" ethnic groups in Botswana. Teachers from the marginalized groups felt that it was important for students to learn about their ethnic groups' culture whereas those from the dominant groups felt that students should learn mainstream culture first and did not see anything wrong in that. These issues need to be addressed before they grow and get out of hand and a national conversation on issues of ethnicity and tribalism needs to be initiated.

#### *History of their Cultures*

Two teachers talked about the need to teach children about their culture, emphasizing the importance of history in understanding their own cultures. Ms Neo elaborately spoke to the idea of teaching children about their origins and history of their culture and had this to say:

I think the most important thing that our kids have to know is our culture. So that they can know who they are, where they come from and other things they need to know to better their culture. I think culture is very important they should learn the histo-

ries of their culture, even if they get more educated they should still respect their culture. Our first president once said “A nation without a culture is a lost nation”. These kids really, in the curriculum I think most of the topics should be on culture- they should teach them up to secondary but at all levels of education students have to be taught their culture and how it got to be where it is today.

Mr Kgabo also expressed his views on equipping learners with knowledge about the history of their culture and said:

We have to teach them about our culture, we have to let them know as to where we are from, the challenges that we came across, how we have been able to overcome them. Learning about the history of their cultures is important as it will really make them proud of who they are. They will also be able to understand why things are the way they are because culture is dynamic.

Though not many teachers spoke about the significance of history, the findings of this study reveal some kind of renaissance on the teachers’ views on teaching children about their culture and its history. This is the history that the same religion and education imported from Europe worked to erase and destroy making *Batswana* to believe that they did not have a history prior to their contact with Europeans.

#### *Unity and Cultural Diversity*

Some teachers felt that it was important to promote unity however; they believed that there should also be recognition of diversity. The teachers argued for the politics of difference because since independence Botswana has followed assimilationist policies that advocated for unity rather than diversity. Though the Botswana Government’s intentions of promoting unity and downplaying diversity were geared towards nation building they seem to have marginalized the other members of the society. Speaking about the importance of teaching students about different cultures Ms Mpho said that:

Teach them about their culture more especially the different cultures since Botswana is a multicultural and pluralistic society. They need to learn that they have to be united and the same time they are different. Since they are different they need to learn to tolerate each other’s cultures. Other countries have gone to war because of lack of respect of other cultures. They need to be taught a sense of belonging to know and understand that though they are all Botswana they are different and need to know what they can do for their country.

Mr Kgabo emphasized the need to understand differences and had this to say:

They should learn cultures of different people because today we are living in a pluralistic society that encompasses different ethnicities that are different from where the child comes from. Accept and tolerate the differences they see in other people- when they know and accept all these dynamics, they will be good ambassadors of this country outside.

Mr Tau spoke on the need to appreciate and maintain our differences and argued that:

They should be knowledgeable in terms of how cultural diversification is important. Citizenship and democratic education are important to avoid unplanned wars or civil wars. We have to maintain our democracy because it binds us since we have different ethnic groups such as *Bakalanga*, *Bakgatla* and so on. Though we are united we also have to maintain our differences

The findings in this category reflect a paradigm shift on issues of nationality and identity. The three teachers who spoke about issues of unity and diversity all belong to the so called “minor” ethnic groups and seem to contend that though unity is important, diversity is as well crucial. These findings signify a clear departure from the notion of being “*Batswana* (nationality) of Botswana (country)” to being “*A Kalanga (Ethnic group) or Motswapong (Ethnic group) of Botswana*”. This is an interesting development as people are beginning to show some doubts and insecurities towards nation building and query its twin paradigms of national identity and national bounded citizenship.

### **Knowledge about their Country**

Some of the teachers felt that there is need for citizens in a democracy to possess knowledge about their country hence they associated being knowledgeable with ‘good’ citizenship. They believe that students in Botswana should be taught about their country and some of what featured in their interviews is that students need to learn about the physical environment, their government, and political issues hence they provided some justifications of why they felt that was important.

#### *Physical Environment*

Two teachers talked about the importance of teaching students about the physical environment and argued that students need to have geographical knowledge of their country. They associated knowledge about their country with good citizenship. Mr Nkwe who is very passionate about environmental issues had this to say:

They (citizens) should have basic knowledge about their environment if we really want to develop knowledgeable citizens. This means that students have to be taught about the physical features in the country such as rivers, hills, plateaus and many others. They have to know about the natural resources in their country so that when someone asks them about their country they should be able to talk about it.

Mr Morubisi talked about knowledge about natural resources and had this to say:

I think when you talk about our country Botswana, things that happen in our country especially those natural resources, taking students to game reserves to view animals. They should be taught what is happening in their country, I think that is the main idea. Students have to be informed about their country in order for them to be good citizens.

It is surprising that the teachers who talked about having knowledge about the physical environment were both male and only two teachers spoke about the issue. The findings in this category raise questions on teachers knowledge of what really makes up the content of citizenship.

#### *Their Government and how it Works*

Some teachers advocated for the need to teach students about their government and how it works. They felt that good citizens need to know about their constitution, branches of the government and channels of communication. They believe that knowing about the government will help students understand their country better. Supporting this issue Ms Kubu had this to say:

I think citizens should know what is happening around them, in the country and their communities. They should have knowledge about governance, procedures, and should have knowledge about their constitution. They should know the channels of communication.

Mr Kgabo talked about knowledge of the branches of the government and said that:

They should have knowledge on how their country should be run, how different activities are run for example, government ministries, legislature and the judiciary. Students need to know how these arms of government operate in order to understand their country.

Ms Neo briefly spoke about the constitution and had this to say:

Know their country they should know their country, respect it and they should follow what the constitution ask them to do and abide by it.

Teachers appeared to associate knowledge about the government with abiding by the constitution and respecting it. The findings in this category are not surprising in that a 'good' citizen in Botswana is one who among others is law abiding, patriotic and obedient and any sense of a dissenting view is seen as arrogance (Mhlauli,2010).

### **RQ 3: Political Knowledge that Should be Taught**

Most of the teachers felt that for Botswana to maintain its peace and stability democratic knowledge and political issues should be taught in schools. They attributed the peace and stability that is reigning in the country on knowledge of political issues more especially the practice of democracy. Under political knowledge special emphasis was put on the need to teach children about democracy and human rights.

#### *Learning about Democracy*

There was consensus among most of the teachers that students need to have democratic knowledge. They felt that democratic knowledge was important in sustaining and maintaining democracy, peace and stability in the country. The findings in this category should be understood within the realities and context of Botswana that, Botswana is regarded as a liberal democracy and has held elections after every 5 years since independence in 1966 and there has been peaceful transitions of the government and presidency ever since. However, teachers are unaware that democracy as conceptualized and taught in schools is drawn from western ideologies hence negating the essence of national identity and developing a real *Motswana* as espoused earlier. This may explain why teachers elaborately justified the need for students to be taught democracy and Ms Mpho mentioned that:

They (students) should possess democratic knowledge. They should take part in the affairs of the nation and their communities. In democratic knowledge they need to know the process of elections, voting choosing leaders and participating in every aspect pertaining to the development of their communities and country at large.

In their focus groups, Mr Tau shared similar sentiments that democracy needs to be taught and argued that not much is being done to teach children about democracy in schools and had this to say:

The most important thing that has to be done I think is to teach our children about democracy at an early stage. I think not much has been done to teach democracy in schools. I want our children to live democracy- That is talking, eating, dreaming and sleeping democracy- by so doing we will be able to maintain our democracy because without democracy there is no peace.

During focus groups, some teachers associated democracy with elections and peace in the country and advanced reasons why they believe democracy should be taught and among them Ms Neo reiterated that:

Students should be conversant with political knowledge such as elections. They should understand the importance of politics- like why do we have politics? It is Important to have knowledge on politics as they can in future be able to choose leaders fairly and equally. I think the way we do things, it shows that democracy is there, it starts from our roots even now the way Mmm... from the elderly people the way they talk, the way they address other people it shows that there is democracy, there is peace in our country. Botswana is a peaceful country, if there was no democracy, Botswana would not be a peaceful country.

Ms Mpho associated democracy with elections, consultation and peace that prevails in the country and said:

Especially from my understanding we Batswana we believe that when we talk of democracy, we talk of free elections, people are free to vote their own parties, people are free to come up with their own views about anything that is happening in their country and they are listen to, whether they query or they do something they are listen to. The government listens to them; they attend meetings without being disturbed.

In their focus group all the teachers attributed the peace and stability that prevails in the country on the way democracy is practiced in Botswana through the *kgotla* system. This is what Mr Nkwe said:

There are free elections and ever since independence, there have been no fights or conflicts over elections. If there is a conflict or misunderstanding, it is settled though negotiations that is why it is a shining star in Africa. People in Botswana are free to elect the leaders they want during elections without being forced. We negotiate if there is something. In some African countries their governments are controlled by their army... The other thing that promotes democracy is through *Kgotla (community meeting place)* meetings where the government goes out and sells its policies to people and people suggest better ways of developing the country. We also see councilors from the local government talking about development of their villages. People are consulted on issues relating to their villages through representatives like councilors. There is peace and stability which attracts tourists and investments.

Ms Thato mentioned this during focus group discussions:

Botswana is democratic country because the government is elected by the people and most of the policies are implemented after consultation, people have been consulted through *kgotla* meetings and political rallies, they have a say. People have the freedom to express their views, they are free to choose the political party that they want to join and there are free to speak their own languages, free to practice their own cultures, free to dress according to their culture/religion.

Ms Batho augmented the previous speakers' views by saying:

The political system; Since independence Botswana holds elections every 5 years - and people are free to elect who they want and follow political parties of their choice. We don't have wars like other countries and the crime rate is low as well. There is tolerance. We are also a society that is rich in culture through *kgotla* system which strengthens our democracy. People are consulted in *kgotla* meetings to reach a consensus. This has promoted the notion of democracy.

The findings in this category clearly indicate the teachers' perceptions, understandings and interpretations of democracy. There seem to be a departure from democracy being viewed from a western perspective to the practice of democracy that combines both the western and traditional types of democracy in principle. Though this combination of the western and traditional democracy is mentioned, in practice, officially and publicly it is denied as democracy within the school curriculum is defined only according to the western traditions which is in contrast with the political reality within which the school is located (Mhlauli, 2010). This creates problems for teachers who have to make learning meaningful to the learners and relate what they learn to their everyday life experiences. These findings clearly indicate that it is time that alternative ways of knowing, meanings and knowledge construction are examined, recognized and legitimized.

### *Human Rights*

Only one teacher talked about the relationship between human rights and democracy. The teacher felt that students need to be taught about democracy as it exposes them to issues of equality and human rights. Mr Kgabo had this to say about equality, human rights and democracy:

I want to say that it is important to teach about democracy and politics because it helps learners to know about what is happening around the world, it teaches about issues of equality and human rights. So, young citizens of Botswana need to learn about these things if we want to maintain the peace and stability that we are enjoying right now.

It is quite alarming that only one teacher mentioned about human rights and equality. There was no mention on issues of social justice. Given the history of the country on issues of ethnicity and tribalism, one would have expected teachers to weigh in on inequality, inequity and social justice. The current surge on the politics of difference experienced in Botswana should have been a learning curve for teachers to begin to shift emphasis from the traditional citizenship education based on liberal thinking to that which is critical and advocating for equity and social justice.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings in the study have revealed enormous paradoxes on citizenship education in the primary schools that participated in the study. Citizenship education is a complex concept and social studies teachers need to understand what it means in order for them to be able to provide citizenship education that is relevant to the needs of the society it serves. There is clear evidence that citizenship education is not well understood and the way it is taught and practiced in schools raises more questions than answers. Based on these findings the major recommendation is that;

- Citizenship education in primary schools in Botswana needs to be re-imagined and re-conceptualized such that it becomes meaningful to both the teachers and the recipients of such an education.
- Teachers need to be given in-service training on citizenship education to keep abreast with global trends in this area.
- Teacher education needs to incorporate emerging issues in their teaching such as global education and global citizenship education.
- Social studies should be accorded the status it deserves within the school curriculum given the mammoth task of citizenship education that it is entrusted with.

### **Implications for Research and Practice**

This study provides 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 among African nations in general. 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 and collaborative research in order to enhance their knowledge and pedagogical base. Furthermore, the study is probably the first of its kind at this level of education in Botswana, therefore, forms a baseline for the re-thinking of citizenship education among teachers and student teachers as a whole.

The study provides empirical evidence that is intended to challenge teacher educators worldwide to revisit their curriculum to see the extent to which they 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 citizenship education to global citizenship education. The findings of the study reflect serious flaws in the way citizenship education is perceived among social studies teachers and calls for a re-examination of citizenship education as understood and practiced in various contexts. The study further sets the platform for the re-imagination of citizenship education within the Botswana context and the public as whole.

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