THE QUEST FOR DEEP DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION: SCHOOLS AS
DEMOCRATIC SPACES IN THE POST - COLONIAL BOTSWANA

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This dissertation entitled
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ABSTRACT

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THE QUEST FOR DEEP DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION: SCHOOLS AS DEMOCRATIC SPACES IN THE POST - COLONIAL BOTSWANA (261 pp.)

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This study investigates the extent to which the concept of democracy is taught and practiced in schools in the post-colonial Botswana taking into account Botswana educational philosophy of Education for Kagisano. The project also explores how Botswana’s education system has been affected by the colonial legacy, which apparently did not foster teaching about democratic participation.

The research uses the qualitative research methods; interviewing, participant - observation and document analysis to solicit data on education and democracy. It uses the theoretical framework of deep democracy, which values the idea that students as citizens, should be allowed to realize their full potential through interconnectedness, which allows everyone to appreciate and respect the diverse hearts and minds. Students, educators, administrators and policymakers in Botswana were interviewed.

The study reveals that there is work to be done in Botswana in order to ascertain that schools become spheres for democratic possibilities that can produce informed citizens who can be of service to their families, communities and the entire nation at large by advancing democratic aspirations. This study notes that it is through deep democratic practice that matters to do with
participation, equity, gender imbalances, multiculturalism, social justice, power and empowerment can better be addressed in Botswana for the welfare of all. It brings different insights on politics of education and also uniquely adds to the literature of social sciences especially on African Cultural Studies, which is relatively a new field in Botswana, hence, the scarcity of its literature. The research also sets a departure point for other scholars to pursue further research in the field of educational politics.

Approved:

William S. Howard

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the Jotia family, especially my wife, Winnie and my daughters, Wedu and Unaswi. The commitment, support, tolerance and love that you showed during my academic journey is truly unspeakable. I am forever proud of you because you provided a shoulder to lean on when I really needed one during my studies and stay in the USA. Life challenges came my way during my studies and you were always my anchor. I therefore remain gratefully indebted to you all.
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CHAPTER 1

Education, Democracy and Kagisano (social harmony) after Colonialism

Introduction

Colonial rule in Africa in general and in Botswana in particular, left a history of unwavering commitment to independence, and many Batswana viewed democracy as the path to independence. Independence in Africa, after all, was about people’s struggle to claim their own space, and their right to name the world for themselves, rather than be named through the color-tinted glass (the eyes) of the Europeans (Wa Thiongo, 1993).

Colonial rule left most of Africa a history of intense and lawless political competition amidst an ideological void and rising tide of disenchantment with the expectation of a better life (Ake, 1996, p.6). As such, those countries that achieved independence, such as Botswana, prioritized the building of a democratic nation whose objectives were to give birth to the development of a socially, economically and politically independent state. At independence, the political environment of the state was profoundly hostile to development in many respects. Education was therefore seen as the vehicle for development.

Education is close to the center of any society’s life and concerns, being intimately involved with its culture and values, its political system and its economic arrangements. For this reason a fundamental review of education cannot simply concern itself with the internal working of the school and such matters as teacher’s qualifications, the school syllabus or
examination results, important as these matters are. One must look more broadly at the role of education in society and its potential contribution to social welfare and national development. (Report of the National Commission on Education (NCE), 1977, p.9).

In the case of Botswana, \textit{Education for Kagisano} (social harmony) was structured by the then government of President Seretse Khama with the hope that it will foster the development of a self-reliant, united and democratic country.

Western education that was imposed on Africans during the colonial era left the continent in a crisis and educationally underdeveloped. Botswana was not an exception, since even today the educational direction that it is following is highly influenced by its colonial history. The indigenous educational practices that were better known for the production of a productive Setswana culture and identity have been tainted. Although without formal education institutions, traditional African education successfully transmitted cultural values from one generation to the other. It focused on producing responsible youth who can play a role in society as well as enforcing the idea that there can be no education without culture and vice versa. According to Bassey (1999) “traditional education in Africa...was a cultural action directed at creating attitudes and habits considered necessary for participating and intervention in ones historical process” (p.16). Therefore colonization tainted African education and culture by teaching against it and promoting Western values.
Colonialism successfully eradicated African education and education was used by Western countries to eliminate African traditions and leave the continent submerged in under-development. Tafa (in Hermans and Nteta, 1994) posits that colonialism negatively affected Botswana’s education system and that it was not about development, rather it was about underdevelopment (p.429). On the basis of this assertion, it could be argued that colonialism did not only affect African education but also contributed to serious socio-economic and political problems at the expense of democracy, peace, freedom and justice (Ake, 1996).

As mentioned above, Botswana had its education shaped and influenced by institutions and culture of the colonial powers, which went on to influence the socio-economic and political life of her people. The arrival of the colonizers in Botswana could be termed as a moment which saw Botswana live in a situation where its traditions have been eroded to a degree where the debris of the past culture seem to be the only thing left today. People were intellectually, physically and emotionally exploited by being compelled to follow European traditions engraved in the education system. Their traditional social structures as well as the education system were affected (Tlou and Campbell, 1994).

The social democracy that Batswana enjoyed seems to have come to a historic end in 1885 when the missionaries (Christians) landed in the country. Prior to that, Batswana's “education for humanity” taught and addressed issues that relate to and reflect the social values of Botswana and not those of the colonial masters. People learned by living and doing and above all, worked
together with the welfare of the entire society at heart rather than promoting individualism. Every member of a society was engaged in participatory education through ceremonies such as the harvest season, rituals, cultural demonstrations, weddings and initiation schools.

From 1885 to 1965, Botswana was under the British rule and even after independence, many scholars contend that colonialism still affect this country since it has not absolutely cut socio-economic and political ties with Britain. Botswana became independent in 1966 as one of the poorest countries in the world. Over half of its budget was financed by grants from Great Britain, about two-thirds of its workers had jobs in South Africa, and drought had killed about a third of its cattle herd, which was then Botswana’s only significant asset other than its extraordinary people (Stedman, 1993).

Botswana

Botswana is a Southern African nation that is landlocked. It shares borders with Zambia, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Its size is about 584,000 square kilometers, which is about same size as France. It has a young population of about 2 million people. It has never been to war and it has managed for almost four decades to maintain a peaceful society. It is for this reason that it is popularly known as Africa’s miracle story of a shining democracy. Samatar (1999) adds, in sharp contrast to the failures and disappointments that cloud the rest of Africa, that Botswana’s thirty years of independence has been a time of hope, optimism, and progress (p.1).
On a comparative note, Botswana is an example of a successful democratic country given that authoritarian dictatorships lead most of the continent’s countries. Since 1966, Botswana has consistently managed to maintain its democratic commitment by ascertaining that elections are held after every five years, which is currently the yardstick for measuring the democratic nature of the state in Africa (du Toit, 1995). Molomo & Mokopakgosi (1991) observe that the case of Botswana has its own limitations, but by comparison, it represents the opposite of the common practices in Africa. It has strived to strengthen its democratic institutions, when the popular trend in Africa has been to undermine them (p.1).

Background of the Study

Botswana may have its own limitations, strengths and weaknesses in its governance, but by comparison as stated earlier, it has strived to maintain its democratic institutions whereas in other African countries, socio-economic and political chaos has reigned persistently. Since decolonization, most African countries have failed to honor democratic constitutions whereas Botswana has remained focused in cherishing democratic ideals.

The former president of Botswana (1980-1997), Sir Ketumile Masire, could be understood to be sharing the same viewpoint when reflecting that Botswana has become widely regarded as a success story. It is one of the countries in which multi-party parliamentary democracy has flourished; human rights and the
rule of law have been respected; good governance has been practiced; and the economy has been consistently well managed (in Fawcus, 2000, p. ix).

Botswana has over the past thirty years marshaled a record where democratic norms set by the constitution have been legally and politically observed. In a continent where formal democratic structures and processes have been wanting, she has been described as a flagship of democratic practice (Molomo and Mokopakgosi, 1991, p.13).

At independence, Botswana was educationally crippled since schools were not even achieving their ‘narrow’ academic achievements as evidenced by very low achievements tests and higher outputs of school leavers who could not read (NCE, 1977, p.19). It is for this reason that the government of Sir Seretse Khama decided to come up with an educational policy that would meet the needs of Batswana and help build a democratic society (NCE, 1977). That form of education was supposed to promote social harmony amongst the people.

Therefore, in 1977, the government came up with an education model known as Education for Kagisano and it is the same model that has remained until today. Hermans and Nteta (1993, p.425) reflect that at independence in 1966, Botswana’s education was in a sorry state indeed and that the government was compelled to make educational reform a first priority (p.425). The colonial education was chiefly meant for the few and had interest in producing “puppets” of the British government as well as laborers who were to work for the so-called masters for no pay.
Carnoy (1974) indicates that schools in Africa were intended to convert Africans from barbarians into civilized humans, to prepare them to fill the role of agricultural producers instead of slaves in the European-run world economic system. This was a European decision - Africans could only accept it or not. Ultimately, even the choice of accepting European values and norms was taken away from them (p.81).

That being as it may, in Botswana, it is believed that it is through *Education for Kagisano* that *Batswana* managed to build a strong democracy to date despite the colonial setbacks. The goal of this study therefore, was to assess the extent to which *Education for Kagisano* has contributed towards the construction of democratic schools that contribute towards the production of critically conscious and democratic minded citizens.

Contrary to the objectives of *Education for Kagisano*, NCE (1977) report advances the argument that in Botswana schools, the present education system tends to alienate students from their cultural roots and make them eventually despise their languages. This is an issue that is a cause for concern. This research therefore examined whether the students are denied a democratic right to participate in the democratic process within the school. The study further sought to unearth the truth regarding Botswana’s democracy and the role that the school plays to foster its success by educating citizens.

If the school environment and the nature of an education system fail to orient young people towards the social, economic, cultural and political values of
their unique societies, and encourage them to proudly participate, then the Botswana national principles are bound to fail to suffice later in the country’s effort to build a democratic and just society. Botswana’s education system as seen in its implementation in schools alienates students from their culture and compels them to some degree to acquire education that is mirrored within the cultural and political aspirations of the colonizer (NCE, 1977). In this case, therefore, it could be stated that students as citizens, do not have a choice and voice but follow the curriculum that does not take into account their social and cultural values.

It is interesting to note however; that according to Botswana’s Moral Education syllabus - Curriculum Development Division (1998), one of the aims of teaching moral education is to equip students with citizenship education as well as teaching them how to make peace and harmony in a society that is democratic and diverse. This syllabus indicates that of course the education system provides room for teaching democracy although democracy is not fully practiced. This study investigated whether that which is theoretical, manifests itself practically within the classroom and the school environment in general.

With reference to Botswana’s Ten Year Basic Education Program’s Curriculum Blueprint (1995, p.2), Botswana’s education system aims at promoting the all-around development of the individual; fosters intellectual growth and creativity; enables every citizen to achieve his/her full potential; develops moral, ethical and social values, cultural identity, self esteem and good
citizenship; prepares citizens to participate actively to further develop the country’s democracy and their own lives in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. This assertion certainly propelled this study to find out how schools train/educate students in order to help the nation achieve its dreams of continuing to build a sustainable democracy.

The cornerstone of a democracy in any social setup is unrestricted participation, which enables students to ask critical questions regarding issues related to their society as well as their learning process. On the basis of such a declaration, it is rational that research of this kind be carried out in order to find out ways through which secondary schools in Botswana prepare students to be well-equipped agents, transformers and participants in an exercise of trying to build a nation that is democratic. Democracy should involve all the stakeholders and it is important that the education system in Botswana reflects democratic structures that create a platform for mass participation.

According to NCE (1977, p.24), Botswana believes that democracy in education should encompass giving every mature person a voice in the running of the country’s affairs and the chance to participate, directly through representatives, in decisions affecting his or her life. Botswana’s education system supposedly treasures the belief that in order for democracy to function, as many decisions as possible should be left to those who are affected by them. As NCE (1977) mentions, “Democracy in education involves giving each mature person a voice in the running of the affairs and the chance to participate directly
or through representatives, in decisions affecting his life’ (p.25). However, this could be challenged by the fact that from 1966 to 1994, the Botswana government refused to allow the 18 year olds (in the Botswana context, they are regarded as mature and able to make rational decisions) to vote under the pretext that they were immature. As such, they did not have a platform to voice their opinion as outlined by *Education for Kagisano*.

When addressing the 16th annual general conference of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), (Speech by His Excellency The President Khama, 1977) President Khama mentioned that the experiences from other nations have taught Botswana that democracy should never be taken for granted and that those who profess to believe in it must work hard to achieve it by being involved in the election process. Yet his government denied youth aged 18 the democratic voice to cast their votes. He added that BDP, as a party of the people should promote voter enthusiasm and maintain a true democratic tradition (p.3). This reflects the limited understanding of the concept of democracy and a contention could be made that democracy should be given or practiced in whole; otherwise failure to do so would affect it negatively democracy.

Dingake (2004) questions the democratic nature of Botswana by positing that after Botswana National Front’s (BNF) loss of the 1990 general elections to the BDP, the BNF, of which Dingake was the vice-president, threatened to boycott the 1994 general elections unless the ruling party becomes democratic enough to allow the 18 year olds to vote. Many citizens who felt that the denial
of the 18 year olds was tantamount to crippling the democratic principles, which are cherished by *Education for Kagisano*, consequently gave Dingake’s plea support. Eventually, for the first time in the history of Botswana’s democracy, the 18 year olds were allowed to vote in the next general elections of 1994. In view of the above, this project also investigated ways through which schools involve students in the decision-making process through voting.

On a different note, Molomo & Somolekae ([http://www.idea.int/ideas_works/22_s_africa/elections/5_botswana.pdf](http://www.idea.int/ideas_works/22_s_africa/elections/5_botswana.pdf)) raise an issue of concern that despite the widening of franchise to include youth of ages 18 year; youth participation in the 1999 general elections was far from satisfactory. As if not enough, Tafa (2003) charges that to date, it is clear that there are no plans to fully democratize education, and that both the processes of schooling and the content of education has a long way to go in as far as the process of educating for democratic activism is concerned. He further charges that the Botswana government seems oblivious to the fact that the process of globalization is global capitalism operated as a single market, and that this system works well where there is vibrant democracy, and not just a formal liberal democracy which does not exist in our schools and classrooms or even in colleges of education.

In a sense, democracy should promote tolerance and embrace diversity and its legitimacy should be derived from the will of the people. Under a democracy, ordinary citizens should be allowed to make decisions about their
socio-economic and political future. In the case of Botswana, since it has embraced globalization, it is essential that it spreads the democratic norms to its citizens since the free market economy advanced by globalization cannot function properly where the “weak and ordinary” are suppressed, although it is evident that the global spreading of democratic norms has used foreign aid, multilateral institutions and trade to impose democracy especially on the Global-South. Education therefore, should be used as a pillar to teach and promote democratic ideals.

In addition, the “Profile of youth in Botswana” (1989), contest that the rapid expansion of Botswana’s economy and democracy requires a pragmatic education system which takes into consideration the social and vocational implications of such an economy and its people. Botswana’s education system is currently struggling to promote democracy in that it is so much rooted in the colonial mentality whereby the school is run with little or no inclusion of the students and their parents. Democracy can, therefore, not function in this regard because the learners will grow as citizens who cannot practice democracy because they never experienced it. This study evaluated the extent to which schools have been democratized in Botswana.

Banks (in Parker (1993, p.xi) maintains that without the pursuit of the democratic project by the schools and larger society, the contradiction between our democratic ideals and the racial and social-class inequality within a democratic society will intensify, thus creating disillusioned and ineffective
citizens. Students do not only need to learn about democracy and equality, but should be given the mandate to taste seeds of deep democracy from the early stages of their education so that they can develop and become powerful strong advocates of a democracy. As such, the democratic project should incorporate the idea that all students regardless of their gender, ethnicity, culture, intellectual capability, should be given a voice in their learning endeavors as well as in the decision-making mechanism of the institution.

This research demonstrates that Botswana's democracy has been compromised/basically not practiced in schools, and apparently there are very few and inadequate mechanisms in place that promote the student's voice as discussed in chapters four and five. There is hardly any legislation of pupils’ democracy, pupils unions, or grievance procedures, while student discipline continues to deteriorate as reflected by the number of strikes in social upheavals in schools (Good, 2004). Strikes are generally a call for inclusion and a way of expressing unhappiness. *Mmegi Newspaper* (09 February 2004) outlines that denying students' voice has resulted in a strike that left the administration block in fire at Matsha College (a high school) ([www.mmegi.bw](http://www.mmegi.bw)). The BNF’s 2004 manifesto also adds that the reason why student discipline has deteriorated in Botswana is because the ruling BDP has for so long promoted highly authoritarian school regimes that have failed to provide structures for student’s voice. The BNF further charges that students continue to be victims of physical, emotional and sexual abuse in schools. If what the BNF is stating is anything to
go by, then one can conclude that President Khama is probably unhappy in his grave since the democratic principles he had envisioned in *Education for Kagisano* seem not to be promoting the democratic ideals he so much cherished.

Tafa, (in Herman and Nteta, 1993) maintains that colonialism has to pocket the blame for the current lack of development in Botswana’s education system and that this situation is perpetuated by the fact that colonialism was never about development but rather engaged in under-development and exploitation. He argues further that post-colonial education has not changed fundamentally and that only a few students get through. It is like a gigantic sieve through which only a few children, mainly from the upper and middle class families, acquire higher education (p.429).

Taking the above claims into consideration, Botswana cannot think of development, unity, self-reliance, humane/personality (*botho*) and democracy (as stipulated in *Education for Kagisano*) while its education is not working towards the fulfillment of those principles. It is probably worth noting at this juncture that there is need for change and democratization of policy making in schools in order to give students a ‘real/unlimited’ voice in the day-to-day dealings of their education. Bigelow, Moroney & Hall (2001) argue that classrooms in democratic institutions must provoke students to develop their democratic capacities: to question, to challenge, to make real decisions and to solve problems collectively (p.3). Freire (2000) could be understood to be sharing the same idea when stating “If students are not able to transform their
lives’ experiences into knowledge and to use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing” (p.19).

Tafa (2003) charges that the current use of corporal punishment in schools contradicts democratic values of a society since corporal punishment causes psychological damage to the self-reliance and self-image of the students, and also contributes to a circle of violence in society. This practice is counterproductive to democracy and dialogue in particular.

Dale (1995) indicates that in order for Botswana to continue growing as a democracy, the fields of education and science should create skilled bureaucratic, professional, and business leaders and that the creation of both is an end in itself and a prerequisite for a more productive/successful economy, a higher quality of life for citizenry. It is through this achievement that Botswana can effectively manage to play a positive role in regional, continental, and global affairs, thus making its democracy shine all the way (p.63).

This study was undertaken to investigate the extent to which schools have been used as departure points for teaching for democratic participation. The concept of democratic participation is a new phenomenon especially within Botswana’s education system because colonial education was not interested in fostering democratic participation among Botswana’s citizens.
Statement of the Problem

Taking into account the fact that the concept of educating for democratic participation is a new phenomenon in Botswana’s education system, this study analyzed democratic practices that take place within Botswana Secondary Schools. Students are considered the most politically ineffective/apathetic, (Independent Electoral Commission (IEC, 2002)). The study further explores how the education system contributes towards the preparation of students in becoming democratically active in Botswana’s young and growing democracy.

Although Botswana is currently labeled as a shining example of African democracy (Ake, 1996), according to a study; *Voter Apathy in Botswana*, it is revealed that only about 4.63 percent of those aged less than 21 years of age registered to vote in the 1999 general elections. Surprisingly, this was after the lowering of voting age from 21 to 18 (IEC, 2002). However, it should be noted that voting does not necessarily presuppose the existence of a democracy, it goes beyond voting.

The study also yields that Southern African youth (except Botswana’s) have long history of participating in political activities and struggles against unjust political systems (IEC, 2002, p.32). Although the *Voter Apathy* study is important to Botswana’s political progress, there is need to conduct research that establishes the relationship between education and democracy in Botswana schools. It is for these reasons that I believe my study adds a new dimension
that contributes to the concept of democracy and education drawing from the theoretical framework of “deep democracy” (Green, 1999).

Research Questions

In an attempt to address the objectives of the study, the following questions were used to guide the study:

1. How is democracy defined and understood within Botswana’s education system by students, teachers and administrators?
2. What are some of the existing organizations within the school system that promote student’s democratic participation?
3. How is citizenship education understood and used in schools?

The population used in this research includes senior secondary school students, teachers, administrators, curriculum development department, Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), officers from the National Assembly who advocate introduction of youth parliament in Botswana, University of Botswana professors and some stakeholders from the Ministry of Education.

Significance of the Study

In all democracies, the role of formal education is organized to be of paramount importance in the process of ensuring a democratic future. Within the field of education in general, civics or citizenship education has taken the specific lead in promoting democracy in schools. Its importance in the curriculum is beyond dispute. Or is it? (Print, 1998, p.3).
Tanner (1991) states, Dewey believed in the power of human intelligence to deal with the deepest and most crucial social and educational problems that inevitably arise in a world of change. He believed social intelligence was best utilized in the open climate of a democratic society. In fact, fostering a democratic association was one of the key purposes of education for Dewey (p, xvii). Given Dewey’s philosophy on education, one can confidently make a case that in a country where deep democracy is valued; the education system should design a democratic curriculum that should provide an arena for open dialogue, debate, and decision-making in a democratic setting. In other words, democracy should not just be preached or just talked about, but should be practiced. Students as ordinary citizens should be involved in the deep democratic process.

Tanner states that Bode (in Kilpatrick, 1935) asserts that the school must be transformed into a place where pupils go, not primarily to acquire knowledge, but to carry on a way of life. That is, the school is to be regarded, first of all, as an ideal community in which pupils get practice in cooperation, in self-government, and in the application of intelligence to difficulties or problems as they arise. That is what the progressive education paradigm entails. On the basis of Tanner’s reasoning, a case can be made that probably Botswana’s Education for Kagisano was brought into existence with the hope that it would create schools that are going to nurture the practice of democracy.

Parsons (1983) posits that a historical review from colonial times to the present shows not only the colonial legacy and expansion of education in
Botswana since the colonial period, but also highlights the debates about whether the initiatives since independence have led to more of the same or chartered a different path. The contradictions that have arisen are between quantity and quality between democratization and elitism and, how education not only contributes to the development but also reflects the nature of development (Parsons, 1983, RNPE, 1994, Youngman, 2000). In Botswana however, while democracy in education is being preached, there are still other groups of people such as *Basarwa* (the earliest inhabitants of Southern Africa) who to date are still marginalized educationally. From the colonial times, *Basarwa* were not formally educated like other groups because it was believed they were inferior and that they should remain subjects to other tribes. Democracy cannot survive where the political culture of the civil society is such that participation is sidelined (IEC, 2002). Hence neglecting *Basarwa* by not having education institutions in their area is a democratic challenge that does not reflect well on Botswana's education.

This research project explored and provides data analysis about education and democracy in Botswana, which in turn could be taken into account when formulating educational policies that are geared towards fostering the prosperity of Botswana’s democracy. In view of the fact that the study involved students, teachers, administrators, policymakers, to mention a few, the findings of the research would help the stakeholders to scrutinize the education system in as far as educating for democracy and help them make modifications.
Levinson (1999) maintains that democratic education is better focused on helping children develop a coherent identity - one that will sustain them as adults and enable them to function as healthy, stable individuals and citizens - rather than on the capacity for choice (p.100). On the same angle, Harber (1999) adds that some writers have gone to the extent of describing schools as prisons, given the lack of freedom or participation afforded to students, while others who emphasize the mass production and certification role of schools have described them as factories because they focus on mass production and neglecting the quality of the products. In terms of educating democratic citizens neither is a flattering analogy, especially when we bear in mind that the teacher’s role of prison warden or factory supervisor has often been backed up with the physical violence of corporal punishment (p.2). If Harber’s point is anything to go by, then one can measure some level of contradiction in practice in that in Botswana, corporal punishment is regarded as legal and is even covered under Botswana’s penal code. In cases where corporal punishment is used in educating children as I witnessed during my research, there is the likelihood that students may become submissive to the teacher and eventually be passive ‘objects’ in as far as the running of the affairs of the school is concerned, thus putting democracy at risk.

Selolwane, *Future of democracy in Botswana* from ([http://www.asc.leidenuniv.nl](http://www.asc.leidenuniv.nl)) also argues that democracy is in crisis in Botswana schools as evidenced by continued voter apathy in youth during
general elections. He cements his case by advancing that voter apathy has increased among youth at every general election.

This research investigated how democracy and education in schools affects students’ participation in Botswana's national politics. The importance of democracy in Botswana cannot be overemphasized especially that the absence of democracy in other neighboring African countries has taught Batswana lessons. These lessons should relay a message to Batswana to challenge the education system and the government in general, to formulate policies and strategies that are going to help the country sustain its democracy. It could be argued in this case, that apathetic citizens cannot sustain a democracy. This research therefore also serves as an eye-opener in this regard and could warn Batswana not to take democracy for granted.

This project brings different insights on politics of education and also uniquely adds to the literature of social sciences especially on African Cultural Studies, which is relatively a new field in Botswana, hence, the scarcity of its literature. The research also sets a departure point for other scholars to pursue further research in the field of educational politics.

Delimitations

The study focused on the concept of educating for democratic participation as understood within Botswana’s school system by students, teachers, administrators, the democracy research unit of the University of Botswana, IEC, and other policymakers, etc. The data from the subjects was
collected in two schools and from different departments within and outside the
Ministry of Education.

Limitations

The research limited itself to two secondary schools in Botswana in
addition to the other subjects that have been reflected earlier. Time constraints
as well as financial resources, did not enable the researcher to cover a wide
range of schools and other people of interest. As such, sampling was used in this
study. As is often the case with qualitative research, some subjects were
reluctant to participate because the research covered political issues.

In addition, some teachers and administrators were not easily accessible.
Some participants, especially teachers, were skeptical about the research and
thought perhaps they were being spied on. I had to convince them that their
names and identity will be protected and that this was just an academic project
that has nothing to do with them as individuals per se. Some informants,
especially teachers, once again declared that they were not “political figures,”
and as such did not think they were politically conscious enough to participate in
the study. However, I had to convince them by stating fact that my study is not
designed to only focus on the politically active figures, but that even them as
teachers may have some unique opinion to contribute to the my study.

The process of getting permission to do the study in Botswana was not
easy since initially I submitted the request to the Office of the President (OP) as
always has been the case, but had to resubmit the application directly to the
Ministry of Education after learning that some changes were made regarding the procedures for securing a research permit in Botswana.

Finding funding for this research was not easy and I am grateful for the assistance I received from the department of African Studies at Ohio University. I also had a slow start on the research since I had an almost deadly car accident two days before I left for Botswana. I got into the field still undergoing the healing process. However, as time passed I fully recovered and continued with my research.
Definitions of Terms

Batswana: the plural of Motswana (refer to motswana below).

Botswana: A southern African country which was a colony of Britain from 1885-1966, when it gained its independence.

Botho: A setswana word referring to a person with a well-rounded character, well mannered, disciplined and realizes his or her potential both as an individual and as part of a community to which he or she belongs.

Citizen: a member of a state or a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.

Citizenship: The ability of a citizen to perform their community or national duties within their rights, privileges and freedoms for their welfare in particular and for the general welfare of their nation.

Curriculum: All the courses of academic studies offered by an educational setup or institution.

Democracy: A governing political system that values participation of the civil society either directly or indirectly. It implies the inclusion of citizens’ voices in a government.

Deep Democracy: A “practical” system of community life where by there is “extended” freedom of participation and presence of machineries that promote empowerment, accountability, open-dialogue, debate, tolerance,
balance of authority and where all voices matter and are heard. It is a democracy that goes beyond voting as evidenced by a high degree of participation. It values and respects diversity.

Democratic Education: An education system that values and respects the students' voice. It is an education system that sees the need to promote dialogical participation in the learning process.

Diversity: The concept of diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing the individual differences within the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies or philosophies. Diversity is about tolerating the other and embracing as well as celebrating the differences that exist among people or a society.

Education for Kagisano: Education for social harmony, which in a Botswana sense addresses the national principles; democracy, development, self-reliance, unity and botho. Education system that is supposed to build a united, development oriented, democratic, self-reliant, morally and ethically conscious society.

Ikalanga: is the language of Kalanga people, mainly located in the northeastern part of Botswana (in this case it is the tribal language for the researcher).

Kagisano: Social harmony, which also advances the idea of living together in peace and tranquility.
Kgosi: Singular. A traditional ruler of Batswana who is also referred to as the Chief.

Kgotla: A traditional Setswana meeting place where members of a community can voice opinions, discuss and resolve issues relating to their community. In many instances the village Chief (Kgosi) leads and facilitates the discussion.

Leadership: The condition or process of enabling a group to engage together in the process of developing, sharing and moving into a vision, and then living it out by fully respecting the rights and freedoms of all those involved.

Liberal democracy: A form of representative democracy that empowers the elected representatives, in most cases, the financially powerfully to exercise power and decision-making within the rule of law. It is an essential part of the class-based capitalist system and places emphasis on the support of the market economy. It has often been criticized for constraining the exercise of the will of the majority as well as promoting individualism.

Motswana: A person who is a Botswana national.

Ngaka: A traditional priest/doctor.

Politics: Any activity attempting to influence the manner in which a government operates. It can also be referred to as any social activity involving authority or power.
Post-Colonial Botswana: Botswana after colonization-modern Botswana.

Setswana: Is a national language of Botswana whilst English is the official language of the country.

Social democracy: A form of representative democracy emerging from the 19th and early 20th centuries that advances that the transition to a socialist society can be achievable through democratic evolutionary ways rather than through a revolution. It challenges the capitalist order by advocating equitable distribution of resources among people. It places emphasis on unity and solidarity within a society.

Society: A community, nation, or a broad grouping of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests.

Ujamaa: philosophically, it is a process of nationhood where all the members of a community work together as an extended family to build and maintain a cohesive community that nurtures and supports its residents. According to Nyerere, Ujamaa advances the three fundamental principles of living together, working together and sharing equitably the fruits and or goods and services of cooperative work.

Underdevelopment: The state of inadequate development. In the case of education and colonialism in Africa, education was deliberately and inadequately developed so as to continuously subject Africans to the “colonial master’s” dependence.

Vision 2016: A name used for the document entitled Towards Prosperity for All
that outlines the Long Term Vision for the kind of a society Botswana
would like to have by 2016.

Voter Apathy: A situation whereby citizens appear not to be interested in the
political affairs of their society. In this case, people do not care about
being involved.

Theoretical Framework

The cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy

-John Dewey (1935)

among many others yields a common theme of *deep democracy* in education
and society in general. While the theory of liberal democracy sees the individual
as an autonomous and independent being seeking defense and expansion of his
or her own “piece of pie” against other autonomous interests, mediated by
government structures, deep democracy advances a different view.

Tarrant (1989) argues that the problem with liberal democracy is the
promotion of liberal individualism at the expense of collective community
character. He further mentions that liberal democracy fails to nurture and
promote traditional ways of living together as a society and does not value
justice and rights for all. In Tarrant’s view, the ultimate justification for
democracy should include the production of certain states or attitudes of mind in
citizens that promote independence of mind, respect and tolerance for others,
the willingness to think and discuss matters with others for the general welfare of the entire community (p.16). Deep democracy is about social interaction where all citizens’ voices are heard for the common good regardless of their socio-economic and political class.

According to Boisvert (1998), the idea of living in association with others is what Dewey referred to as community life, which provides opportunities for growth as well as giving power to the people. In view of these assertions, it could be argued that liberal democracy neglects the full flourishing of democratic aspirations since it advances the giving of power to certain individuals or class at the expense of the masses. Deep democracy advances the opening of more spaces for dialogue and participation and values respect for diverse hearts and minds (Green, 1999).

Boisvert (1998) states “...a society moves in the direction of the democratic ideal when the varied groups that compose it have relations that are multiple and supple, “when different groups interact flexibly and fully.” The more porous are the boundaries of such groups, the more, in other words, they welcome participation from individuals, and the more the varied groupings enjoy multiple and flexible relations, the closer is a society to fulfilling the democratic ideal” (p.56). This kind of a democratic ideal mentioned by Boisvert is what Green (1999) could be understood to be referring to as deep democracy where citizens engage in a form of a social discourse and promote the ideal of co-citizenship.
As if in complete agreement with Green on deep democracy - when making a case against liberal democracy, Boisvert (1998) shares “Democracy as an ideal for community life is not a mere provision for a minimal state which simply leaves citizens alone. Such individualistic ideal is inimical to the kind of associated living which is democratic. This kind of community life ought to occasion sensitivity to the consequences of one’s actions. It should, in other words, extend participation and awareness” (p.58).

Deep democracy maintains “the idea that a person’s identity is derived from his or her relationship with others. The image of the autonomous self - interested individual give way in this alternative view to the image of the network, the interconnected web of existence that defines individuals in relationship to each other and defines institutions as an expression of the nature of the connections in the web” (Lowery & Wilson, 2003, p.50).

At its core, as Dewey (1935) understands it, democracy is a realistic, historically grounded ideal, a desired and desirable future possibility that is yet to be. So understood, the democratic ideal indicates a direction for further evolution of the full range of formally democratic institutions, as well as for growth of democratic “habits of the heart” and of the processes of inquiry and education that supports them. In a sense, “habits of the heart” would promote the building of character which promotes coherent life in a community rather than selfish and isolated individualism. Democratic habits are supposed to build an interrelated or
integrated society where everyone cares about the other as well as the entire society.

According to Hutchinson & Hunt (2001), Democracy & Education: “Living Democracy in the Classroom”, Dewey believed that in order for democracy to be sustaining, it must “become part of the bone and blood of people in daily conduct” and that “democratic habits of thought and action (must become) part of the fiber of a people” (p.3). From the deep democratic spectrum of democracy, people need to develop respect human rights by building the public sphere in a collaborative manner which consequently would make possible the flourishing of a harmonious community.

In addition, Green (1999) describes the concept of deep democracy as a form of democracy that goes beyond just the formal institutional framework that outlines or governs how a society should function. In her view, deep democracy is a set of structures, concepts, habits and practices that reach out to the community as well as to the very core of individuals. In other words, there is an element of interconnectedness within a community and people are able to voice their opinion freely and also learn from others. It is about creating spaces for social transformations by including voices of the masses and not focusing only on the needs, aspirations, and prosperity of the selected few. Lowery & Wilson (2003) further clarify the concept of deep democracy by stating:

Deep democracy, as we see it, does not privilege the concept of
community by reifying it into a single set of values and norms to which the individual must subordinate him or herself. Rather deep democracy describes an open dynamic system springing from the diverse points of engagement where individuals and community come together. Deep democracy is a transformative process in which the individual learns to think and act from the perspective of the whole. In deep democracy, citizenship is conferred by personal engagement - not just by revealing individual preferences through voting and rational choice, but by exercising the democratic arts of participation. It is based on public conversation, where one begins to listen to and know the “other.” It becomes the enfranchisement of the self in daily life, transforming one's self-identity into one of inclusion in, and responsibility for, an expanding circle of community (p.50).

Driscoll (2004) explains that in a deep democracy, each individual matters because deep democracy pays attention to personal relationships where each individual should be listened to without being interrupted although mass participation can lead to diverse views which may prove problematic especially when a community has to reach a common decision. Although so, deep democracy gives individuals a chance to confront social injustice engraved in racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, ageism and any other unjust practices that society tends to impose on individuals. It nurtures one's consciousness to challenge the ills found in a society and allows everyone to participate.
On the basis of the above assertions, a case could be made that within a school environment, deep democracy would promote an atmosphere where all those involved in its community are at liberty to challenge the status quo and work together for the betterment of the system. Students would have input in the decision-making process, feel free to inquire and also have sound and productive dialogue with their colleagues, teachers and parents. Gutmann (in Spring (1994) says “two of the hallmarks of democratic education are the protection of freedom of ideas and nondiscrimination” (p.18). According to Spring (1994), Gutman’s democratic education is one that “consciously seek to prepare citizens who will maintain a democratic state. This means preparing students to actively participate in the sharing of power and the shaping of society” (p.20). Spring observes, however, that this form of education can be a problem since it could lead to the “reproduction of particular values” that undermine the individual and family needs contrary to what Gutmann advocates.

The response to this problem in Gutmann’s view is that “...democratic control allows all people the opportunity to participate in the control of the educational system and to shape that system according to their own values. The ability to participate depends on the existence of a democratic state, which, in turn, depends for its continuation on conscious social reproduction through education” (p.20). Within the scope of deep democratic theory, schools should teach democracy by promoting participation and accommodating diverse voices.
Hutchinson (in Democracy and Education, 2003, *More than Ever*) states “It seems self-evident to me that schools, as places of learning in a democracy, should be one of the most foremost spots for critical literacy education and public dialogue to take place” (p.2). Deep democracy, unlike formal liberal democracy, would empower the students as members of the learning community to challenge the status quo and any form of injustice that tampers with their freedoms and rights.

In a deeply democratic school setting, the learning community should involve students, teachers, administrations, staff, parents and community members (Hutchinson & Hunt, 2001). Those involved in the school community should be encouraged by the educator to freely communicate their various ideas and experiences without discrimination. Hutchinson & Hunt (2001) mention that:

A democratic educator cannot force students to engage in democratic learning. While we have the responsibility to be as creative and invitational as possible so that our students who may not be used to a democratic learning environment will feel themselves as an integral part of the learning process, it cannot be forced. We must respect them (p.2).

Although Hutchinson & Hunt’s way of looking at democracy appears to be making sense, the contrary is happening in Botswana schools since corporal punishment is used to discipline and even to force students to do things that they would not do under normal circumstances. Such actions compromise
democracy and it for this reason that this study embraces deep democratic theory so as to try to open the structures for democratic participation by challenging undemocratic practices that are perpetrated by those in power.

A deeply democratic educational atmosphere would involve students in the formulation of classroom rules, school regulations, punishment code, curriculum and pedagogy, elect their own leaders, be involved in the planning of school outings or educational trips, and above all, be encouraged to develop democratic “habits of the heart” in order to “…enter the adult world full of confidence knowing…” “I can change my world, I know how to change my world” and “I care enough to change my world” (Hutchinson & Hunt, 2001, p.6). Learning institutions need to empower students and encourage their critical thinking since they are the future leaders.

Lowry & Wilson (2003) posit:

On a more applied level, the prominent concepts behind deep democracy include social capital, interpersonal communication (especially dialogue, deep listening, and non-violent communication), negotiation and conflict resolution (including mutual gains and “third-sider” approaches – i.e. not right and wrong, but “both-and”), appreciative inquiry, community participation (including the Intermediate Technology literature on “scaling up”), communitarian thought, and the literature on learning organizations (p.50).
According to Hubbard (www.peacexpeace.org), democracy - deep democracy, participatory democracy, and synergistic democracy - is all about inclusiveness, equity, personal responsibility where citizens speak up, are heard, and leaders are accountable in an immediate way. She further states that it is about flow of information, transparency, participating, and being self-responsible. Hubbard shares that “an example of an evolving deep democracy would be a military that doesn't just occupy but teaches, that doesn't just fight but repairs environments damaged by fighting, that doesn't just deliver bombs, but also delivers bread.” (www.peacexpeace.org).

This study is therefore, situated within the theoretical framework of deep democracy which values the idea that students as citizens, should realize their full potential not through extended power over others but through interconnectedness that allows everyone to appreciate the other as part of themselves. This is essential in every democratic institution. Kagisano (social harmony) cannot come to fruition without deep democratic participation. The deeper conception of democracy expresses the experience - based possibility of more equal, respectful, and mutually beneficial ways of community life and “habits of the heart” - those characteristic feeling-based, culturally shaped and located frameworks of value within which we perceive the world and formulate our active responses in it (Green, 1999, p. vi).

In those areas of community life and to the extent that this deeper social and cultural background is lacking, formally democratic institutions tend to
generate the kinds of crises we are now experiencing because their inner logic is conceptually incomplete (Green, 1999, p.ix). To account for this incompletion, Green believes that there is “need for a clear contemporary articulation of deep democracy to interpret the origins and the imperative, historically unfolding transformative implications of the democratic ideal” (p.ix). Green further draws logic from Dewey by advancing that Dewey treasured the ideal that “the cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy,” which in the language of our own times could be equated with deep democracy (Green, 1999, p.ix).

Green further makes a case by drawing comparisons to the fact that many environmental philosophers have argued that we need a deep ecology to articulate the meaning and imperative of effective caring for the shared, fragile ecosystem in which we humans find natural homes. Likewise, we need a clear, contemporary articulation of deep democracy to interpret the origins and the imperative, historically unfolding transformative implications of a democratic ideal (Green, 1999). In an institution that values and practices deep democratic ideals, educators are transformative intellectuals (change agents) who create an environment where students feel as though they were part of the entire learning community by recognizing their differences and allowing their diverse voices to be heard on mutual grounds.

Green believes that democracy should be a transformative ideal that leads us to work for further evolution of social unity ideas. That said, one could contend that education should be seen to be fostering transformative citizens
who can partake in their national democratic exercise without apathy or fear of victimization. A philosophy of deep democracy helps to reenergize civil institutions and extra political networks into effective public voices calling for more deeply democratic social reconstruction by reinvigorating the public role of philosophy and its influence within engaged transformative praxis (Green, 1999, p. x).

Shapiro & Macedo (2000) could be understood to be sharing the same view with Green and Dewey when advancing that it “might be widely accepted that deep democracy is a good thing, yet it is equally apparent that democrats have much work to do in improving the performance of democratic institutions.” (p.1). Shapiro & Macedo’s notion of democracy ties well with the findings of the Voter Apathy Report (2000) of University of Botswana’s DRP that reveals that though Botswana is generally perceived as a true example of a democratic state, the fact that youth are politically apathetic signifies that Botswana still has a challenge to build strong democratic institutions. In a sense, the depth of Botswana’s democracy is questionable if at all the democratic ideals of Green (1999), Shapiro & Macedo (2000) and Voter Apathy Report (2000) are anything to go by.

Petti (in Shapiro & Macedo (2000), allude to the fact that all law in a democracy should be geared towards “empowering the common, recognizable interests of ordinary people, and nothing else besides” (p.5). A deep democratic argument yields that though society is diverse, at least to some degree, citizens
should work towards common interests through the presence of two political institutions; “electoral institutions” whose function is to attract and express expressions of common interest, “contestatory institutions” whose goal is to ensure that decisions that are implemented really reflect the common interest of the people” (p.6). In this regard, one could argue that a deep democracy is the one that values deliberative interaction/consultation by all citizens. That being as it may, it could be argued that an education system that does not create a platform for the exercise of expression of difference is probably an ailing system that doesn’t reflect elements of “peopleness” which are of paramount importance in a democracy.

Deep Democracy:
Beyond Government of, for, and by the People

Deep democracy challenges humanity to relate to one another with absolute respect, and due dignity. Deep democracy is a social system in which people are encouraged to express their creativity, to be responsible for the decisions that affect them, to join others and co-create communities that are reciprocal, that care for their members, that are sustainable, regenerative, compassionate, and that are connected to nature and to others doing the same (www.peacexpeace.org). Cohen (1971) mentions that as the breadth of democracy is determined by the generality within which members participate, the depth of democracy is determined by the fullness, the character of participation that does take place (p.17).
Dewey understood democracy not just as a mere issue of “government of the people by the people and for the people,” but saw it differently when stating:

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race and national territory, which kept men from perceiving the full importance of their activity (Dewey, 1935, p.101).

According to World Wide School (http://www.worldwideschool.org), making reference to Dewey, a democracy is believed to be more than just a form of government as people normally perceive it, but rather, it is primarily a model of associated living of conjoint communicated experience. Therefore, democratic education is that form of education that provides space for all parties involved to take action and at the same time paying attention and due respect to the action of others despite differences.

From Dewey’s viewpoint we see a democracy without boundaries whereby people value association and individual differences; this is what deep democracy advances.
Deep democracy recognizes values and respects diversity. It provides space for the expression of differences for the benefit of all involved in a society. Barber (1992) also contributes to this discussion by relaying that in a democracy, the purpose of education should be to teach and practice liberty by preparing citizens for their citizenship through public education. The role of the educator in this case is to teach liberty. The teaching of liberty can only materialize where democracy is deep. In this case, individuals are allowed to be the master of their ideas/experiences with the welfare of the entire community at heart. The same idea is advocated by Nyerere (1967) when advancing that every student in Tanzania should firstly understand the needs and values of a society and work towards their fulfillment rather than addressing selfish individual interests.

Cohen (1971) posits that democracy is that system of community government in which, by and large, the members of community participate, or may participate, directly or indirectly, in the making of decisions that affect them all (p.7). From another angle, Putnam (1993) mentions that democracy can only work if the civil society is actively involved in the affairs of the government, and that those areas with weak civil society will not succeed in quickly developing a democratic state. On that score, a deep democratic school is the one where student’s involvement in decision-making is practiced. In a democracy, all those affected by its functioning should play a part.

Parker (1996) adds to the deep democratic theory by maintaining that differences in a democracy should be used as strengths and virtues where by the
diversity existent within a community is used to foster active participation, thus building a strong democracy. Democracy means men and women who are committed to ways of living together that are marked by popular sovereignty rather than authoritarianism, genuine cultural pluralism rather than in the name of political unity, and a fundamental commitment to liberty, law, justice and equality as moral ground of social life (Parker, 1996, p. xi). In view of this opinion, it could be maintained that a school that subscribes to deep democratic notions cherishes diversity and creates platforms for the exercise of differences for the general good of all involved in the learning process.

Deepening Democracy in Schools

On the basis of the above intellectual advancements, it could be deduced from the above theoretical framework that an education system that values and practices deep democracy has regard for diversity, dialogue, participation and accommodates multiple voices. Nash (1997) shares in addition that students know - sometimes from painful experience - that there will always be competing conceptions of what is true and good in a secular pluralist democracy, and the best way to resolve philosophical, religious, and political differences in a diverse world is through mutually respectful, open-ended dialogue, characterized always by an honest epistemological skepticism (p.39).

Deep democracy within the school system enables learners to challenge, critique, and argue about issues that are affecting them directly or indirectly. Nash (1997) appears to be in support of this view when asserting; remember
something John Stuart Mill said in *On Liberty* (1999) “In a democratic society, all opinions must be heard because some of them may be true. And those that are false must vigorously, but respectfully, be contested” (p.155). Good (1997) adds that in a democracy, popular participation is the best hope for limiting elitism and corruption (p.149).

Cohen (1971) further adds to this discussion by saying:

But whether democracy both broad and deep is ever substantially realizable in human communities is a question clearly answerable now. It is. What is actual must be possible. The clearest proof of the practicality of full democracy is the actual existence and success of such government in some of the communities in which many of us participate every day...through a democracy of breadth and depth (p.19).

Deep democracy tolerates and respects difference on mutual grounds and values the growth of individuals. Dewey (1935) concludes our discussion by stating:

The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education...(and) the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth. Now this idea cannot be applied to all the members of a society except where intercourse of man with man is mutual, and except where there is adequate provision for the reconstruction of social habits and institutions by means of wide stimulation arising from equitably distributed interests. And this means a democratic society (p.100-101).
On the same score, Cohen (1971) appears to be in support of Dewey's claim above when contending:

Concerning the practicality of deep democracy, then, I conclude that important human communities exemplifying democracy both broad and deep are actual, and more are possible. Participation in depth in community affairs, for many citizens of large national democracies, is an accomplished fact, and within existing structures opportunities abound for the greater generalization of participation in depth. The claim that large democracies can never exhibit overall depth is dubious as a matter of fact, and irrelevant to the wisdom of retaining deep democracy as a national ideal. The claim, even true, that all existing national democracies lack overall depth, is still less relevant to the appropriateness of the ideal of full participation, and would reflect only upon our accomplishments to date in developing democracy in these contexts (p.21).

Deep democracy therefore differs from the ‘formal’ democracy in that it goes beyond elections and opens up avenues for citizens to have ‘an extended say’ in the manner in which their society or government functions.

In a society such as Botswana’s, education has to teach about the value of democracy to its citizens so as for freedom to be nourished as well as enhancing chances of producing democratically conscious citizens who can positively contribute to nation building. This can only become possible by widening the parameters of participation; this is what deep and real democracy is about.
Generally, my theoretical framework provides a unique and essential lens under which the concept of democracy and participation can be understood and be bettered in Botswana.

Summary

Chapter One of this study lays out the foundation for the study by providing an introductory note, especially on Botswana’s colonial legacy and on the national philosophy of *Education for Kagisano*. It also elaborates on the force driving the research as reflected under the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study as well as the delimitations and limitations of the study. Therefore the next chapter of the research will be discussed by taking into consideration the questions raised by the researcher in chapter one.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

*Insights on the State of Education and Democracy in Botswana*

**Introduction**

At independence, Botswana was a very young and fragile democracy, which inherited a ‘deliberately deformed’ and culturally irrelevant education from Britain. Therefore, the government of President Khama had a mammoth task ahead of it to design an education model whose goal was to build a peaceful and harmonious social environment that would positively impact the country’s socio-economic and political panorama. *Education for Kagisano* was born and at the heart of its operation were Botswana’s four national principles by then, (the fifth one was added in early 1990’s). These principles are democracy, unity, self-reliance and development and *botho*, which was added lately. The essence of this education system was to try to build a united democratic society that is able to live self-reliantly and develop while also upholding cultural values and respecting human dignity in general. According to NCE (1977, p.11), Botswana’s independence meant that the country had a task to develop a society that gives expression to the unique character and values of Botswana while taking advantage of useful innovations developed elsewhere.

The structure of the education system that was put in place to help *Education for Kagisano* become a reality is the 7-3-2. This means that students spend seven years of primary school (eligible to start on January 1st of the 6th
birthday), three years of junior secondary certificate and two years of senior secondary education (National Development Plan (NDP 8). According to this structure, the first ten years are compulsory and are regarded as the years for basic education to which every citizen is entitled. After the ten years of basic education, those who do well continue into senior secondary education while those who fail to perform better are advised to pursue vocational training. The itchy issue, however, is that the language of instruction from standards 1 to 4 is Setswana and thereafter English and there is a pilot project that started in 2002 that sought to experiment on the implementation of English as a medium of instruction from standard 2. That on its own reflects and maintains colonialism’s idea that use of language to deculturalize and socially transform African people (Spring, 2001).

*Education for Kagisano* cherished the ideal that the focus of Botswana’s education should be the development of citizens by enabling them a full, successful life and continued personal growth, and equipping them to participate effectively in a rapidly changing society. Therefore, the starting point here was that the curriculum should be designed with these entire qualities in mind. *Education for Kagisano* was seen as the real messiah in as far as developing an education system that relates and respect the values of a society was concerned. As indicated earlier, the national principles were considered very essential and any form of education that Botswana follows should not divorce itself from:
Puso ya batho ka batho (Democracy)- the logic behind this principle is that Botswana should have an education system that provides voice for all today and in future, and that not only should voices be heard on political platforms, but generally in all community, socio-economic arenas of the state and even beyond.

Boipelego (Self-reliance)- the context behind this principle was that there were a lot of foreigners in the country who ran its affairs, therefore by adapting self-reliance as a principle it was believed that Botswana’s economy would be brought under the control of the local people and replace the expatriates at the most possible speed. At individual levels, Botswana wanted to see the emergence of citizens who can progress through self-help with the government on their side.

Popagano ya sechaba (Unity)- this principle was to remind Batswana that they can only progress and brave the pains of colonialism through unity and solidarity. Above all, it was the nation’s dream that unity amongst the people would help build a unique sense of national identity and awareness.

Ditiro tsa dilhabololo (Development)- Fortunately for Batswana, just like many other African countries, it is rich of resources, therefore through the principle of development, every Motswana is reminded that for the country to prosper, citizens should take the
initiative to manage the physical resources well so as to build a stronger economy that would benefit all Batswana. Focus was also made on the development of human resources so as to allow every Motswana to realize their potential with the help of the government. (NCE, 1977, p.30)

Early 1990’s addition- Botho (humane/ good personality)- this principle was added in the early 1990’s as a wake-up call to the HIV/AIDS scourge that is devouring Botswana’s society. The government thought that the reason why many Batswana were dying from AIDS is because they lack the “right personality” since they no longer cherish and respect their cultural values and norms. In fact the government observed that morality is now history amongst Batswana, as such the government saw the need to remind people of their cultural values and expectations. Therefore, it is through the concept of botho that people should start thinking otherwise and behave in a way that shows respect for one another as well as their culture.

Education: The Key to Understanding Democracy

Limage (2001, p.xxii) makes a case that schools are still places where learning the practice of democracy is still an exception instead of a rule. She further contends that there can never be peace without justice; no democracy without critical participation; and no freedom from violence, need, or injustice without young people’s and adults’ learning that all age ethnic, religious, and gender identities must be heard. Limage could be understood to be making a
case that the learning environment, i.e. the school, should be a platform where all voices should be nurtured to participate and air opinions that eventually would foster individual's ability to make sound and rational decisions as citizens. If schools continue to hamper the inclusion of all voices in decision making and otherwise, then one could conclude that eventually the products of the school will be products that are reserved, apathetic and deficient of the zeal to participate in scenarios which are structured to help people make concrete and sound decisions which affect their lives and the nation at large.

From another angle, Osler in (Harber 1998, p.52) also sails within the same ship as Limage when advancing that it is essential that education systems should respect and promote human rights education whose intention is to make sure that every human being is given equal opportunity to learn, participate and also contribute positively towards the development of their nation. Osler maintains that countries should prioritize allowing children full participation in quality education and also commit themselves to support international efforts to enhance children’s well-being through implementation of the United Nations’ Convention On the Rights of the Child that declares:

We shall place a stronger emphasis on combining provision with children’s protection and participation. For example, we shall support the development of education systems where children are all educated about their rights and are shielded from violations of these rights (p.52).
Given Osler’s advancement, it could be mentioned that Botswana can build strong democracy by formulating an education system that gives children room to fully participate by allowing their voices to be heard from all corners. In order for students to grow as active democrats, Osler adds that the school should be seen as a community that enables students to acquire skills and in turn provide a set up where they can explore their citizenship meaningfully by also reflecting on their identities and sense of belonging in a multicultural society, within a human rights value framework (p.53). The BNF’s claim could be seen as being inline with the claims made by Limage and Osler that schools should be places where students are given room to make their voices heard, as well as providing a chance for students to explore their citizenship.

The use of corporal punishment in Botswana’s schools can be regarded as a tool that can develop students as passive and docile individuals who are not eager to challenge circumstances or even willing to make critical decisions that affect their lives or the nation in general. The BNF further laments that the BDP government legalizes the use of degrading and dehumanizing corporal punishment mainly for children of the working class and peasant backgrounds in government schools with the ultimate purposes of producing a docile workforce for the capitalist companies (p.14).

When commenting on the Role of Tertiary Institutions on Botswana’s Vision 2016, Tafa (2003) appears to be sharing the same opinion with the BNF manifesto when mentioning that from the Vision 2016 development plan:
...it is clear that there are no plans on full democratization of the education system - both the processes of schooling and the content of education, both the school administration and classroom discourse. In schools there are no structures for student voice. The is no legislation of pupil democracy, pupil unions, grievance procedures, liaison teachers, students and parents’ charters and a range of other structures that are found in the industrialized countries. Indeed our schools are characterized by a great deal of state sanctioned violence - the largely uncontrolled use of corporal punishment which violates the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child that our country has surprisingly signed and ratified, and yet it is not honoring its obligations (p.1).

Still on the same subject, Godwyll (Democracy & Education, 2004, p. 10), “Democracy and Education” also articulates that the crux of the matter is that education is the key to understanding democracy. He further strengthens his argument by quoting Ezewu (1983) who shares that schools are expected to teach democracy so that the individual has equal opportunities to attain good things in life (p.11). With that said, it is clear that educational institutions should spearhead the teaching of democracy and make democratic living within institutions a daily practical experience. As future leaders, the journey to training students to become responsible and productive leaders should start now by exposing them to circumstances that challenge them and at the same time train them to be informed democratic decision makers. Denying them such an
experience might prove to be a fatal move in the future that could see the state turning into a chaotic social ground.

van Resburg ([www.gov.bw](http://www.gov.bw)) maintains that democracy in education can take place when the school incorporates practical skills into the curriculum so that those who are not able to perform well theoretically can still function productively in society. van Resburg advanced his philosophy by becoming the founder of brigade's movement in Botswana in Serowe village and challenges students to be at the core of their learning process. “Students should not sit back and expect the government to spoon-feed them but must work as a team because there is great progress in unity. Education, training and productive work must be combined.” ([Daily News Online, 22 December, 1999](http://www.dailynews.co.bw)). van Rensburg believes that education should be linked with technical education because people need skills to perform various functions.

On the other hand, Murangi & Abosi (2002) posit that in most instances within a Botswana classroom, discipline generally is seen as something imposed by the school ‘authorities’ (including the classroom teacher) for the purpose of securing a conducive learning environment, or specifically to secure compliance with instructions (p.57). In this regard discipline is seen as something external to the students since they are never involved in deciding which form of discipline or punishment should be used on them.
On that score, punishment or discipline is therefore nothing but an imposed and coercive measure that student do not even like. Murangi & Abosi contend:

Discipline can be maintained by any group of students whether in their classroom or on the playing ground without the teacher or the headmaster or his agents being present to enforce compliance with the rules and orders. Such a situation can arise if the students as a group autonomously decide by what rules to play the learning game, and all anticipatively enforce such rules (p.58).

If students can be allowed to engage in such discipline measures without the involvement of the teacher, then that will be the right step towards allowing them to exercise their democratic consciousness.

Educational Philosophies in the Pre-colonial Botswana

Higgs, Vakalisa, Mda and Assie-Lumumba (2000, p.63) argue that a generally disturbing assumption is that the Europeans brought education to the continent of Africa. Such thinking conforms to the doctrines of *terra nullius* (empty land) or *terra incognito* (land without minds, thus people devoid of culture, history and civilization). Through these doctrines Europeans did not only claim a right of ownership to the land of indigenes, but also waged a religious and education ‘war’ that sought to undermine and denigrate any cultural practices and spiritual values that were embraced prior to European invasion.
In the modern day society, education is always associated with schooling. This kind of attitude makes one think that if there are no schools, then there can be no education. The fact of the matter is that education takes place even where there are no schools as was the case in the indigenous Africa. Abosi & Murangi (2002) share that though pre-colonial Africa did not have schools in the modern sense, this did not mean that young people and children were not educated: “They learned by living and doing” (Nyerere, 1967). What this suggests is that there was no distinction between an individual’s life and learning opportunities; it was all in one. Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi (2002, p.4) explain that traditional education in Botswana was essentially practical training that was intended to enable the individual to play a useful role in society. “Therefore, to the extent that traditional instruction made a contribution to the preparation of boys and girls for living in a society, it was in every sense true education” (Mwanakatwe, 1968).

When addressing the subject of indigenous education in Botswana, von Borstel (“Lessons from the Past” Education with Production, 10 (2) 47-68) posit that it operated under the philosophy of Education for Humanity and Education for Living, which was based on the Learning Curriculum rather than the Teaching Curriculum of formal education. Based on a seemingly imperceptible curriculum, indigenous education was so interwoven with the people’s daily political, economic, social and cultural activities that many anthropologists were not able to tell it apart from other activities. They tended to conclude that these societies
had no education and that learning was through experience, observation, experimentation, apprenticeship, excursions, games and active participation in the daily chores of the community. This is what former president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, called education with production-Ujamaa/nationhood.

According to (Legum & Mmari, 1995), the principles of Ujamaa, “citizens should be governed by fundamental human principles of living together working together and sharing the fruits of their work (especially basic goods and services) as well as the major means of production” (p.36). African education encouraged citizens to always have the welfare of their society at heart and work towards its development without prioritizing the pursuits of selfish individual interests and advanced by the colonizers.

On the basis of the above, it could be argued that the indigenous education in Botswana also embraced the theory of constructivism whereby people learn through their active participation in problem solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity that they find relevant and engaging. People were learning through the construction of their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their knowledge and experiences, applying these to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). So education for humanity and living was of paramount importance to Batswana because people were learning and experimenting with real-life situations rather than just learning concepts that at times are irrelevant to real life. Higgs, et. al (2000) add that the philosophy of
humanism embraced in indigenous education saw to it that human need, interests and dignity are of fundamental importance and concern; and that humane people are those endowed with moral norms and virtues such as kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy and respect and concerns for others (p.188).

Under indigenous education, the students (children) appeared to be intrinsically motivated (did not need the artificial motivation and punishment of the formal education system) and achievement was measured in terms of one’s sense of community, self-worth and self-reliance. There were no examinations (only limited criticism for the mistakes and realistic praise for good work). There were no teachers in a formal sense, no centralized bureaucracies. In short, there was no real school, as learning was part and parcel of the different indigenous education. Therefore characterizing it as authoritarian (as the colonizers believed) seems to be an overgeneralization, notwithstanding the fact that there were some authoritarian elements.

Abosi & Murangi (2002) maintain that the skills of reading, writing and mathematical computations as we know them today were not part of traditional education except that games such as \textit{dara or dili}, \textit{wouri} or \textit{awale} are said to be the real exercises in mathematics and improved geometry and other properties of numbers (Moumouni, 1968). According to Tlou and Campbell (1994) people learnt history (as part of indigenous education) from old people and in the initiation schools such as \textit{bogwera} and \textit{bojale} where young people were taught
the history of their groups and leaders by learning long poems known as praise poems, *maboko*, which tell of great events. In addition, young people were also taught how to become responsible adults.

Datta (1984) adds that oral traditions told carefully and repetitively, also constituted the African child’s training in a complicated linguistic system without a script. Names of trees and plants, animals and insects, as well as the dangers and uses of each, were learnt as boys’ herded cattle or farmed land with their fathers. Imitative play formed an important part of formal education. Boys staged mock battles and made model huts and cattle pens; girls made dolls, played as husband and wife and cooked imaginary and at times real meals. Central to the organizing of the initiation schools, especially *bogwera* and *bojale*, was the village Chief, *kgosi*, who often called the elders in the village at the *kgotla* and told them that it was time for the boys and girls to go into the initiation schools.

Tlou and Campbell (1994) hint that the boys were taken into remote places circumcised and then taught how to behave as men. They also learnt about the laws and customs of their *morafe* (a group of people normally having a lot in common), as well as how to fight and defend their people during time of need, undergoing hardships, and generally learning how to respect others as well as oneself.

On the other hand, the girls were taught about responding to physical changes in their bodies, how to cook, how to be a responsible mother and wife,
as well as raising children. Schapera (1934, p.2) reveals that *bojale* consisted of formal instructions in matters concerning womanhood, domestic and agricultural activities, sex, and behavior towards society. The skills that were also learnt by women at the initiation school included skills such as sewing, cooking, carving mortars, making hoe handles, and weaving beads. The result was that women qualified for motherhood and marriage.

Schapera (1934) further explains that *bogwera* was usually conducted away from the village in a special bush camp. Boys learnt special skills such as hunting, herding livestock, and making shields and spears. At the end, the boys had to undergo a circumcision ceremony under the supervision of a *Ngaka* (a traditional priest/doctor). Both boys and girls were taught folklore, songs, poetry, and various other aspects of culture and after the initiation ceremonies; boys were regarded as young men and girls as young women. It is therefore clear given the above that indigenous education in Botswana was certainly a true community education that was structured with the welfare of the community’s needs at heart. This kind of education had a concrete philosophy that ascertained that theory does not get divorced from practice.

On a comparative note, a gap of difference could be measured between the indigenous education and the modern formal education in Botswana in that today we see a chain of problems associated with learning whereby students abscond from school, take drugs, drop out of school, become suicidal, boycott and disrupt the learning process, go on strikes, fight with teachers, and in some
cases go to the extent of shooting them, etc. There was order under indigenous education since the elders were the ones who were in charge and would be given the due “natural respects” by those they led.

Abosi & Murangi (2002, p.5) further posit that the education of the child was so important that parents, siblings and neighbors shared it. All people, of any age group, assumed some responsibility for training children or promoting their understanding of the laws and the customs of the tribe. This practice was in keeping with the concept of extended family, which strengthened the bonds of unity. Nonetheless, parents were generally responsible, with the support of their own grown-up children and close relatives, for educating their offspring during the initial years. Here, we come to understand the logic behind the African proverb *it takes the whole village to raise a child*. In most instances, a child was not expected to reply when scolded and was not to look the elderly person in the face. Any misbehavior was punishable even by a stranger unknown to the child. This practice underpinned the need to respect all elderly people from the age of six or seven years (Abosi & Murangi, 2002, p.7).

On close examination, the main aims of indigenous or customary education can be identified as follows: to preserve the cultural heritage of the extended family, the clan and the larger group, to adapt members of the new generation to their physical environment and teach them how to control and use it, and to explain to them their own future, and that of their community, depends on the understanding and perpetuation of the institutions, laws and values
inherited from the past (Datta, 1984). This statement reveals the fact that indigenous education was an education whose philosophy cherished the ideal that education of a people should develop from the immediate physical situation and social needs, and that in order for an individual to function well in a given society, they should be trained well. That is where we begin to see the reality in the philosophical concept of education for humanity and living which of course had a highly functional curriculum relevant to the needs of the people.

Moumouni (1968) reflects that one strong point about indigenous education is that the child and the young person learned everywhere and all the time instead of learning in circumstances determined in advance outside the productive and social world. He was truly in the school of life in the most concrete and real sense. Above all, the growing child's traditional education stressed at every stage the importance of strict adherence to the accepted moral code. One point to note is that though some of the issues raised here concern traditional education, some of them are still in place even today. One must agree with Castle when asserting that it would be foolish and dangerous to regard it as quite irrelevant to the needs of the present, to be cast off as an ill-fitting garment of paganism—the past has a way of asserting its values in the present (Castle, 1996).

In a sense, the above discussion paints a picture that Batswana had their own indigenous educational philosophy before colonialism. Contrary to what we see today under western education, the philosophy of education for humanity
and *education for living* based on a *learning curriculum* had the zeal to produce citizens who understood their environment and would work towards the development of a strong and better society. Its teaching methodologies were relaxed; learner and community centered, and directly addressed the world of reality. However, as shall be discussed later, this form of education appears to have suffered devastating blows at the hands of colonialism and changed forever.

**Impact of Colonialism on Botswana’s People and Education**

During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, missionaries were all over Africa pursuing their assignments regarding the gathering of material and human resources as a response to the boom of the industrial revolution. The missionaries spearheaded this exercise under the pretext that they were spreading the word of God to the world. History has it that they were more imperialistically inclined than spreading the word of God. African colonies were made politically and economically subordinate to European needs. The recently industrialized states of Europe, particularly Britain and France, required cheap raw materials and desired captive markets for manufactured goods (Gordon & Gordon, 1996). Tlou & Campbell (1994) advance that missionaries believed that people would not be saved unless they were Christians. In order to convert people to Christianity, Christian churches in Europe and America formed Missionary Societies that sent missionaries throughout the world and one of these societies was the London Missionary Society (LMS), which was formed in 1795.
Robert Moffat, eventually landed on Botswana soil and started his mission of converting people to Christianity. For some reason, he became very popular amongst Batswana and they respected him as a man who had nothing to do with the politics of their country. Little did they know that this man was opening the doors of “evil” into Botswana. Soon he was followed by David Livingstone in 1842 who made history by teaching the first Tswana Chief, Sechele, how to read and write. Tlou & Campbell (1994) add that he taught Sechele how to read and write and also converted him into Christianity though it took him (Sechele) a very short time before realizing that the missionaries were teaching against his custom. However, Livingstone became very popular amongst Batswana because professionally he was a medical doctor, and he cured some of the diseases for which Batswana did not have a cure.

Abosi & Murangi (2002) observe that in almost all African countries, including Botswana, the first western education institutions to be established were founded by missionaries of various denominations. Their first and major concern was the propagation of Christian faith, which was done by the British who later on were followed by Americans. In the case of Botswana, it was the missionaries who played an important role in bringing Bechuanaland (Botswana) under British rule under the following reasons:

- The LMS missionaries were British citizens and so they wanted their own country to rule the land of Batswana.
They feared that if their country did not rule the land of Batswana, the Boers in South Africa would colonize it, which would mean the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) would take over from LMS. So Britain was used to promote their spiritual empire.

They believed that under the British rule, Batswana rulers (Chiefs) would be powerless to resist Christianity.

They wanted Britain to help change those African customs they considered heathen.

(Tlou & Campbell, 1994, p.133).

The colonization process became acute in Botswana to the degree that the missionaries became open and declared that they hated Setswana customs such as bogadi (bride wealth), rain making, polygamy, bogwera and bojale (male and female initiation schools) and they worked to the marrow to destroy all the customs they abhorred. They believed European cultures were superior to the Batswana's and that Batswana should move away from their barbaric customs and follow the examples of the Europeans. Picard (1985) mentions that by 1880, the missionary presence in Botswana had become permanent and they did everything in their power to change their custom.

Parson & Palmer (1977) have argued that colonialism in Africa also went to the extent of taking away traditional authority and community regulations that governed land use for agricultural purposes. With the arrival of colonialism, management of resources took a negative dimension, which ultimately
perpetuated poverty amongst Africans. As such, it goes without saying that colonialism did not only affect education but also had impact on society, on land use, and agriculture.

The schools and churches built in Botswana were used as cultural destroyers. Missionary education was geared towards producing citizens to worship the colonial system as well as subscribing to their values. The main purpose of colonial education was to train Africans to participate in the domination and exploitation of the continent as a whole. Colonial education was education for the subordination, exploitation, and the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment (www.scholars.nus.edu). Colonial education polluted the minds of Batswana to a degree where a lot of them decided to shun away their culture and follow it.

The missionaries trained Batswana teachers who were converted to help spread their mission and they also continued building schools. Missionaries established the first secondary school in Botswana in 1949 later followed by Mater Spei College in Francistown, and finally Gaborone Secondary School. They became the first schools to offer courses leading to the School Certification Examinations of the Cambridge Syndicate (Abosi & Murangi, 2002). The missionaries were in charge of these schools and decided on what was to be taught without the involvement of the Batswana. Soon the elders who were spearheading the learning process saw their powers disappear at an alarming
rate. They were regarded as uncivilized and barbaric, hence could not spearhead the learning process for their children.

Some of Batswana saw colonial education as meant to help meet their needs, thereby improving the quality of their lives. Perhaps there is nothing strange about this if education per se is taken as an abling agent, which is to make the people perform certain tasks that they were unable to do before. But it is a known fact that schools, whether church or state financed, were modeled on the educational systems that had been developed in the industrial countries (Kallaway, 1984). Colonial schools became institutions of control and the indigenous people were not allowed to exercise their freedom or have a say in the manner in which schools were run. Missionaries created a division between the Batswana since some of them decided to disobey their Chiefs and follow the newly found “demi-gods.” They used the divide and conquer strategy to dominate Batswana. Eventually, Batswana lost their culture and identity as they started accepting colonial rule under the guise of civilization.

Akinpelu (1981) asserts that one of the all-embracing criticisms leveled at colonial education, is that though an educational system should reinforce the values cherished by the people who set it up, it tended to inculcate and reinforce a value system different from that of the people. The inherited system was designed to reinforce the colonial condition. It was meant to train the individual to render services to the colonial state and perpetuated intellectual arrogance by those who have walked through the gates of the masters’ school. Nyerere (1967)
suggests that those superior educated citizens condemned those who have not been successful at home as inferior and rejects. Pupils learned to despise even their own parents regarding them as ignorant and unable to offer anything to learn. As if not enough, Akinpelu (1981) further lashes that so great is the confidence of the colonized in the western form of schooling to the degree that the young believe that all knowledge which is worthwhile is acquired from books or education people. Generally, *Batswana’s* culture became despised.

The traditional doctors who used to cure diseases amongst *Batswana* got new labels such as evil witchdoctors because of colonial influence. All things associated with traditional Tswana value are today regarded as of little value, superstitious and primitive. African people have been alienated from their roots through colonial education which deculturalized and depersonalized them.

According to National Commission on Education (1977), indigenous culture was submerged and many *Batswana* were encouraged to believe that their own cultural inheritance was inferior to that imported by the British. Halpern (1965) sums up our case by stating that educationally, the *Batswana* are probably more backward than any other people in Africa who have been under the British rule. This state of affairs is a cause for concern. Could there be a quick solution to it for the sake of democratic development?
The Dynamics of Botswana’s Educational Philosophies and the Road to Socio-economic and Political Development

According to the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) (1970), which has ruled the country since independence, the main concerns on education soon after independence were to develop secondary and university education within the first decade. The demand for secondary education and tertiary education became pronounced since almost every Motswana shared the notion that education was fundamental to individual’s development. Education was regarded as the key tool to gain professional jobs and it appears as though every parent wanted to see his or her child progress well in life. In view of this high demand for education, self-help institutions came into existence and both the state and its citizens raised high the flag for Education for Kagisano. It cherished the ideal that the principal aim of education is individual development. The BDP government saw it important to start teaching democracy from the grassroots so as to continue building a culture of democracy in Botswana. Holm & Molutsi (1989) suggest that democracy in education involves giving each mature person a voice in the running of the affairs and the chance to participate directly or through representatives, in decisions affecting his or her life (p.94). The schools were therefore expected to establish a democratic tradition by rejecting all social and economic structures that are exploitative and instead promote the establishment of new ones reflecting the interests of the masses (Holm & Molutsi, 1989).
Regarding education and development, the NCE (1977) posits that education must first be organized in order to serve development. To show its positive commitment to educational reform, the government of Botswana between 1976 and 1985 built 23 Government Aided Schools, 35 Private Schools and 20 Self-Help Schools (Republic of Botswana, 1970). This was indeed a commendable effort that shows a point of departure from the previous colonial administration, which negatively affected the development of education and contributed towards the erosion of Botswana's culture.

The philosophy of education for humanity and living was bulldozed and replaced by the imperialist and exploitative form of philosophy that did more harm than good to Batswana. What is left today is a struggle to mend the broken walls of social structure and cultural identity. The hope of Botswana lies on Education for Kagisano, that tries to account for and catch-up with the lost Education for humanity. Many scholars see a conflict of ideology and philosophy because Education for Kagisano came to life when the education industry in Botswana was still under much influence of the British, so it was seen as a perpetuation of deculturalization.

Botswana faces a cultural dilemma regarding the implementation of a democratic curriculum in education. First, the current Botswana society believes that discipline should be enforced in school as per the colonial legacy. The belief is that corporal punishment should be a must in school. Therefore, the implementation of Education for Kagisano is seen as a promotion of non-
discipline in schools that has been advocated for by the British. The village Chiefs/traditional leaders are legally mandated to use corporal punishment to enforce discipline anywhere in their society. Therefore, they see the abolishment of corporal punishment as an insult to their traditional powers.

Democracy implies independence as well as openness, tolerance and flexibility to dissenting views of others. The disagreeing individuals come to a compromise and readjustment of their views in order to ensure maximum benefit and freedom of each individual in a society (Abosi & Murangi, 2002). However, this can prove to be an impossible thing to implement in Botswana’s society because culturally, children are supposed to be seen and not heard. This kind of thinking betrays the philosophy behind Education for Kagisano.

It is an open secret that the young can best be prepared for democratic society if the organization of the school and the life of the classroom reflect democratic values as opposed to the dictatorial procedures. Sad to note, democracy is a new and youthful concept in education in Botswana and the teachers who are supposed to teach democracy are inexperienced in the area and are products of undemocratic education systems themselves. So, in many cases they do things the way they were taught (follow the prescription of the status quo). The capacity for teacher education to institutionalize democracy is determined by the ability of teacher education to address the authoritarian perceptions and values hindering the flowering of democracy. It is the perceptions of stakeholders that either constrain or create possibilities in Teacher
Education Institutions (Mannathoko in Harber, 1998). Are stakeholders playing a role in Botswana’s *Education for Kagisano*?

In summary, the challenges facing the economic, social and political development of Botswana cannot be overemphasized. Botswana’s cultural identity needs to be reconstructed in order to erode all forms of colonial hindrances that hamper the country’s democratic development in education. This will take efforts of the state and the civil society to work together towards a common destiny. Education for social harmony can only be possible in Botswana if the people themselves are in harmony with themselves and their culture. Colonialism has made things to fall apart, but reconstruction lies in the hands of all Batswana. The zeal for change for the better should never escape the minds of the state, students, teachers and parents, for there is a promised land ahead.

**Democratic Education**

*The academy is not a paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom* (hooks, 1994, p.207).
When addressing the subject of democracy and education, Parker (1996) mentions that talking of democrats in education basically indicates the fact that we are referring to men and women committed to ways of living together that are marked by popular sovereignty rather than authoritarianism, genuine cultural pluralism rather than oppression in the name of political unity, and a fundamental commitment to liberty, law, justice, and equality as the moral ground for social life (p. xi). In a sense, democratic education encompasses the fact that students are given the mandate to participate in all the affairs affecting their learning.

The meaning of democracy should not just be narrowed down to active political power, identifying with a political party, voting etc. It stretches further to focus on the individual and their actions within a given society or environment.

Patterson (in Singhal & Howard, 2003) defines democracy as a system in which individuals participate, either directly or indirectly, in decision making, use various methods to hold leaders accountable for their actions, and exhibit specific values, such as tolerance and willingness to compromise and build consensus (p.15). Democratic education therefore, would target the promotion of those values mentioned herein.

Under a democratic educational learning environment, students have a voice and have the freedom to participate in the decision-making process of their learning institutions. Without the pursuit of the democratic project by the schools and the larger society, the contradiction between our democratic ideals and the racial and social-class inequality within our society will intensify, thus creating
disillusioned and ineffective citizens (Parker, 1996, p. xi). Democratic education creates a scenario whereby there is a balance of authority in the manner in which schools are run. Parents, students, administrators and teachers become involved and share duties for the general betterment of the education institution.

Defining democratic education from an African perspective, Higgs, Vakalisa, Mda & Assie-Lumamba (2000) state that it is a form of education about empowerment, laying a basis for African people to participate in mastering and directing the course of change and fulfilling the vision of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together as equals with others (p.6). It goes without saying from this statement that democratic education has to do with empowering citizens to understand each other and be understood by them, as well as joining in the decision making process.

A conclusion could be made that in order for African governments to develop strong democracies that are going to support sustainable development, food production and employment, they need to implement democratic curricula so that the civil society can be exposed to democratic participation at an early stage. However, Higgs et al (2000) argue that in Africa there is still work to be done in expanding the purpose of education beyond its immediate functionality, ascribing to it major contribution in the formation of the whole human being. Higgs, et al (2000) that the curricula are only paying lip service to democracy.

Levin (1998) adds to the above claim by mentioning that the school curricula continue to be abstracted from students’ real social context so that the
curricula remains largely abstract tasks. Goduka (in Higgs et al. 2000) argues that in Africa, the school can function positively only if African learners are allowed to claim their right to use their tongue/language, their style of thinking, and also are encouraged to speak and write their culture and spiritual values which are rooted in indigenous episteme (p.64).

Youth’s natural vitality, idealism and optimism are not sufficiently connected to the educational ends. This is a giant problem that needs to be addressed especially for a continent such as Africa where governments are trying to build strong democracies after having been victims of oppression for so long. Structured academic activities that encourage students to critically discuss political issues can foster participation, accountability, and democratic values (Patterson in Singhal & Howard, 2003, p.16). Patterson further suggests that school-affiliated and community groups, such as voluntary associations and service clubs, provide an opportunity for youth to incorporate civic involvement into their identity during key points in their lives (p.16). Higgs et al. (2000) further observe that democratization of education as a political project to build up democratic society very much depends on the degree of participation of the members of the society in the decision-making process (p.9).

Thomson (1987) contributes to this discussion when outlining that democratic education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life, adapting them where necessary
to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth
and evolution (p.36). On that score, one can confidently advance that the logic
behind democratic education is to produce functional citizens in different
communities. The conditions of the truth and the conditions of democracy are
one and the same: as where there is freedom, a community is open and inclusive
and the exchange of ideas thorough and spirited, so there is more democracy
and more learning, more freedom and more knowledge that in turn becomes
ideas conditionally agreed upon. Learning communities, like all communities,
function only when their members conceive of themselves as empowered to
participate fully in the common activities that define the community - in this
case, learning and the pursuit of knowledge in the name of common living
(Barber in Beckham, 2000, p.89).

Taking the above claim into account, it could be argued that in order for
national democracy to come to the fore, it is apparent that educational
democracy should be used to nurture the development of citizens who in turn
will see the need to be engaged in activities to do with the birth and growth and
their country’s democracy.

Orill (1997) treasures the fact that democratic education is a type of
education that sees each individual as unique and with potentials. To drive his
point home, he makes reference to Dewey whose philosophical viewpoint
embraced the fact that human beings are given the ability to associate mind with
experiences regarded as rare and unique, like geniuses. But every individual is in
his or her own way unique. Each one experiences life from a different angle than anybody else and consequently has something distinctive to give others if he or she can turn his/her experiences into ideas and pass them on to others. Each individual that comes into the world is a new beginning; the universe is, as it were, taking a fresh start in him or her and trying to do something, even if on a small scale, that has never been done before (p.xix).

The democratization of education in Africa is therefore clearly a challenge in that the African continent has suffered devastating blows from colonialism and to date most of the African countries are following an education system that has been prescribed and imposed on them by the colonial “masters.” Therefore, the democratization of education is often seen as a threat to those in power because if education succeeds in empowering citizens, then one day the citizens may start a revolution that might challenge those on the golden stools. As mentioned earlier, a dozen or more of African countries are currently in wars that make it difficult for the policy makers to focus on the development of education, let alone its democratization.

Botswana’s Education and Development of a Democratic State

*Democracy is strongest where education is strongest. To many people, the ideal is identical to formal politics voting, elections, political parties and so on. According to this view, the purpose of democracy is to register the desires of the people as they are, not to contribute to what they might be or might wish to be. Democracy is*
simply a market mechanism: the voters are the consumers; the politicians are the entrepreneurs.

-Ben Levin (2004)

The NCE (1977) reflects that development is a process whereby the nation as a whole and its individual citizens come to have improved standards of living; increasing control over their environment; more options in the disposition of their time and material resources, and greater choice in the items they consume. It involves the gradual elimination of dependency on powerful interests within or outside the country, or indeed on outdated attitudes that so often “colonize” people’s minds. Development depends on the creation of productive assets and on their wise management. It also presupposes a skilled and independent-minded population. Education therefore should be organized to serve development (p.26). Given this assertion, one can advance that within the democratic spectrum, any form of education should play a role in developing citizens who will feel the need to actively participate in all issues affecting the socio-economic and political development of their country.

Holm & Molutsi (1989) indicate that the 1977 National Commission on Education attached particular significance to democracy as an overriding principle that should be promoted in the school system in order for democracy to grow and develop. In view of that, the commission adopted the view that democracy implies a voice for all people in their future, not only in political elections but also in the community’s social and economic affairs. In its report, the NCE made the following comments and observations on education and democracy in Botswana:
• If democracy is to work, then people must have sufficient information to make wise decisions, and their decisions must be respected.

• In education, as many decisions as possible must be left to the community. At minimum, this means that people must have direct voice through local school committees, parents-teacher associations and elected councilors in the way the schools are run.

• Teachers and other educational professionals must be consulted about democratic institutions and the way each works, including some opportunities for practical experiences through visits to social gatherings (kgotla), council and parliament.

• Pupils, because of their relative immaturity, can be given only a limited voice in any important decisions affecting the school community, but should be encouraged to manage their own affairs to the greatest possible degree and to participate in the running of the school. They should be given every possible degree and opportunity to exercise choices in groups and individually. In particular they should obtain information about opportunities for further study, training and careers (Holm & Molutsi, 1989, p.90).

Although the above observations make sense, one can quickly be disturbed by the last point which mentions that pupils, because of their relative immaturity can be given limited voice in important decision making processes. Can democracy be given or practiced minimally? This kind of attitude has
consequently seen students going on the rampage demanding their rights and vandalizing public property during the cause of their rage. For instance, during the 2003 BDP primary elections in Serowe, the BDP youth wanted to hold polling officers’ hostages for excluding them from the election process of their BDP representatives and threatened to burn ballot boxes as a way of satisfying their frustration (*Mmegi*, 10 December 2003).

Before making an analysis on whether Botswana’s education positively contributes or has contributed towards the development of a sound democracy, it is worth noting that after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, liberal democracy was seen as the real “messiah” for a new socio-economic and political order in the world. To date, this form of democracy is seen to have bred more harm than good in the development of the Global-South, of which Botswana belongs. Ake (1996) contends that liberal democracy does not regard development of the people as a major priority. He advances that through liberal democracy, the elite get richer while the poor remain mourning forever for the improvement of their socio-economic and political conditions. Botswana is regarded as Africa’s story of democratic success and yet the majority of its populace remains absorbed in poverty despite the fact that Botswana is currently one of the richest and most stable democracies in Africa.

Nzongola-Ntalaja & Lee (1998) argue that African democracy has adversely affected the social and economic fabric of the people and has also exacerbated the political tensions and conflicts in African countries at the
expense of development. Generally, most of the African states cherish the new political reforms, but the sad part of the story is that many African countries are plagued in political turbulence that makes it impossible to have successful governments that can foster development.

Molomo (http://www.ccsu.edu/afstudy/summer2.html) mentions that from 1966 Botswana has managed without fail to follow the constitutional provision of regular elections after every five years, which illustrates the fact that the BDP government sees elections as an integral part of a political culture. Molomo continues by stating that the constitution advocates a non-racial multi-party democracy that is based on the democratic tenants of regular free and fair elections, equality of all citizens, freedom of association, assembly and belief, and the rule of law. One could question: Is voting an automatic signal that democracy exists? In a liberal democracy, elections are often equated with the presence of democracy. That is of course a false claim especially when taking the principles of deep democracy into account. Democracy means more than just elections.

Du Toit, (1995) shares that Botswana is an exceptional democratic success story in a continent that has many authoritarian governments. He adds that Botswana has performed exceptionally well in light of the fact that other nation-states in Africa have performed poorly since decolonization. Of all the African countries that received independence in the 1960s, Botswana has consistently maintained democratic principles and practices by holding free and
fair elections from 1965 to present. Just as indicated by Molomo, the yardstick that has been used for measuring Botswana’s elections has been free and fair elections. The use of this yardstick has made Botswana to be crowned the most democratic nation state in Africa. Contrary to this claim, Dingake (2004) charges that the only time that the BDP government should feel good about the international accolades they are receiving about Botswana being an oasis of democracy, peace and stability in a region of violence and instability, should be when they are applauded by Batswana themselves, to whom they are directly answerable. Dingake could be understood to be disputing the fact that Botswana is a shining example of democracy and that the citizens do not give it such a label and that the label comes from the international arena.

Nzongola-Ntalaja & Lee (1998) state that for decades Botswana’s democracy did not recognize women as equals in the government and even the constitution is biased. They contend that women’s struggle for equality in Botswana in the 1990s took a more overtly political stance in demanding representation and political space in decision-making structures of the government and political space (p.25). It is argued that Batswana women’s role in government and development is restricted by certain powerful conventions in the form of custom, traditions, laws and political practices which relegate women to a position where they become subordinate to men who limit their capability to make sound decisions about their lives and welfare. As such, one can confidently
declare that Botswana’s democracy reflects more of a pseudo-democracy in that it does not respect gender differences.

As if not enough, Dingake (2004, p. 75) contends further that Botswana’s democracy is at crossroads. He advances the fact that the unemployment, crime, car hijacking, corruption and armed robbery continue to escalate. Though Botswana has one of the highest income gaps comparatively with other countries, Dingake observes that between more than 50% and 60% of Batswana live under the poverty datum line in spite of the fact that Botswana per capita income is approximately $3,000.00 and is among the highest in the continent. On a similar score, some scholars using a greater yardstick of measuring democratic practices and principles have been less praising of Botswana’s performance. One reason for this is that the ruling party has won all elections since independence. According to Pierre du Toit (1995), “Botswana’s opposition is ascriptive...Ascriptive minorities cannot become majorities, so elections do not reflect a true democratic picture” (du Toit, p. 18).

Binsbergen (www.shikanda.net/ethnicity.htm) adds to the above opinion by stating that the weaknesses of Botswana’s opposition is not due to lack of politicians of great capabilities, but is due to lack of funds (whereas the ruling party is at least logistically facilitated by the government), fragmentation, a low degree of grassroots organization, and the circumstance that the ruling party’s powers of co-optation and appeal for peace and unity cut across political boundaries. Botswana's ruling party continues to perpetuate its dominance such
as the appointment of specially elected political bodies and in most cases this is done whenever the opposition threatens to take majority, and persuading opposition members to cross the floor to the ruling party. In order for democracy to grow and live long it needs a strong opposition.

The Dilemma of Education and Democracy in Botswana

Levin (www.acea.ca/educa/levin_democracy.phtml) asserts that learning about political participation would seem hollow if one is unable to exercise political participation. Significant numbers of secondary school students are old enough to vote, and many become old enough soon after leaving secondary schooling. Yet for most students, secondary schools remain largely places where they have neither political rights nor a political role. School curricula continue to be abstracted from students’ real social context so that they remain largely abstract tasks. Youth’s natural vitality, idealism and optimism are not sufficiently connected to educational ends.

Regarding the development of Botswana’s democracy, Picard (in Vaughan, 2003) maintains that Botswana is a de facto one-party state with an electoral process that is symbolic of a style of political rule rather than a source of alternative political leadership. He continues to add salt to an injury by stating that the purported uniqueness of the Botswana political system is somewhat superficial. The government is led by a cohesive group of elites who see themselves as modernization agents, content to leave responsibility for political mediation and the management of a top-down strategy of economic growth to
the bureaucracy (p.67). From a different political angle, the former President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, in his foreword (in Fawcus, 2000) declares that Botswana is widely regarded as a success story because it is a unique country that has maintained multi-party democracy and saw it flourish. He adds, human rights and the rule of the law have been respected, good governance has been practiced, and the economy has been consistently well managed (p.ix).

However, the BNF Manifesto (2004) could be understood to be challenging President Masire’s claim when outlining that after four decades of the BDP neo-colonialists government, still the BDP does not know what to do with this country apart from the basic social and physical infrastructure development in terms of roads, schools, clinics, water supply and telecommunications. Although the BNF appreciates the provision of these services, the Manifesto further charges that infrastructure development is the function of any government throughout the world, though the BDP has failed to provide enough of these resources to the masses. The BNF (2004) further argue that although the BDP continue to boast about Botswana’s so-called phenomenal economic growth, reality has it that:

- The number of households living under poverty is 55% of the rural population, 46% of peri-urban village population and 29% of urban population.
Social inequality has increased and unemployment has remained above 20% of the labor force since 1989. Among the youth, the unemployment rate ranges from 30% and 40%.

The agriculture sector that used to employ the majority of Batswana has collapsed.

Corruption and economic crimes, mainly perpetrated by the BDP financial backers, has also increased in tandem with abuse of power and arrogance by the BDP leadership.

There has been a rapid increase in juvenile delinquency with the effect that when a delinquent youth becomes an adult, we have a phenomenon of delinquent children becoming parents that gradually gives rise to a delinquent nation. This gives rise to a vicious cycle that threatens the whole nation.

The BDP government has communicated no strategy to eradicate poverty, empower citizens, create more employment opportunities, combat HIV/AIDS, diversify the economy, etc.

The BDP policies constitute a time bomb that the nation cannot afford (p.2).

The BDP is also blamed for failing to combat voter apathy amongst youth since independence. Although almost all the political parties have youth wings, the participation of youth in politics, especially voting, continues to decline. This is a clear indication that youth are politically apathetic and this problem qualifies
one to declare that *Education for Kagisano* has yet to achieve its objectives. The opposition parties have always charged that the ruling BDP, as well as the (IEC), fail to come up with voter education programs that would help educate the masses about democratic involvement.

Seeletso (2001) also adds to the discussion by exposing that a historical perspective of elections in Botswana since 1965 reveals relative political inactivity and low voter participation rates among Batswana. Evaluation reports of the 1999 general elections show that out of a total of a voting age population of 867,000, about 459,662 (53 percent) had registered to vote in 1999 general elections. The actual votes cast were 354,466 (41 percent). Of the 17,400 non-resident voters, only 333 (2 percent) voted against 1,395 who had registered. A sizeable proportion of the registered youths did not take up their responsibility to vote. Overall, 17,483 ballots were spoiled or rejected (p.1).

Recently several ministers in Botswana have been noted to have abused their powers by allocating land to themselves as well as those close to them, at the expense of the civil society.

On the basis of the above, it goes without saying that political involvement and democratic practices in Botswana, especially among youth, leaves much to be desired. They fail to address deep democratic ideals and if at all Botswana is to continue being crowned a shining example of African democracy, then it ought to come up with democratic programs in schools that would involve students from grassroots. Non-participation is an unhealthy
practice especially in a tender democracy such as Botswana’s and eventually it can prove to be a threat to the survival of Botswana’s democracy. Those in positions of power should refrain from imperialist notions whereby they want to accumulate wealth and land at the expense of the masses. We certainly see a dilemma between what the country is supposed to be doing in the education system and what really takes place within the system on a day-to-day basis. This signifies the fact that democracy ought to be granted in totality/deeply, failing which we continue to have an ailment.

**Botswana’s Effort to Integrate Democracy in the Curriculum**

*Democracy should be viewed as key learning outcomes in the formal curriculum from the earliest years of schooling. If there is to be a government of the people, by the people and for the people, then there must be education of the people in the principles, practices and commitments of democracy (Patrick, 1991, p.1).*

Clarken (1990) states that in Botswana, education may have grown much, but has changed very little. Society and the economy have evolved in new directions, making fresh demands in terms of attitudes, skills and abilities; but the education system has been slow to respond, and at times has actually seemed to be obstructing progressive development in other spheres of national life in Botswana (p.3). He adds that other problems include failure to gear education towards noted personnel shortages in the modern economy, especially in the areas of science, math, and technical fields, lack of training capacity, inconsistencies in quality education, especially at the primary level and inequitable access to education in general.
Because of the above, in 1980, Botswana’s national development plan included proposals to address the problems delineated above which were seen as seriously affecting democracy in education. The proposal included primary education reform that emphasized a more practical approach to learning. The secondary school program was also included in the plan so that there could be widespread educational access for every capable/qualifying citizen. The technical and vocational education was expanded and the brigades program got a lot of support. Such mechanisms were put in place so that the field where democracy is to be practiced should be seen to be conducive.

As a way of trying to embrace the concept of democracy in Botswana, the NCE charged the social studies program with the responsibility of teaching about active citizenship. As earlier indicated, the NCE (1977) states:

The principal aim of education is individual development. The individual is of unique value and it is only through changes in the developed capacities and attitudes of individuals that society changes. The focus of education in the school and the classroom should therefore be upon learners: enabling them to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior that will give them a full, successful life and continued personal growth, and equipping them to participate effectively in a rapidly changing society (p.23).

Therefore, through social studies, children are expected to learn and understand the meaning of democracy and the importance of decision-making as
individuals. Social studies was made a compulsory subject (only at junior secondary schools) so that all students should understand the values that the country cherishes. As a way forward of late (early 2004) for the first time in the history of Botswana's education, social studies has been introduced in senior secondary schools (as an optional subject) and this shows the extent to which the government expect teachers to reach students in the teaching of democratic values. This proves that it is not enough for democratic education to be taught only at junior secondary school if all the country is committed to a productive and successful democratic future.

Clarken (1990) draws our attention to the fact that the teaching of democracy through social studies has faced problems since social studies is a new field which was introduced to primary schools in 1980 and the junior secondary schools in 1986 and of late in senior secondary schools in 2004. There are not enough and knowledgeable teachers to handle the social studies curriculum. Currently there are no social studies textbooks. Most of the teachers within the social sciences have trained as specifically history or geography teachers and having to shift to social studies creates a lot of professional dilemmas and frustration among teachers. Another blow to the face is that there are no resources in place to promote the teaching of this important subject. Below are some of the aims of the social studies program as stipulated by the Curriculum and Development Division (1996). On completion of the program, students should:
- Show knowledge and understanding of Tswana Culture, Language, Literature, Arts, Crafts and Traditions.
- Have developed desirable attitudes towards different types of work and have the ability to socialize with other people harmoniously.
- Have acquired knowledge and skills that will enable them to be self-reliant and also be productive industrially.
- Have acquired knowledge of their environment and meet the need for sustaining the scarce natural resources.
- Have developed desirable attitudes/behavioral patterns in interacting with the environment in ways that are protective, preserving and nurturing.
- Have acquired understanding of society and appreciation of their culture including languages, traditions, customs, social norms and sense of citizenship.
- Have acquired good knowledge and practice of moral standards and health practices that will prepare them for responsible family and community life.
- Understand English and use it appropriately, as a vehicle of communication in school and beyond school.
- Realize the effects of Botswana’s location in Africa on political, economic and social life in Botswana.
- Have developed a sound moral code of behavior compatible with ethics and traditions of Botswana.
- Be able to adapt to social, economic and technological change by adjusting acquired knowledge to the new situations and by taking appropriate action.

A closer analysis of these aims should reveal that they are in line with the objectives of *Education for Kagisano*. The problem is that they are supposed to be administered in a climate where students are denied a voice and are expected to be recipients of knowledge without having to be vocal participants. One can even question if students were consulted prior to the formulation of this program because if they are expected to learn about democracy, then they should be given the platform to say what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Worst of all, it is not all students who take social studies at senior secondary school.

Adeyemi (2000) indicates that democracy in schools should respect involvement and participation and further mentions that a democratic classroom is therefore deemed to be a situation where the teacher and the students work hand in hand in an atmosphere devoid of hatred, fear, uncooperativeness, unfairness, inequality in any form, and other negative traits to achieve the goals of learning and the overall goals of the school and the society (p.390).
Botswana’s Vision 2016 and Education

As earlier indicated, Botswana’s development plan since independence has always been based on the national principles of Democracy, Development, Self-Reliance, Unity and of late Botho. In 1997, the former President Sir Ketumile Masire appointed a task force which was mandated to consult with various organs of Botswana’s society and come up with strategies which they would want to see implemented by the year 2016 so as to ascertain that Botswana continues to be a positively developing democratic nation. After rigorous and extensive consultation with the people, the task force published a document entitled *Long-Term Vision for Botswana: Towards Prosperity for All*. This document reflected all the views and suggestions that the nation felt were important in formulating a development plan for Botswana. Molomo and Somolekae (http://www.idea.int/ideas_work/22_s_africa/elections/5_botswana.pdf) reveal that among the areas of focus in the Vision 2016 is the creation of an open, democratic and accountable nation. The vision seeks to consolidate Botswana’s democracy and the cultivation of a leadership ethic described as “A morally and ethically upright, educated society...with increased political tolerance, and legal sanction against those who violate the principle of accountability at all levels of leadership, including the state president.” (Vision 2016, 1997, p.11).

From the above statement, it could be argued that Botswana can only achieve the goal of being a morally and ethically upright nation if it promotes
democracy from grassroots. The absence of democracy in educational institutions can hinder the birth and development of the realities of Vision 2016. The vision should start with children in schools. If they do not see the need to participate in the shaping of Botswana's democracy, then it is sound to project that Vision 2016 will surely turn into a total failure as this children become adults. Vision 2016 emphasizes the fact that by the year 2016, Botswana should be an educated and informed nation. The time to be educated and be democratically involved and informed is now and the school should be seen to be playing a leading role in this regard.

Botswana can become a compassionate and caring nation if it upholds the values of democracy that Sir Seretse Khama lay down, valued, lived, practiced and treasured. Democracy in education and in Botswana’s society in general came to the forefront during Sir Seretse Khama’s reign when he mobilized the nation to contribute herds of cattle, contribute money and render human services towards the building of the first university ever in Botswana. Through the successful construction of the University of Botswana, Botswana’s principle of Self-reliance came to light and if the same could be done today by encouraging the youthful Batswana to participate in the building of the nation, then surely Sir Seretse Khama would smile in his grave.

Botswana’s future and past are determined by its current approach to democracy. As outlined in Vision 2016, Botswana can only become a safe and secure nation in the future if it continues to uphold its democracy with utter care
and caution. Of course, Botswana has to be an open, democratic and accountable nation and there is nowhere in which the students can learn to be accountable citizens if they are not exposed to accountability in their learning journey.

It should be noted that it takes the whole nation to build a democracy and a system of political tolerance. Botswana in this case has an obligation; the civil society ought to be involved in the running of the affairs of the country together with the government. If Botswana's civil society is denied participation because of undemocratic education system, then personal morality and tolerant personal attitudes within the nation will die a devastating death that will affect the country greatly.

According to the Botswana Government Press (www.gov.bw), it is hoped that by 2016 Botswana should be a united and proud nation, sharing common ideals, goals and symbols as well as developing a strong sense of tradition and pride in its history. Batswana's sense of common identity can flourish only if democracy is allowed to manifest itself in different individual, social, educational, cultural and government setups. Failure to do so will ultimately lead to Vision 2016 becoming a blurred and dead vision.

Molomo & Somolekae (2004) raise an issue of concern that despite the widening of franchise to include youth of ages of 18, youth participation in the 1999 elections was far from satisfactory. Not only did a negligible number register for the elections, but also their turn out was also poor. Equally important
is the fact that political parties in general did not field any significant number of youth candidates. According to Molomo & Somolekae, Youth wings of political parties face great challenge ahead of them (http://www.idea.int/ideas_work/22_s_africa/elections/5_botswana.pdf).

One can authoritatively argue on the basis of the above claim that despite the fact that Botswana is labeled as a successful story of democracy in Africa, the civil society, especially youth, are still to be educated about their civil, political and democratic rights. Political ignorance has always been a worrisome issue within Botswana’s political playfield and unless schools play a paramount role in educating the nation about political involvement, voter apathy and political ignorance will remain an issue of concern.

The traditional marginalization of students in the decision-making process in schools may prove itself to be a time bomb to Botswana’s democracy. The explosion of this bomb can lead the country into a political crisis that may take ages to extinguish. Botswana’s schools should provide a foundation upon which democratic ideals are born, nourished and groomed to a level where they are going to enable one generation after another, to lead a prosperous, peaceful and harmonious society. The time to start building an everlasting democracy is today and education should be the tool for total empowerment and activism.

Youth and Voter Apathy in Botswana: A Democratic Challenge

Before 1994, there was a serious political debate in Botswana regarding the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 that was proposed and pursued
especially by the Botswana opposition parties and particularly the BNF. The opposition leaders advanced that Botswana’s democracy cannot prosper if the youth continue to be sidelined from the political decision-making process. Although the BNF won the debate, the 1994 General Elections yielded less youth involvement in the elections. Selolwane (http://asc.leidenuniv.nl/pdf/conference2402003-selolwane.pdf) posits that although the number of potential voters increased in 1994 by 250% from 1965, the nonparticipating voters increased by 319% that reflects less participation by youth. As such, voter apathy was growing at alarming rates and continues to grow especially among youth.

Although almost all the political parties in Botswana have youth wings, youth’s active participation in politics continues to decline. This is a clear indication that youth are politically apathetic and seems not to value their power to vote and make a difference in the political environment of their country. The opposition parties have always charged that the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) as well the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) fail to come up with voter education programs that will help educate the masses about democratic involvement, and in particular youth. Responding to such charges, with special reference to the 1994 General Elections, McCullum (1999) states that Andrew Sesinyi, the spokesperson to President Festus Mogae stressed the fact that the IEC’s purpose was to run the elections and not to promote them. As if making a deliberate contradiction, McCullum (1999, p.2) quotes Andrew Sesinyi...
to have acknowledged the fact that voter apathy especially among young people has been a problem and continues to be. He states “voter apathy has been a problem in Botswana since 1966 and we hope that this time around it will improve. Young people are very uninformed and apathetic. We appreciate the media and what it does but it too has a responsibility to raise issues and cover the campaign” (p.2).

The above statement indicates the fact that voter education in general in Botswana’s problem of democratic education in schools has to be addressed for the better. On a different dimension, some argue that youth are not interested in Botswana politics because before the eyes of the society, they are still young and cannot be entrusted to lead or assume positions of power. This social stigma withers the democratic nature of politics in Botswana and if not addressed soon, Botswana’s democracy will crumble to irreparable pieces since it is likely to have leaders who are politically myopic.

Seeletso (2001, p.1) could be understood to be in agreement with McCullum’s claim above when providing statistical evidence that historically since 1965 there has been lower numbers of participation in elections especially when looking at the 1999 general elections whose statistics was provided earlier on the discussion regarding “The Dilemma of Education and Democracy in Botswana.” For instance, “About 268,500 youths (18 -21 years) were eligible, but only 21,288 (8 percent) registered to vote. A sizeable proportion of the registered youths did not take up their responsibility to vote” (Seeletso, 2001, p.1).
The above figures send a strong message about the youth’s political involvement in Botswana and confirm a high level of political complacency. One therefore wonders why youth do not want to participate in elections.

Botswana is said to be the most peaceful and exemplary democracy in Africa. If there were historical instances whereby youth were politically intimidated and violently prevented from voting, then one would possibly understand why they do not want to take part in the elections. Certain modalities ought to be put in place so that youth can board the democratic train of Botswana. Democratic education can help elevate the level of political awareness and consciousness especially among youth.

The other problem associated with youth involvement in politics is that the government does not provide resources to support young people who are willing to campaign for positions of power. The financially blessed individuals within the political system end up triumphing over youth because they have the resources at their disposal. Young people aspiring to campaign for council seats and parliamentary positions are often demoralized to even engage in the political race to avoid humiliation by the stronger and older opponents who have been in the government and know the channels of getting access to resources that would help them in their campaigns.

According to the IEC- *Voter Apathy Report* (2002:10) “the lowering of voting age in Botswana should be accompanied by more voter education targeting the youths. Voter education that targets the youths should emphasize
the importance of voting.” In this case, if schools were promoting education for democracy, then the apathy that affects them would be eliminated at an earlier stage and fully prepare youth for political involvement in their country. The IEC report further advises that schools should be able to release students for the purpose of participating in the voting process and that the timing of elections should be such that it does not coincide with the sitting of secondary school leaving examinations (p.11). Given this advice, it is clear that schools schedule the examinations at a time when students should be voting and eventually students fail to show up at the polling stations. If the school curriculum encompassed voting as a central and paramount issue in the curriculum, then schools would understand the importance of releasing students to go and vote.

**Theories of Voter Apathy Versus Political Participation**

Basically, there are two conflicting views regarding voter apathy. One theory maintains that voter apathy is a sign that people are happy with their political process and those governing them. In this case, voter apathy is seen as a positive developmental political process that should be encouraged and promoted. The other view sees voter apathy as a sign of political marginalization that affects the political process negatively and that it should be improved for the better. The bottom line however, is that no democracy can flourish if its citizens are not actively involved in its shaping.
Voter Apathy: A Positive Political Development

In some democracies and political environments in general, voter apathy is regarded as a positive and healthy process. According to Lazarsfeld and McPee (1954), the elite theorists see voter apathy as a healthy political process that would breed positive results in any country’s politics. They contend that the absence of voter apathy characterized high tensions within a society and that high political participation signal political instability and is bound to produce dictatorship as it occurred in the Nazi Germany in 1933. Dye & Zeigler (1993) hint that the elite theory maintains that the masses are authoritarian, intolerant, anti-intellectual, nativistic, alienated, hateful, violent and advocates that the elite should not promote the publics involvement in the political process since this can cause havoc. The elitist view is that only those who are economically advantaged should participate in politics and that the majority of the populace should remain politically passive until their involvement is deemed necessary. As such, elite democracy is seen as normal and a social viable political measure.

The elite theory cherishes the idea that democracy can only prosper if there is less majority involvement since those in positions of power will be able to make decisions without that much interference. Huntington, (1975, p.114) shares “The effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups...In itself, this marginality on the part of some groups is inherently undemocratic, but it has also been one of the factors which has enabled
democracy to function effectively.” This philosophical advancement justifies the fact that democracy can prosper if there is some element of apathy within the citizenry. Apathy helps keep the civil society away from politics, thus making political administration manageable. Some elitists state that if the government delivers goods and services to the people, then political apathy will suffice since people are happy and have nothing to worry or complain about which would warrant political involvement or voting.

The IEC report shows that there have been complaints raised by the Botswana electorate that the leaders are self-centered and concerned about enriching themselves at the expense of the masses. The electorates argue that the elite have failed to live to their promises and as such, the civil society is no longer willing to vote since voting seems to be a tool that is used to empower and enrich the politicians. This kind of discontent obviously nullifies the elite theorists’ claim that apathy can be a result of contentment. The elite theory hints that political apathy might help brew political stability in a nation and the truth of the matter, realistically, is that voter apathy has bred a lot of political instability in a number of states, especially in Africa.

Botswana’s youth are generally apathetic and if political experience and social instability is anything to go by, it may not be long before youth cause political instability and social upheavals in Botswana. The 1976 Soweto uprisings in South Africa signify the danger that political and social apathy possess, especially among youth (Mandela, 1995). It was the youth in South Africa who
transformed the political and social history of South Africa for the better and they were driven by apathy that was deliberately generated by the then corrupt, evil and inhumane apartheid regime. With this mentioned, Botswana should not regard voter apathy as a positive step of political development, but should regard it as a sounding bell that symbolizes the fact that the political system should be changed for the better by opening doors for youth involvement. Voter education coupled with citizenship education should be some of the strategies that should be implemented to help curb the apathetic situation among youth in particular and the entire society in general.

Voter Apathy: A Negative Political Scenario

Voter apathy has been viewed over time to be a worrisome political scenario that in most cases could impede the development and success of a democracy. Some citizens have resolved to become individualistic and stay away from affiliation to any political party, as well as displaying perpetual cynicism regarding the political leaders and the entire political system. In any true democracy, participation by all is a very essential step that could help nurture democracy. Governments that value democracy have all the reasons to be worried about voter apathy since it can eventually lead to the collapse of the political process which would negatively impact political development and stability.

Deluca (1995:10) mentions, “Countries with low political participation such as the United States of America and Botswana are those that attempt to link high
political participation with democracy. Because America takes pride in being
democratic, and political democracy is generally thought incompatible with
pervasive indifference, Americans generally agree that, all other things being
equal, apathy should be discouraged.” In Deluca’s words, apathy is a political
deformity that should not be promoted in a democracy.

Contrary to the elite theorists’ claim, participation is a healthy and an
integral part of a democracy whereas nonparticipation is seen as a threat to the
survival of a democracy. Lipset (1960, p.82) strengthens the argument by
declaring “Any situation which results in high participation by members of a
group normally has a high potential for democracy.” Given Lipset’s statement, it
could be argued that less political participation indicates the weaknesses of a
democracy and it carries weight for one to contend that, on the basis of
participation, Botswana is a weak democracy though it is economically and
politically stable. If a society remains politically apathetic, then the leaders will
not feel pressure nor the need to deliver the goods and services they promised
the nation during their election campaign. Political involvement is an important
tool especially in countries where the leaders perpetually indulge themselves in
corrupt political practices at the expense of the electorates. The only way to
unseat such leaders will be through the ballot-box which can only function if
citizens are politically motivated to cast their votes. The IEC report (1999)
reveals:

An instance that is likely to produce political apathy is cumbersome voting
arrangements. Unfriendly voting procedures could switch potential voters off and turn them into apathetic individuals. Thus, the electoral system could be alienating potential voters such that they make the seemingly erratic decision to stay away. In short, people become apathetic not because they are naturally apathetic or currently satisfied or socially content. They may be apathetic because power relations produce apathy. There is evidence to show that the inherited Tswana culture and cumbersome administrative procedures (such as the possession of a valid Omang (national identity card); having to register every five years; long queues) generated political apathy in Botswana (p.21).

On the basis of this claim, it could be argued that Botswana’s political system has some loopholes that ought to be addressed urgently so as to safeguard the future of its democracy. Participatory democracy should be promoted even in social settings such as sports activities, churches, the kgotla (traditional tswana meeting place for administrative issues) and households. If students can be exposed to this form of participation as well as having schools that teach and practice democracy, then the prosperity of Botswana’s democracy could be predicted. In any instance, where voter apathy is seen to be a positive step towards political development, there is the likelihood that democracy can be impacted negatively. Hence, the need for participation cannot be overemphasized in this case.
Surely democracy begins with conversation, freedom of speech and intellect and free participation, therefore it is vital in the case of Botswana that leadership should be brewed from grassroots by open social and educational tributaries whereby learners can nurture their innate leadership potentials without fear of victimization or being shut-down. The future of Botswana’s democratic leadership lies within the palm and the intellectual freedom of its youth. Hence the time is now to revisit the education system in order to get rid of those principles that otherwise prove to be a threat to democracy and future leadership in the country.

Democratizing Education: A Comparative Challenge for Africa

_We should not give the Natives any academic education. If we do, who is going to do the manual labor in the community?“_ J.N. le Roux, 1945

*National Party Politician in Apartheid South Africa (appearing in Christie (1986, p.12).*

It should be noted that the colonial legacy of Africa has planted socio-economic and political problems that will take ages to heal. In many African countries today, democracy is still scarce due to social upheavals popular in many African states. It will therefore be naïve for one to expect democratic education to exist in a region that has never tasted peace. Africa today is crying and the efforts to repair the damage of colonialism are making progress in some cases, whereas in some areas chaos and confusion remain the order of the day, thus destabilizing the implementation of concrete education programs.
Christie (1986) states that since 1976, there has been continuing school unrest in South Africa and that students have marched, boycotted classes, burned schools and government offices, and clashed with the police. Eventually, some of the students have been expelled, injured, detained, and killed (p.11). This scenario reflects the danger of colonialism amongst Africans. The historic apartheid regime in South Africa promoted Bantu Education, a form of education that was equivalent to no education at all since those who graduated from educational institutions could not fit into the world of work since they were deliberately undereducated. Democratic education was not possible during apartheid days in South Africa and even today education reform has not fully taken shape.

Traditional African education has been replaced by modern Western education that in most instances promotes the imposition of Western ideas in African schools, thus failing to fully implement civic education that was enjoyed by many Africans from their traditional social democracy in education. Makulu (1971) mentions that tribal and traditional education were part of the social order of all communities. In the ancient empires such as those of Ghana, Mali, Songehi and Benin in the west of Monomotapa in East Central Africa, practical education of a considerably developed pattern was an essential part of social organization (p.1). Be that as it may, it could be contested that the disruption of African educational structures has affected the idea for education for social harmony or nation building. Makulu (1971) seems to be in support of this claim.
when advancing that the idea, therefore, of education for nation building is by no means new; it is the form this education has taken which has differed in each phase of history of Africa (p.1). The missionary education that has been imposed on Africans appears to have had interests that had nothing to do with the intellectual development of Africans to actively function in their societies. In contrast it subjected them to becoming loyalists to the European.

Summers (2002) maintains that schools for Africans (during the colonial era) were chronically under funded, crowded, and staffed by poorly trained teachers operating in shoddy buildings with few books or materials (p.3). The fact of the matter is that a frustrated teacher is a dangerous one. Teachers cannot promote democratic participation if their workplace conditions are terrible. Also the fact that Africans were not in control of their education affairs makes the whole situation complex. Nieuwenhuis (1996, p.33) argues in the case of Lesotho, that at the time of independence of Lesotho in 1966, education was inadequate in scope, quantity and quality. Prior to its independence, formal education was mainly offered by missionaries (95% of all schools were controlled by missionaries).

Nieuwenhuis (1996) further makes his case regarding the obstacles in the implementation of civic education in Africa by stating that in the case of Zambia at independence, the goals of education were not achieved. He contests that the decline in the quality of education at independence was generated by lack of finances and constraints such as large classes, poorly furnished classrooms, a
sarcity of textbooks and other essential items (p.39). As if not enough, Nieuwenhuis brings in the similar case of Swaziland where at the time of independence from Britain in 1968, education was characterized by poor quality, uneven distribution of schools, high dropout and repeater rates, serious shortages of teachers, and inappropriate and highly academic abstract curricula. These kinds of problems are common in many African countries because a majority of their economies are in shambles, which therefore makes it difficult to allocate funds to education for development purposes.

From a different intellectual angle, Patterson (in Singhal and Howard, 2003) charges that democratic education in Africa has been made difficult if not impossible by lack of entry-level jobs and the high cost of education which has left youth without a clear social niche that eventually leads to a decline in youth political participation (p.17). She adds that HIV/AIDS is one of the major obstacles to the development of civic education in Africa in that it claims the lives of teachers and increases AIDS orphans. In this case, it means that the replacement of teachers becomes difficult and also, the money that could have been used to develop education and the civil society ends up being used to care for the health and nutrition related issues for the orphans. She makes this point clear by reflecting that AIDS has caused governments to divert funds from education to health care in order to care for the rising numbers of AIDS patients. In countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda, over 50 percent of government health spending is used for AIDS care (p.21). This is certainly a
challenging issue that might eventually affect agriculture, especially on food production since there is likely to be scarcity of labor to work in the farms. Sustainable development cannot take place without skilled human resources.

Another major obstacle to the implementation of democratic education in Africa has been the conflict between traditional African beliefs and the modern African traditions influenced by the West. For instance, Abosi and Kandjii-Murangi (2002) observe that some practices seen in the light of the present outlook and attitude are rather odd. A child was not expected to reply when scolded and was not to look the elder person in the face. Any misbehavior was punishable even by a stranger unknown to the child. This practice underpinned the need to respect all elderly people from the age of six or even seven (p.7). This attitude of regarding elders as demi-gods in a society certainly suffocates democratic practices at school because the students see their teachers as parents, and do not argue or challenge whatever they say with the fear that they could be subjected to severe corporal punishment.

African countries such as Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, DRC, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Sudan, to name a few, have experienced the degrading wars and social instability that made the development of sound education almost impossible. In some instances, children left schools and joined the war as child soldiers and this had a negative impact, and continues to, in those countries that are still at war or experiencing socio-economic and political crises. Patterson therefore, makes a strong case that
children raised under violent circumstances, may resolve that problems are solved through force, not dialogue, compromise, negotiation and consensus building (p.24). One cannot agree more with Patterson on this issue. A Setswana saying yields that noga e tsala nogana, meaning a snake produces another snake and not otherwise. Therefore those born and raised under war circumstances will certainly inherit the war-like characteristics that certainly are detrimental to progress in a number of ways.

During the Zimbabwe presidential elections in 2002 for instance, the ruling party of President Robert Mugabe sought to prevent the opposition from freely competing in the elections by mobilizing youth into militia groups called the Taliban, (Patterson, in Singhal and Howard, 2003, p.24) as understood within the Afghan taliban regime. Child soldiers were also a public nuisance in Liberia. On the basis of the above, it would be misleading to conclude generally that the implementation of civic education in Africa has been commendable although there has been an increase in the number of students who enter schools today than during the colonial era. Let it be noted that entrance into a school gate does not mean democratic education is in place. There are a lot of issues that ought to be taken into account prior to making a conclusive judgment that democracy is flourishing in schools.

Samatar (1999) states that in sharp contrast to the failures and disappointments that cloud the rest of Africa, Botswana’s thirty years of independence have been a time of hope, optimism, and progress. She states that
most African political leaders elsewhere considered it another Bantustan of apartheid. Both Western and African experts looked elsewhere for Africa's development pace setters. Countries like Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Kenya that inherited more developed infrastructure and better resource endowments were thought to have better chances (p.1). At independence in 1966, Botswana, as a product of colonialism, had enormous problems that needed immediate attention, among them education. Samatar (1999) adds that a better understanding of the story of Botswana is absolutely essential for not only overcoming the dominance of Afro-pessimism, but in appreciating what Africans can do for themselves despite the colossal constraints of the world order and the internal legacy of the last three decades (p.1-2).

Mokopakgosi and Molomo (1991) mention that since decolonization, most African countries have overturned their initial “democratic constitutions,” which enshrined multi-party forms of government and replaced them with a one-party state in which opposition parties are outlawed. In some cases, armies have overthrown democratically elected governments and abandoned altogether the use of the ballot box. The constitution of Botswana stresses the separation of the state from the civil society, which is a fundamental prerequisite for any form of democracy. By guaranteeing citizens' free political activity, free speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, etc., the constitution has created the necessary climate for public opinion formation independently of the state (www.un.org). This strong foundation is believed to be the one that has
sustained the country and also led to the development of more democratic school system.

According to the report of the National Commission on Education (NCE) (1977, p.25-26), democracy in education should involve giving each mature person a voice in the running of affairs and the chance to participate, directly or through representatives, in decisions affecting his/her life. The belief is that democracy in Botswana could only work if citizens have enough information guiding them to make wise decisions. Regarding development, education was envisioned as a tool used to improve the standards of living of an individual as well as his/her nation. Sir Seretse Khama maintained the idea that, in order for development to take place, citizens should be capable of staffing the existing positions in the economy and of creating new opportunities for self-employment or employment of others.

Although Botswana had laid out the above, the HIV/AIDS scourge challenged the country to come-up with the fifth principle, botho (personality/humane/mutual respect). In view of the fact that Botswana is amongst the most hard-hit countries in the world by HIV/AIDS as stated earlier in chapter one, it was concluded that the reason why citizens are dying from the disease was because morality has been eroded since it was not taught at school. Therefore botho was added to Education for Kagisano as a direct response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Higgs, et al (2000) share that the concept of botho or ubuntu (humanness), comes from the expression: “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu
(Nguni) or “motha ke motha ka batho” (Sotho) which captures the underlying principles of interdependence and humanism in African life (p.182). They state further that this principle illuminates the communal embeddedness and connectedness of a person to other persons (p.183). The students are now taught about how to relate well with other people as well as learning to behave in a morally acceptable way.

Seeletso (1999) posits that the elections history in Botswana shows that youth have been apathetic and not participating fully in the democratic process. On another hand, Deluca (1995) seems to be in support of the above when stating that Botswana is one of the countries with low political participation despite the fact that it is deemed a shining example of democracy. This could be an indication that the education system is not doing enough to promote democratic participation. This can ultimately affect sustainable democratic development.

Of late Botswana schools, especially secondary schools, for instance Masunga Senior Secondary School, has experienced more than four strikes in less than a year and in all instances students complained that the school administration is authoritarian in nature and does not listen to their voices (Mmeği, September 20th 2004). A conclusive analysis of such strikes reveals that students are not given their democratic right in the manner in which the school is run. As such, there is likely to be continuous chaos that might eventually hamper proper learning.
According to Moulton, Mundy, Walmond, and Williams (2002), for many African countries, the democratization of education requires a major reformulation of the entire educational enterprise, opening the door to reform programs that range from budgetary reform all the way to changing individual classrooms (p.3)

Summary

The above literature raises many issues pertaining to the concept of democracy in education. However, there are some existing holes in the literature because it does not outline how democracy is taught in Botswana. The literature fails to address the relationships between, teachers, administrators, parents and students, and how these relationships nurture or suppress the teaching and practice of democracy. The literature falls short of outlining the degree to which Education for Kagisano has managed or failed to promote democratic principles, which ultimately affects the entire democratic process of the country. Finally, it is important for us to learn about student's reactions to political involvement/participation in Botswana and the literature did not yield much to that. It is because of the gaps in the literature that this research sought to explore the situation concerning the teaching and practicing of democracy in Botswana and propose ways through which Botswana's education could be fully democratized.

This study addresses matters to do with the development of structures in schools for student voice. It is through the development of an interactive approach to learning that this study believes Botswana's citizens can positively
play a social role in the political environment of their country. This research was
carried out with the hope that it will positively affect or influences education
policies in Botswana by bringing in new innovations that reflect deep democracy.
Additionally, it opens avenues for further exploration regarding civic education
and how it affects or influences Botswana’s political environment. The next
chapter outlines the research design and the methodology that was used to
gather data pertaining to the study.
CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Filling A Gap in the Literature

In Chapter One, I indicated that there is a problem in that the concept of education for democratic participation is a new phenomenon in Botswana, and in Chapter Two, the literature confirms the availability of the problem by outlining that Botswana’s youth are politically apathetic as evidenced by little or no participation in the country’s national elections. However, the literature does not fully suggest solutions to the problem or reflect on what was done to address the problem. Therefore, this study sought to close the gap in the literature by investigating the democratic practices taking place within Botswana Secondary Schools and how they contribute towards the preparation of students in becoming democratically active in Botswana’s young and growing democracy.

Through the deployment of qualitative research methodology, my study joins the literature that steers the debate regarding the understanding and teaching of the concept of democracy. Given the findings of the study, this research brings in a new line of thought by making the marginalized voices heard as reported in Chapter Five.

Comparative in nature, the literature in this study provides a lens to contrast with other African nations, especially those in colonized southern Africa, for instance, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Angola and Mozambique. Africa in general and Botswana in particular, is dominated by literature that has been
written by “outsiders” who in most cases do not have much insight or knowledge about the continent or Botswana. Therefore this dissertation exposes the pitfalls of national consciousness by sharing first-hand information that emanated from interaction with the participants combined with my rich socio-economic and political knowledge of the affairs of Botswana since I am a citizen. Because I am a citizen of Botswana, and an insider, this study offers a nuanced and, one hopes, more authentic view than has been heretofore offered in research.

This study challenges conventional, celebratory and or congratulatory literature about the state of democracy in Botswana and provides evidence of counterview by sharing the concerns and opinions of Batswana as understood from the voices of those who participated in the study.

This chapter outlines the methodology used in carrying out the study. The design of the study as well as the specific procedures used in conducting the study is explained. The organization of the chapter includes research design, selection of subjects, sources of data, research methods, procedures in data collection, the researcher, language and cultural traditions and finally data analysis.

Given the literature in Chapter Two, I resorted to using the qualitative methodology that enabled me to interact with subjects to address the problems exposed in the literature. The literature shows that there are problems pertaining to education and democracy in Botswana, but falls short of fully addressing solutions or measures that have been taken to ameliorate the problem. This
design was deliberately chosen with the confidence that it will help close the existing gaps in the literature as earlier mentioned. Sound and informative social interaction with the subjects provided logical ideas that could be used to ameliorate the problems related to school and democracy.

Jameson and Hillier (2003) share that the word research stems from the French *rechercher*, meaning to seek or search again. Seeking is a delightful word. It implies action, and intention. Searching again implies ongoing action and commitment. If we consult a thesaurus, research is linked to a number of words including analysis, delving, examination, scrutiny, exploring and probing. There is something about research that involves action, intent and commitment to finding out something (xviii). This study therefore used qualitative approaches of interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to gather information crucial to the study.

Research Design

In instances where the researcher wants to gain deeper meanings, insights and absolute understanding about peoples’ behaviors, attitudes and how they perceive the world around them, qualitative research methodology is particularly the most appropriate (IEC, 2002, p.94). It enables the researcher to explore, examine and analyze his/her environment so as to get answers pertaining to the study. In order to have an understanding of how schools in Botswana are used as spaces for teaching and practicing democracy, this study employed a qualitative research method (participant-observation, interviews and
document analysis) to get answers to the questions advanced by the study. The methods of qualitative inquiry are for studying and understanding people in whatever setting and under whatever circumstances one encounters them (Patton, 1990).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) qualitative researchers proceed as if they know very little about the places they visit. They try to loosen themselves from their preconceptions of what they will find, what people will be like, and what will go on in the setting (p.49). Spradley (1980) adds that people learn by observing those around them, listening to them, and paying attention to their physical surroundings. It is for this reason, therefore, that this qualitative study used interviews and participant observation in order to be able to fully understand the environment of the researched, thus harvesting the necessary data pertinent to the study.

The design of this study was flexible, iterative and continuous in nature so as to accommodate any possible changes that occurred during the data collection (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Adding to the importance of qualitative research, Bogdan & Taylor (1975) state that qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Researchers who use qualitative techniques examine how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others. In view of this assertion, it is for this reason that the researcher valued flexibility in the study to accommodate unforeseen
circumstances during the course of the study. The researcher adjusted the schedules to accommodate the times that were convenient to the researched. Tsayang (1998) states that qualitative research should allow some degree of flexibility on the research design to accommodate logistical constraints and that the manner in which data is gathered may differ from one location to the other depending on the prevailing circumstances. Guiding questions were used throughout the research in order to keep the researcher on track.

Selection of Sites

When addressing the issue on selection of research sites, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) mention that the researcher scouts for possible places and people that might be the subject or source of data, find the location they think they want to study, and then cast a wide net trying to judge the feasibility of the site or data source for their purposes. On the basis of the above premise, this study focused on two senior secondary schools in Botswana (Kanyi and Kwedu Senior Secondary Schools- not real names), which are located in Pano Town and Ikweno Village respectively (not real names). Students attending these schools are in forms four and five and most of them enter senior secondary schools being eligible to vote or they become eligible by the time they finish their two years at a senior school.

Pano is a big city in the country and was the first city in Botswana to have a senior secondary school that was built by the colonial administrators, with the goal of training students and citizens who would help in the spreading of their
colonial ideology. Kanyi Senior Secondary School is regarded as one of the best secondary schools today as evidenced by excellent Cambridge University Examination results, especially between 2000 and 2005. On the other hand, Kwedu Senior Secondary School was founded in the early 1990s in response to the Botswana National Development Plan’s vision to increase the number of senior secondary schools so as to actively address the needs and goals of *Education for Kagisano*.

Unlike Kanyi senior secondary school, Kwedu has experienced a chain of strikes by students and its students do not do well nationwide on the Cambridge University Examinations. Students have gone on strikes alleging that teachers were behaving unprofessionally by having sexual relationships with students, neglecting their job, as well as abusing students corporally and denying them a voice in the management of the institution. Of late, the school has undergone a lot of administrative changes in an effort to improve the situation.

These schools were chosen with the hope that they will have unique and interesting stories to tell pertaining to the subject of democracy. The fact that the other school historically has been a site for student’s social unrest while the other has been a center for academic excellence, made me to choose them as research sites. As noted in chapters Four and Five, both schools had interesting experiences which helped address the objectives of my study.
Selection of Subjects

During the research design phase of a project, the investigator needs to consider a rationale for identifying and using a particular setting and population for data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Spradley (1979) also adds to this statement by stating that in qualitative research informants are chosen on the basis of their involvement and role in any given policy. As noted earlier in Chapter One, the researcher interviewed students (both leaders (prefects) and ordinary) \( (n=32) \), teachers \( (n=16) \), administrators-school heads \( (n=2) \), deputy school heads \( (n=2) \) Department of Curriculum and Development officials (Principal Education Officer - PEO, and Material Resources Officer) \( (n=2) \), professors from the University of Botswana \( (n=2) \), Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana (IEC) \( (n=2) \), some officials from both the Ministry of Education as well as from the National Assembly \( (n=2) \). The National Assembly officer deals with the promotion and introduction of Youth Parliament in Botswana. I found all these diverse informants to be instrumental in as far as policies and the implementation of Botswana’s education system is concerned. Their wide range of diversity and informed experiences positively contributed in various ways to this research.

My judgment or “purposive sampling” as Wiersman (1991) and Burgess, (1984) prefer to call, was driven by the availability, knowledge, accessibility and willingness of the researched to participate in the study.
These informants were chosen on the premise that they both have a significant role in Botswana’s education system and policies, as well as playing a part in the shaping of democracy in Botswana at different levels.

**Sources of Data**

Through the interviews, participant observation and analysis of the documents, was sought which helped me understand the state of education and democracy in Botswana. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) posit that in qualitative research, interviews may be used in two ways. They may be the dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or any other techniques. In all these situations the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world (p.95). The combination of the above techniques ensures triangulation in the research methodology. By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements (Berg, 2004).

**Participant-Observation**

Bernard (1994, p.134) observes that participant-observation involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with one’s presence so that one can observe and record information about their lives. The School Heads introduced me to teachers at morning staff briefings and then
assigned me to research coordinators who in turn introduced me to students and other members of the school community. My entrée was therefore made easy in this regard.

The use of participant-observer technique enabled me to explore and understand the behaviors of the informants in as far as education and democracy are concerned. This method made it possible for me to be viewed as a participant in the research process and not as an outsider or just a mere intruder. Goetz & LeCompe (1984) share that participant-observation is about eliciting from people the ways in which they construct their definitions of reality and the manner in which they organize their world. It is clear from the above literature that participant-observation created an environment for the social interaction between the researcher and the subjects who provided an opportunity for collection of data. As a participant-observer, I engaged in conversations with the subjects and at the same time discovered their interpretation of the events in their environment.

The participant observation is that the researcher should not be viewed as a threat to the lives of the researched, and this can only be possible through the construction of a sound social rapport between both parties. In an attempt to build a sound social rapport, the researcher interacted well with both teachers, students and administrators during the teaching activities, staff meetings/briefings, observations in classrooms and outside the classroom environment, for example, at the dining halls and sports facilities where I had
informal discussions with them. Seidman (1998) argues that participant observation is the single and best way to gather data about people in a society.

The researcher took notes during the course of observations and used a tape recorder after seeking permission from the informant. In some instances, as soon as I introduced the tape recorder to the informants they felt uncomfortable and wanted me to assure them that the information I was seeking will not be used consequently to get them in trouble, especially students. I therefore explained that the interviews I was conducting will remain confidential and that they will remain anonymous. One informant, a teacher, sought assurance that I was just conducting an academic research and had nothing to do with jeopardizing their future by disclosing sensitive information to their superior; “Rraetsho (sir), are you sure you are not spying on me? Nna rra ga ke batle mathata.” (I personally do not want trouble Sir).

After every interview or observation, following the advice of my dissertation chair and the entire committee in general, I went over my tapes, transcribed them and stored my data as “a workable finished product.” This was challenging especially when I conducted a lot of interviews and observations during the day. However, it eventually paid-off because it enabled me to go over my data and tried to make sense of it while memories were still fresh.

Interviews

A researcher can approach the experiences of people in contemporary organizations through examining personal and institutional documents, through
observations, through exploring history, through experimentation, through
questionnaires and surveys, and through a review of existing literature. If the
researcher’s goal, however, is to understand the meaning people involved in
education make of their experiences, then interviewing provides a necessary, if
not always completely sufficient avenue of inquiry (Seidman, 1998).

I used semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions so as to
allow more independent responses from the subjects. The open-ended interview
questions, applicable both to the individuals and small groups of individuals both
are questions that solicit the respondents’ views, opinions, thoughts or feelings
rather than the specific factual information (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). As the
name reflects, open-ended questions are open, and they allowed the interviewee
to give as much information as they deem necessary without being limited in one
way or the other.

Bogdan & Biklen (2003) indicate that even when an interview guide is
employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to
pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of
the interview. When the interviewer controls the content too rigidly, when the
subjects cannot tell their story personally in their own words, the interview falls
out of the qualitative range. It is for this reason that the interviewer gave the
interviewees some degree of freedom in order to tell their stories without feeling
as though they were being restricted from expressing their views. Probes were
used to enable the interviewee to answer the questions in depth. Bogdan &
Biklen (2003) further add that good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view, and they also provide data that is filled with words that reveal the respondents’ perspectives. That is exactly what I employed during my data collection phase and it bred good results.

In cases where the interviewees gave answers that were not clear, clarification was sought so that the story could be recorded correctly. Every response from various respondents was given due attention and treated as though it were the *magic response* to the questions raised by the study in general. Mutual understanding between the researcher and the subjects were harnessed through direct communication. Interviews for teachers and administrators were conducted in their offices whereas those for students were conducted at different places, dining hall, sports field, classroom outdoor study areas as well as at the office for my research coordinators. The interviews were conducted in English. *Setswana* and *Ikalanga* were only used to clarify points.

**Document Analysis**

An analysis of relevant documents especially from the Ministry of Education (MoE) was made to get information related to the study. Making an analysis of documents especially prior to the interviews is helpful since it enables the researcher to come up with some questions that the interviewees may be requested to clarify depending on their degree of understanding of the issues raised by the documents. McEwan & McEwan (2003) state that document analysis can fill in some of the missing data pieces or it can raise a host of new
questions regarding the accuracy of observations and interpretations, necessitating further conversations with the teacher or possibly even another observation (p.82). On the same note, Bogdan & Biklen (2003) add that more recently, researchers have become particularly interested in the documents themselves, and may use interviews or participant observation as supplementary data to see how the documents get interpreted by real people instead of an imaginary audience (p.124).

I also reviewed documents at the IEC office, department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation, the syllabi in schools, school prospectus and staff manuals, discipline policy documents from the Ministry of Education, and I also got historical documents from Botswana Archives. Professors at the University of Botswana made recommendations regarding some documents relevant to my study that I would make use of. Given the above information, it could be argued confidently that document analysis plays an important role in qualitative research study. It widened my scope of approaching my study.

Procedures in Data Collection

It is a standard procedure in Botswana that before pursuing a research in the country, permission should be sought from the Office of the President (OP), which upon granting the permission will notify all other government departments with whom the researcher intends to work. I submitted my application for permission to the office of the OP six months ahead of my scheduled start date. While waiting for a response from the OP, events took a turning point. I was told
that the OP had decentralized issuing of research permits to various government departments and ministries who were going to handle requests directed to their offices and act accordingly. I therefore had to resubmit my request, this time directly to the Ministry of Education. My acceptance and approval letter was sent before I could get into the field. Hectic but a necessary process, that was a good starting point for research since it exposed me to some ups and downs in a project of this nature.

Additionally, a research approval was also sought from Ohio University Office of Research Compliance since this research dealt with human subjects. Ethical issues in qualitative research ought to be given attention so as to avoid harming those involved in the research. Applied to educational research, ethics encompasses those principles and standards of good conduct researchers should observe to ensure that research is morally justifiable, reasonable, and beneficial to educational purposes, is carried out well and causes no harm to anyone or anything (Jameson & Hillier, 2003, p. 83). As a standard procedure, I did the online IRB training module and obtained my certificate reflecting that the training module has been completed. This was an important exercise especially that it exposed me to professional ways of dealing with the researched and the legal and ethical implications that may come to the fore, should the research rules and regulations be violated. As stated earlier, data were gathered through interviews, observations in schools and also via daily interaction with the
subjects. Field notes were taken for record purposes. The study was conducted in Botswana from June 2005 to August 2005.

The Researcher

When discussing the role of a researcher in a study, Berg (1998) states that the researcher is expected to study the world without having to impose his/her views or taking positions on social and political matters. From another angle, Patton (1990) as well as Rubin (1995) see the researcher in qualitative methodology as the primary research instrument. Van Maanen, Dabbs and Faulkner (1982) also advise that qualitative researchers gather information from the position of both an insider and outsider. I was an insider in that I come from Botswana and had an idea on Botswana's school community. On the other hand I was an outsider in that I do not directly belong to the community where I did my study. Therefore, as an insider, ethically in research I could not assume things, jump to conclusions or impose my ideas on informants about research issues and disregarding the story of my informants since they are the ones who are in the middle of the daily school experiences. From an outsider’s viewpoint, I listened to the story of the interviewees and sought clarifications within research ethics.

I am a Motswana by birth and a product of Botswana’s education system. I am also a teacher by profession and probably by birth too, and I have taught in various secondary schools in the country. It is because of this teaching experience/background that I decided to pursue a program on education and
democracy in Botswana with the hope that the results of the study will contribute positively to the construction of strong and sustainable democracy by conscientizing youth at a grassroots level.

Growing up as a student and later as a teacher, I observed and experienced incidents that needed militant citizens to seek transparency and accountability in the education system and in the government in general. The future of Botswana lies in the hands of its citizens; hence the citizens should play a role in the building of a better socio-economic and political country. This research hopes to influence some positive changes in the education policies of the country, especially in the field of Cultural Studies in Education. The concept of education and democracy is also a new phenomenon in Botswana, which needs to be explored for the betterment of the education system as well as Botswana’s political process.

In my previous qualitative research on *The Causes of Spelling Errors in Pupils Written Language at Community Junior Secondary Schools in Botswana*, I learned the importance and practical viability of using interviews as well as participant-observation methods in a research of this nature. This research enabled me to see the effectiveness of using interviews as well as participant observation method in a research. My positive interaction with students, teachers, administrators and officials from the Ministry of Education, IEC and University of Botswana made this study a fruitful educational and political exercise.
In my position as the president of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at Tonota College, a member of Board of Affiliated Colleges, Graduation Committee for Colleges of Education, member of Senior Management Team at Pitikwe Secondary School, as well as being a Sports Director/Master, in a secondary school, I have experienced the manner in which educators and administrators’ attitudes in Botswana may be detrimental to the development of a strong democracy. My interaction with students in the past exposed me to a lot of issues of concern regarding the theme of democratic participation in schools in Botswana. My experience, therefore played a positive role in this study, especially regarding the policies and procedures of dealing with students, senior government officials, teachers and administrators, and above all, just to know who to consult or where to go for help.

Language and Cultural Traditions

Knowledge of the local language and other pertinent cultural issues are of paramount importance in qualitative research. In this case, the researcher’s knowledge of the national language, Setswana, helped in communicating with those informants who could not express themselves well in English or were just not interested in speaking to another Motswana using a foreign language. The researcher also speaks Ikalanga, which is spoken mostly by people in the northern part of Botswana where one of the senior secondary schools targeted for this study is located. My diverse knowledge on languages helped to minimize communication barriers and this helped the interviewees see me as one of them.
It was interesting especially when the informants asked me a question, almost in a shock because they heard me speaking in my mother language; *Oh! So you are able to speak Ikalanga, are you a Kalanga Mr. Jotia?* We laughed about it and I utilized the *laughter and “the shock”* to be the starting point for my research-questions related conversations. It broke the ice.

**Data Analysis**

According to Huberman & Miles (1994, p.10-12) data analysis can be defined as consisting of three concurrent flows of action, data reduction, data display, and conclusions and verification. Berg (2004) adds that qualitative data needs to be reduced and transformed in order to make it more readily accessible, understandable, and draw out various themes and patterns. Data display sends a message that data are presented as an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusions to be analytically drawn. After the data have been collected, reduced, and displayed, analytic conclusions may begin to emerge and define themselves more clearly and definitively (p.39). Gay (1996) also reflects that the coding of data is important in qualitative research since it involves a critical analysis of the data, as well as identifying themes and topics that stand out to represent categories into which numerous pieces of data can be classified. Bernard (1995) also asserts that throughout the data analysis process, researchers typically index or code their data using as many categories as possible so as to identify and describe patterns for the understanding of themes.
Taylor & Bogdan (1984) relay the fact that the first important step in analysis of qualitative data is discovery, whereby the researcher looks for important meanings from what was harvested from the interviews or from observations. The data analysis exercise enabled me to explore themes pertaining to the subject of education and democracy. As earlier mentioned, my interview tapes as well as the filed notes were transcribed so as to make the data user-friendly without distortion of the facts. Consequently, I made themes/topics from the research questions and those themes in most instances were used as chapter sub-headings. The interpretation of data was made as a way of trying to make sense of the findings and the message that they relay to the theory guiding the study and the general implications to my study.

Summary

This chapter shows that the researcher gathered data from two senior secondary schools in Botswana, and it also went further to discuss the necessary data collection procedures, which were adhered to prior to going into the field and during fieldwork. As stated earlier in the chapter, the researcher used interviews, participant observation, and document analysis in order to obtain the necessary data on the extent to which schools are used as spaces for the teaching and practicing of democracy in Botswana’s young and developing political system. Data were collected from students, teachers, administrators, and officials from Ministry of Education (Curriculum department, Regional Education Officer) and professors from the University of Botswana, IEC, as well
as from some officials from Botswana National Assembly. These subjects provided data that have themes that helped me draw sound conclusions on the study. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.
As stated earlier in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to research on democratic practice in Botswana Secondary Schools and how this practice contributes towards the preparation of students for participation in their adult socio-economic and political life in an increasingly democratic political environment. This chapter therefore, presents an analysis of data that was collected from students, teachers, administrators, as well as officials from Curriculum and Development Unit, Independent Electoral Commission and from the Ministry of Education as earlier stated. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the data were gathered through interviews, participant observation, and analysis of documents.

Roberts (2004) advises that if a researcher is analyzing data (e.g. interviews transcripts, observations), there is need for them to take time to become thoroughly familiar with data in order to make sense of what people said and to integrate what different respondents said. The key questions posed in Chapter One, enabled me to understand and generate categories; themes and patterns pertinent to my study, and answers to those questions are given in this section. Data were therefore coded according to the emerging themes and patterns.
Research Sites

As indicated in Chapter Three, the researcher conducted the study in two senior secondary schools in Botswana (Kanyi and Kwedu), which are located in two different areas. Kanyi is located in Pano the largest city in the country. Kwedu is in a big village, Ikweno, which is in the northern part of the country. Kanyi is a big and old secondary school whose history dates back to the colonial times. Missionaries founded it in the early 1940s when missionary work in Africa in general, and in Botswana in particular was gaining ground. Kwedu is fairly new. It opened its doors in the early 90s, and it came to birth as a result of Botswana government’s mission to make secondary education more accessible to its citizens.

One difference that is easily noticeable upon entering these two schools is that although Kanyi has very old buildings, it is relatively well equipped/resourced. On the other hand, Kwedu has modern buildings constructed in the early 90s but surprisingly, the buildings look dilapidated, with exposed broken pipes, worn-out and falling ceilings, broken lockers, falling blackboards, blasted sewage pipes, to mention just a few. One could advance that the state of the buildings is a symptom of a diseased if not neglected education system. The school is poorly equipped and when I asked why the structures were falling apart, I was told that the school had experienced a number of student strikes. Apparently the strikes were masterminded by the unhappy student body. However, both sites were conducive for my research.
In view of the above, the analysis of data in this chapter takes into account what the researcher heard, observed, recorded and found out during document analysis in the field. In most instances data were organized by research questions, which also provided headings under which all the findings related to the question were presented. It is from these headings that, themes, categories, and/or patterns emerged. Organizing data by research question is a good way to clearly discuss the findings and maintain consistency among chapters (Roberts, 2004).

The Concept of Democracy

Stromberg (1996) cautions that the initial problem facing any student of democracy is how to define the term. Democracy is a fuzzy term. The word is all around us; it is constantly used in the news media and in everyday discourse to define our own culture and to shape our policies towards others, who are said to be delinquent if they are “undemocratic” and may even need to have this nebulous entity thrust upon them by force (p.3).

When asked to define democracy, one student said; “democracy is about freedom and rights. In other words, people should be allowed to exercise their freedoms at the same time making sure that they respect the rights of others.” Another student mentioned:

Democracy is about being allowed to vote and then becoming party of the majority in decision-making. For example, in the case of our school, the school administration should seek our opinion as students in the decisions
they want to take. Democracy is about showing people that they are appreciated in a society and not just doing things without involving others, as is always the case in my school.

One teacher defined democracy as:

A system where there is equal and balanced involvement by all the people. Democracy is about equal opportunity, all voices, transparency and consultation. In fact I should say basically it is about involving all the stakeholders in the decision-making process towards a set common goal. For instance in a school situation, democracy could be practiced by having the school administration involving parents, teachers, students and ancillary staff in the daily decision-making process.

As reflected above, no one individual gave the same definition as the other, although it was clear that their definitions had some similarities given their understanding of the concept of democracy. When asked to define democracy, most of the students expressed that a democratic state should allow those involved in any government or any institution to be at liberty to express their opinions without the fear of being victimized by those in positions of power.

One student leader said:

It is not easy to define democracy. However, I would say it is about expressing oneself freely without having to think about being punished corporally especially within a school environment. It is about rights, being taught about them as well as being able to exercise them freely without
harming the other people. In a democracy, we are supposed to express ourselves without limits.

Arguably, democracy means different things or processes to different social setups. However, in the contemporary discourse, the concept of democracy has become associated with a political system in which multi-partyism exists, periodic free and fair elections conducted, and press freedom, human rights and rule of law guaranteed (Sachikonye, 1995, p.1).

Maundeni (2004) explains that as a way of trying to expand the doors for participation in Botswana’s politics, in the last two decades, Botswana has experienced phenomenal growth of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among which youth organizations such as Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC) are included. The civil society resorted to forming NGOs so that their voices could be heard in the decision-making process in Botswana’s politics in which the elected politicians and public officials regarded themselves as the only legitimate leaders of the society (p.67). Maundeni (2004, p.67) further shares that in Botswana, BNYC has 51 district youth councils and is affiliated to 16 other NGOs which makes it more possible for BNYC to reach more young people in and out of schools, in political parties as well as in other sectors. However, it remains to be discussed in this chapter whether students in Botswana are actively involved in the decision-making process of their schools or not.

Contributing to the definition of democracy during an interview, a professor at the University of Botswana echoed:
Democracy is just not about elections but empowering people with decision-making powers on all matters, be they political, economic or social. In other words, real democracy does not regard the mere act of voting as the Alpha and Omega of the democratic process; rather it empowers people to make decisions regarding their daily economic, social, political, educational and even judicial matters. ...In other words, in my view, democracy must mean simplifying the functions of government and drawing the general populace into administering their affairs on a daily basis, instead of reducing them to electoral fodder whose role is confined to choosing, every five years, from the same small bunch of elites, who is going to go to parliament to repress them.

Given the above statement, democracy is understood to be an idea or a phenomenon that embraces consultation and participation by those who are involved in the general running of the affairs that affect them. A teacher librarian at one of the schools also shared the same view regarding the definition of democracy when he said, ‘democracy is very broad and relative. It includes taking all the stakeholders on board, where everyone has to be given a voice.’


Democracy is a system of government whereby those in positions of authority derive power from those they rule through their vote. The first duty of the electorate is to choose a government through free and fair
elections. The second is to contribute towards sustaining the institutions of democracy through consultation and active public participation in key decision-making processes at both national and local levels. Botswana can get closer to achieving functional and rewarding democracy if it builds and sustains institutional accountability (p. 2).

Although the above points make sense, I was surprised to learn from one teacher interviewee who expressed that although democracy is about equal opportunity, voice, transparency, consultation etc, at school level, both teachers and students are just passive recipients of concluded decisions since the school administration is in total control of the affairs of the institution and in most cases the administrators do not value participation by both parties. Given these claim, in a country such as Botswana that is labeled as a democratic miracle story, such acts could be detrimental to the future success of democracy if citizens continue to be left out of the decision-making process.

The School as a Democratic Space

The interviewees seemed to agree that schools should provide the platform where citizens are exposed to democratic participation at a tender age. The Head of Sciences at one of the sites revealed that in Botswana, it is difficult if not impossible to have a democratic school since what is in picture—especially at his school, is that students are not involved meaningfully in the running of the school and this is evidenced by the fact that student leaders are hand-picked by school authorities and then imposed on the student body. He further lamented
that in many instances students, teachers and parents are just told what the school administration has decided, rules are not explained, decisions are not challenged and ultimately discipline and cooperation become a problem which consequently lead to strikes and extended feelings of animosity.

As if directly responding/challenging the above claim, when asked whether his school practices democracy, the deputy school head of Kanyi Secondary School stated:

Good question. In my school, students have class monitors and prefects. Regarding teachers, we normally have morning briefings and term meetings. Let me explain one thing though that students vote for their leaders and teachers have to confirm the "real" [deputy head's emphasis] leaders because at times students elect "wrong" leaders [deputy head's emphasis], who at times are academic failures.

Quite interesting and it appears as though students are not mature or responsible enough to elect people whom they think can lead them. It is apparent from the responses I got that schools were not involving students enough in the day-to-day running of school affairs. A student at Kanyi secondary school mentioned:

In this school students do not have a say. What we experience daily is imposed rules and punishment, as well as verbal abuse by both teachers and the administration and in some cases teachers even engage in sexual relationships with students and expect us to praise them. The worst thing
though, is that they do not even allow us to choose our optional subjects and even our leaders. I think it is high time we should be allowed to have Student Representative Council (SRC) in government schools since prefects are useless—they are handpicked by teachers and the administration and they act as messengers for the administration. We need to see decentralization of power in our school. At times I just feel like we are in a prison.

Another educator stated that on average, schools are generally undemocratic and are run on the basis of fear and intimidation of teachers by those in power, and as a result they (teachers) intimidate and terrorize the students. He concluded that rigid school rules and regulations are imposed on students, which is counterproductive to democracy's existence and maturity.

Denying students democratic participation in schools affects their active and effective citizenship. When addressing the importance of social studies curricula in New Zealand, (White and Openshaw, 2005, p.8), argue that social studies helps develop individuals who are able to take their place as effective citizens of a democracy. They contend that by effective citizen, they mean one who has a lively sense of responsibility towards civilized values, who can make firm social judgments and who acts intelligently and in common interest.

As indicated by Dewey in his address to American school administrators in 1937, democratic principles are essential to educational institutions if political democracy is to survive. Schools need to embrace and practice democratic habits
so as for students to experience and practice democracy in their daily school lives, which ultimately will motivate them to partake in national politics by having a voice in the formulation of policies that govern the people. Because the aim of education is to free individuals from barriers that would prevent them from cooperating and supporting each other as members of inclusive communities, it is necessary for the institutions of learning to also be inclusive democratic communities (White and Openshaw, 2005, p.24).

Teachers also shared the same views with the students that enough is not being done to promote their involvement. A certain teacher for agriculture disclosed:

In this school, superiors want to instill an element of fear among students and teachers by creating a hierarchy that is intimidating. Lack of communication and consultation are a major problem in my school since teachers at times just get instructions and announcements that do not solicit other people's input.

He added:

It is absolutely embarrassing and humiliating for teachers and students to just learn of things during the headmaster's announcements at the assembly. It would be more professional if not respectful, especially to us teachers, if we could be briefed about new developments before making general announcements at the assembly. Come on, what kind of
leadership or democracy is that? Ke mathata mo sekoleng se rra. (It is just problems in this school, sir).

According to my observations, schools have a lot to do if at all they are to be deemed democratic spaces. Those in positions of power seem to be at the heart of decision-making and fail to bring all the stakeholders aboard. Students are not empowered and teachers at times they also receive instructions, commands and announcements from the authorities with little or no input expected from them. Deep democracy advocates for the strengthening of human relationships for the general betterment of the entire community, apparently the deep democratic principles are not yet understood and practiced in schools.

School Head’s views on Democratic Participation

On a different note, administrators feel that all is well in as far as democratic participation is concerned in their schools. Both school heads shared the notion that democracy is in place in their schools since they have the prefectship system in place and that all groups in both schools have representatives who play a part in the management of the institutions. The Head of Kwedu disclosed:

Prefects supervise meals, cleaning, study, and attendance. The election of prefects is also such that teachers and the administration scrutinize the discipline, leadership qualities, and academic performance of the to-be leaders and screen them thoroughly before they can be mandated to positions of power. We do not want to have irresponsible and troublesome
people being put to positions of power because they may end up creating havoc in the institution.

Given the above claim, it appears as though the duties of the prefects are focused more on supervision rather than in the decision-making process, hence making prefects more of law enforcement officers than decision-making leaders.

Sybouts and Krepel (1984) uphold the ideal that if properly implemented, the prefectship system can breed positive results in the running of educational institutions:

One of the fundamental assumptions of democracy is that people are competent to govern themselves and their efforts will result in an organization “of the people, by the people and for the people.” Such an organization necessitates appropriate social and political ideals, understandings, attitudes, skills and a willingness to live, as well as to die, for the common good. However, these tenets are automatic but must be developed. This development comes appropriately through practice and a philosophy of ‘learning by doing’ in a setting resembling that of ultimate citizenship. Participation by students in school government truly represents such a setting (p.220).

The prefectship system in Botswana schools is facing pronounced criticism from both students and teachers since they feel that student-leader’s decisions are never considered important. What is in practice is that students act as puppets of the administration and do very little to convey the concerns of the
student body to the administration. In fact, some prefects alluded to the fact that their relationship with the student body is rather sour since they were never voted into power by the student body. The school system imposes a hierarchy among students. The administration still appoints prefects. As a result their peers see them as tools whose allegiance is superior to authorities and not as representatives of the students (Phorano, 1988 in Holm & Molutsi 1988, p.95). It is for this reason that some educators and students are calling for a paradigm shift in the student government and advocate the introduction of the SRC, as is the case with Colleges of Education in Botswana. The SRC is regarded as a more progress oriented and ‘radical’ system of leadership which empowers individuals. The School Head for Kwedu contributed to the issue of prefectship and power centralization by stating that he finds it difficult to understand why there is so much noise about the issue of rights, responsibilities and justice:

   This is a very controversial matter because it appears as though everybody is obsessed with the issue of rights and they forget that their rights are theirs and that they should not infringe on other people’s rights. Students in most cases do wrong things and when we take them to task they see this as an action of harassment or a violation of their rights. We elders also have rights and they should try to understand that. If things are done wrongly, justice has to prevail and we try to listen to them although the student leaders do not play a role except in very minor offences once in a while. Students’ representatives as well as teachers can
only go to a certain mile and ultimately myself as the School Head I have
to prevail.

During the data collection phase, a University of Botswana professor
addressed the issue on schools, democracy and student leadership:

Botswana’s education system has severe limitations. Both the content and
process of the education system must be democratic and yet the average
classroom discourse is highly authoritarian and the school ambience is by
no means democratic. Corporal punishment in government schools is the
order of the day and is not even regulated by existing regulations that are
violated on a daily basis by the teachers. The Ministry of Education (MoE)
turns a blind eye because of the ideological training for the workers to be
obedient to their factory bosses, if they are lucky to secure a job within
the system. Ours is a classic case of vocal teachers, silent students.

Citizenship is not something people inherit from their parents, it is not
inborn. People have to be taught democracy and this cannot happen
unless and until there is political education in schools—not the usual
cursory reference to civic rights. Furthermore, the lived experiences of
students and teachers must also be democratic and yet up to now there
are no student representative councils in our primary, junior and senior
secondary schools. It is not enough to teach about democracy—the daily
lives of the students and teachers must be democratic. In the tertiary
institutions, the SRCs are confined to social issues and have no role to play on curriculum issues, which is also troubling.

A member of the student leadership, deputy head boy, at Kwedu appeared very much disturbed by the whole subject of student involvement in the school affairs:

Tell you what; this school is a cause for concern. For instance, students are not allowed to voice their concerns. Take for example, choosing of subjects, students have a limited choice on electing optional subjects. Subjects are imposed on us and this costs my future. It puts it to doom since I am not able to do what I want. Students who are put in pure sciences classes are not allowed to opt out of the sciences if they do not like them. Many students have raised concerns and the answer we got from the administration was, we cannot allow that, period! We run the school. The issue of food for instance, the ministry of education has allocated money for student’s feeding and what happens at the dining hall is that there is acute shortage of food because at times teachers eat from there, especially when they are on duty. We were never consulted and to me this is a denial of students’ right to food. Re nale mathata Mr. Jotia. (We have problems Mr. Jotia).

The sentiments expressed by this student leader join the reasoning that those in positions of power in schools do not treasure students’ voices in issues that affect them. Democracy is limited, if not at all non-existent.
Historically, the authoritarian and restrictive way of running schools in Botswana has resulted in student unrest and strikes. Good (2004) shares:

“Violent disturbances” reportedly occurred at Masunga Senior Secondary School in North East district in May 1995, when some 200 students damaged school property and the police responded by raiding dormitories, breaking windows, firing tear-gas, and beating and injuring some students. There were a number of issues, but they appeared to revolve around students’ standing grievances that had “apparently been ignored by the administration.” Sexual harassment by senior staff members was one unresolved problem, as was the punishment meted out by certain teachers. But the action was also motivated by what was called “the prison-like atmosphere of the school, where students were allowed out only once in a term to make purchases in the village” (p.62).

As if not enough, Good further brings in another case of extended authoritarianism in schools that was happening at another senior secondary school. He discloses:

A similar anti-authoritarianism motivated pupils at Ghanzi Senior Secondary School later in the year. Here too were complaints that teachers forced sexual favors from students, but there was also a complaint that Rastafarians, unlike Christians, were not allowed access to the school, and teachers used plastic pipes when inflicting punishment. A
strike had occurred and tension was said to have engulfed the school (p.63).

In a democracy, whenever people’s views/voices are ignored and their rights trampled upon, a guarantee could be made that those oppressed will use all means necessary to fight injustice. Oppression in a school will often lead to rebellion by those oppressed. Cases of students’ unrest and strikes in Botswana are not a rare experience especially in senior secondary schools.

My interview with a former school head and now a Regional Education Officer (REO) painted a different picture on how school heads should run schools. She mentioned that the main problem of administrators is that they are still not mature enough since they lack respect and trust for their subordinates in the institution. She stated that it is difficult for any school leader to be seen everywhere and as such, it is of paramount importance that they should delegate both students and teachers to take care of school business. She continued:

We need to delegate. It is essential that the leader should give the subordinates the chance to grow through participation without instilling fear on them. During my days as a school head I came to realize that some people like to close others out of decision-making and experience taught me that even ordinary people in a school system can share very productive and functional ideas. I believe in the power of the people. For me, the introduction of SRCs in schools is long overdue because our students are mature people. It is high time that both teachers and
administrators looked at the needs of the child and see if they are offered what they deserve rather than just sidelining them as though they were just mere things with no brains.

Feldman (In (Democracy and Education, 2003) article “The School as a Participatory Democracy,” makes a point that democratic educators should propose ways of helping children develop democratic understanding. She suggests that one way should be the giving of children some control in their school, especially in their learning which should involve challenging them to think critically about their communities. Students, in Feldman’s view, ought to be involved in a culture of democracy by contributing to matters to do with hiring, firing, budgeting, rules etc (p.48). Lack of children’s commitment to the democratic process is attributed to the fact that they are not fully exposed to the school political environment and as such their freedoms and rights become repressed.

Making a case against running schools in Botswana as an autocracy by excluding other stakeholders, Monyatsi (2005) contends that there are some disadvantages against running a bureaucracy like a school because eventually school heads become overloaded with work. In cases where the head delegates to teachers, Monyatsi reveals that they get tasks such as collecting mail, arranging halls for examinations, arranging sports trips and punishing students for making noise in class or not doing home work. This lack of trust by management to empower teachers through jobs which demand crucial decision
making, consequently under-develops them as future managers and burdens school heads with too much work that may result in them being deadwoods or over frustrated and stressed to the marrow. In a nutshell, centralization of power in schools is detrimental to the prosperity of democracy and it intellectually and managerially cripples the subordinates, especially the students.

Pedagogical Issues and democracy in School

My literature review in chapter one addressed the issue that Botswana’s Education for Kagisano embraces democracy as an essential ideal that should be embraced by Botswana’s education system. This is a philosophy of our national government since independence. The National Commission on Education of 1977 observed and married the idea that in Botswana, the curriculum should ascertain teaching about democratic institutions and the way they function. It proposes prioritization of teaching of democratic values. Although so, my study revealed that there is alarming concern pertaining to the fact that Education for Kagisano, to date has not succeeded in teaching and promoting democracy.

The living reality in schools is that only those students who take social studies, history, development studies (DVS), and to a limited extent guidance and counseling, are the ones who get exposed to issues to do with democracy. However, these subjects are not compulsory at senior high school. As for the rest of the subjects, nothing is taught about democracy and even some teachers are not interested in addressing political matters. When asked to explain how the curriculum addresses democracy, a social studies student said:
In my social studies class we discuss forms of government and one of the subjects we cover in our syllabus is democracy. There is one topic that draws comparison between a one party state and multi-party democracy. The way my teacher teaches is completely different from other classes since he challenges us to think by allowing open discussions. We have a lot of debates and at the end of the day you just wish that all classes could be conducted that way. It is so enjoyable.

During document analysis, I saw a link between what was said by the interviewee about democracy and the social studies program’s objectives as reflected in the syllabus. It stipulates:

Social Studies is an important inter-disciplinary subject in Botswana Senior Secondary School Curriculum, which integrates concepts from Social Sciences and Humanities. It inculcates into learners the five National Principles: Democracy, Development, Self-reliance, Unity and Botho. This is in accordance with the aspirations of Vision 2016 (a long term vision for Botswana). It transmits bodies of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for effective citizenship. The acquired skills promote critical thinking, problem solving and decision making to help deal with the challenges of twenty-first century. At this level, social studies should build in learners: cultural pride, tolerance and pragmatic attitudes towards critical issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, globalization and total commitment to the nation’s development goals. On completion of the course, the learners
should be able to think critically, make reflective decisions and participate in the civic life of the communities (Updated social studies syllabus, 2004, p.1).

The syllabus encourages teachers to use learner-centered methods of teaching that place emphasis on problem-solving skills, inquiry and experimental learning that places the learner at the center of the learning process. Social Studies covers topics such as family, nation building, governance (covers democracy), citizenship in Botswana, global identity, international relations, cultural diversity in Botswana, world cultures, economic development in Botswana, education in Botswana and education and human resources development (social studies syllabus, 2004, p.2-8). Through social studies, students are challenged to develop attitudes and values that equip them with the skills to participate in socio-economic and political life of their society, and above all, it nurtures the concept of good citizenship.

On a similar note, history and development studies develop learners’ skills of inquiry, problem-solving, and balanced judgments as well as critical analysis of issues. Through research projects in both subjects, learners take the responsibility to be in charge of their learning. They interact with their society and improve their research skills. I observed history, social studies, and DVS classes being taught and I observed a big difference compared to other subjects. For instance, there was pronounced social rapport between learner-learner and learner-teacher relationships.
The class focused on learner participation where students were given the platform to argue their points by bringing in real-life experiences. For instance, in a History lesson, *The Rise of Hitler*, students were asked to draw comparisons between Hitler's *Iron hand leadership* and the leadership of Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) - the current ruling party in Botswana since independence in 1966. Generally, freedom of expression and interaction existed and even the teachers were approachable and very friendly. Delaney (1999) quoting Schrenko (1994) makes a case for learner-centered learning that:

The learner-centered school or classroom focuses on the success of all students. In the traditional classroom, children at six years of age are expected to know and do the same things. In a learner-centered classroom, developmentally appropriate activities are designed to help students use the thinking and learning strategies they will need to succeed both in school and in life. In a learner-centered system, standards are established, and each child is expected to achieve those standards. The time required to master skills may vary, but the standards do not. Learner-centered classrooms focus on meaningful experiences. Learner-centered teachers know that a "being there" experience is the best type of teaching so they provide as many real life experiences as possible. (http://www.mun.edu/faculty/mwatch/vol1/delaney2.htm).
Although the above experience reflects a positive way of conducting learning activities, the other subjects I observed proved the contrary. Most of the methods used were teacher-centered and learners had very little control, if any, on their learning activities. Their role basically was to answer questions from the teacher and learner-learner interaction was limited, let alone democratic discussions. Some teachers came to class “armed” with sticks and board dusters to corporally punish those who interrupted the learning process or displayed behaviors that were harmful to the social interaction of the class. When I asked a teacher why they brought a stick to class they responded; *Ba bana bone thupa ke molemo o motona mo go bone* (As for these children, the stick (caning) is the best medicine for them).

In the study, *Corporal Punishment: The Brutal Face of Botswana’s Authoritarian Schools*, Tafa (2002), found that corporal punishment (caning) was the order of the day in schools. Students were canned for missing Saturday study, talking to one another during study (normally referred to as making noise), fighting, failing to cover their books, not giving correct answers, failing a test, to mention but a few. One teacher, regrettably, declared before Tafa that he caned students for failing tests, having love affairs, coming late to school, talking during study time, to state a few. Teachers justified their corporal punishment by claiming that caning was engraved in the African tradition of children upbringing and that even parents condone corporal punishment. This causes a dilemma between African culture, education and democracy.
Phorano (1988, in Holm & Molutsi (1988)) sums up the discussion by contending:

The very structure of education in Botswana rejects the idea of democracy. There is a ladder of seniority that is uncompromising. The principal is at the top, followed by the deputy principal, the assistant principal, the senior teacher, and then the ordinary teachers. One can tell this hierarchy from the position and size of their offices. The authoritarian nature of our schools is reflected in the person of the teacher who enforces discipline with a stick, whose teaching is dominated by the lecture method. Desks in class are regimentally arranged with the teacher in front reflecting his dominant and authoritarian role and passivity of the pupils. The teacher even supervises evening studies and entertainment. In the end students learn how authority works in schools and the wider society; they learn that they are expected to conform to the dictates of the rulers, no matter how irrational the commands are. If they do not conform, they experience the high cost of punishment (p.95).

There is a concern and a plea that education should produce well-rounded characters that are able to transform theory into practice and this point is evident in this account by University of Botswana professor:

My belief is that education must bridge the gap between manual and mental labor. There must be a revolutionary praxis- combination of theory and socially necessary labor from a very early age. Education for the all-
round development of the person engages all three ‘Hs’ namely; the ‘head’ (cognitive), the ‘hands’ (psychomotor-real industrial skills) and the ‘heart’ (affective domain), which engages the feelings of the students. This has pedagogical, social and economic advantages. For instance, there would be no need to introduce school fees because cost recovery would be built into the curriculum itself - students would learn theory and apply it in workshops, factories and farms to produce real goods and services. Elitism would be combated because there would be no artificial separation of those who excel in theory and go on to become members of the ruling class controlling those who failed in the over-rated academic aspect of the curriculum. They would now work with their hands. The conceptualization of curriculum knowledge should draw from educational psychologists who subscribe to constructivist view such as Vygotsky and not the current overemphasis on behaviorism, which is congruent with education for social control or mental enslavement.

When asked about examples of democratic practices especially regarding how they are taught, a pure science student, who is also a prefect, hesitated, thought and finally answered:

First, I am a pure science student who was forced to do sciences and worst of all, Christian Religious Education (CRE) is also a must-take here. Ke eng gone moo? (What is that?). Teachers basically tell us what we are going to learn and they come up with ways on how we are supposed to
learn. We only hear of democracy from our colleagues who are doing history, social studies, DVS as well as in guidance and counseling where students are allowed to raise topics of interest and discuss them openly with the teacher and other students. We need to be treated more like human beings; we need to see student-centered lessons rather than everyday coming to class to listen to a teacher “singing” at us.

Some students understand teaching and democracy from a different perspective altogether. As if deliberately proving ignorance on the understanding of democracy and teaching, one student added, “Yes, democracy is taking place because our teachers teach a lot about discipline. They give a lot of assignments, tests and examinations and also punish us when we fail.”

On the basis of the above, it appears as though curriculum and pedagogical issues have a role to play in the democratization of schools. However, from the look of things, a lot has to be done to better the situation.

Defending the Presence of Democracy on Pedagogy:

The Teacher’s Voice

*Critical to the success of our secondary education programme is the recognition of individual talents, needs and learning styles. Hence the role of the teacher in the classroom has changed. S/he must be a proficient manager and facilitator, a director of learning activities. S/he should be conscious of students’ needs to take on board a measure of accountability and responsibility for their own learning. S/he must also account for the*
widening range of ability of student body and the different levels of achievement, which they aspire to. This means active participation for all and the creation of rich and diverse learning environments.

-Ramatsui (History syllabus, 1998)

Botswana citizens’ “good education” is important in as far as equipping them with skills to become the best managers, producers and purveyors of services. The culture of transparency, accountability, tolerance, productivity, botho (humane) can breed results if educators respect the dignity of learners and begin to involve them in their learning as advocated by Ramatsui above. My discussion with teachers, regarding teaching and democracy, generally gathered that most of the teachers feel they are promoting democracy to the best of their ability through their teaching methodologies despite other constraints. Contrary to the claims by most of the students that educators deny them a voice in their teaching, one teacher explained:

To start with, our students choose their options though we have a problem of resources and end up placing them on the basis of their academic ability and aptitude. My students are free to express their views, especially in literature. What I also do is lay down the ground rules and later accommodate the voices of my students. Where necessary, I also punish (cane) them and in this case punishment is just meant to guide them. However, I punish them after explaining. We cannot function
without punishment - that is why we have the police force even in a
democratic state.

At the end of one of the classes I observed, I was able to meet with a
student to find out how they felt about corporal punishment and the response
was:

*Rona re tsewa jaaka ditonki mo sekoleng se. Thupa ke sejo sa malatsi, re
ithobogile.* (We are treated like donkeys in this school. The stick (corporal
punishment) is our daily bread, we have given up).

Further exploring the subject on students choosing their electives (optional
subjects), one teacher shared a different view:

The fact that teachers are not allowed to participate in politics as civil
servants definitely cripples democracy. We cannot live outside of politics,
how can we teach democracy if we are not allowed to fully participate in
the shaping of our democracy? I personally feel I could be more
democratic in my teaching, but I have a syllabus to follow and time
becomes a major factor, I cannot afford to listen to all voices if at all I am
to finish the syllabus. So I have to use the lecture method in many
instances.

According to Limage (2001) only a few people would deny that education,
including teacher education, is part of the problem and part of the solution of
poorly prepared citizens in countries that are democracies. The teacher's views
above indicate that *teaching to the test/examinations* is a problem that
compromises democracy since teachers have to rush through the syllabi and in the process deny students a voice. The deputy head at one of the schools seemed to be more progress-oriented when outlining:

Nowadays students question a lot of things around school and their society and as such, teachers should allow them to express their views during the teaching-learning process. By allowing debate and using media, for instance, basing discussions on real life issues as depicted in the radio and television would yield positive results.

The Head of guidance and counseling department at Kwedu, also noted: Guidance and counseling is trying to promote democratic participation through their constructivist teaching methods which become apparent during their teaching and counseling sessions. On another note Mr. Jotia, there is no democracy in the manner in which information is disseminated to the students, since almost everybody is focused on finishing the syllabus. In the long run, teachers use teacher-centered methods instead of being student-centered. This is a big challenge and causes some role conflicts.

One history teacher decided to “take the bull by its horns” when it comes to promoting democracy via her teaching methods:

I infuse democracy in a number of ways in my teaching. At times I teach politics in my class - contrary to the policies that are in place. I need to broaden my students’ minds. This is a democracy after all, ga kere gontse
jalo rre Jotia? (It is so, isn't it Mr. Jotia?). However, to be honest with you, at times I get scared in the event the students let the cat out of the bag. Anyway, I trust them and I know they enjoy my classes and also do well in examinations.

The above experiences draw us closer to the reality advanced by Freire (1970) when making a case against “banking education,” which he argues fails to liberate learners to become transformative intellectuals since their critical consciousness is suppressed. In this case, teachers are oppressors who dehumanize students by their acts of oppression, and in the process also lose their human face. Freire (1970) makes a democratic argument:

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence (p.72).

Freire makes it clear that this lack of student’s involvement in the teaching process makes the teacher the subject in the learning process while students are dissolved to the level of objects that are just receiving deposits and their critical awareness is compromised.
Language and Democracy: A Challenge in Botswana

Teachers in Botswana, especially Setswana teachers at my research sites, could be understood to be in support of Freire’s argument when contending that the curriculum is oppressive in nature since English is used as the medium of instruction to the extent that even the Setswana syllabus is written in English and yet they are expected to instruct in Setswana. A Setswana teacher commented:

I do not think there is democracy in the curriculum especially if you take the Setswana problem into cognizance. The Setswana syllabus is written in English and even technology does not support the use of Setswana since English is reigning in all corners. This kind of arrangement conveys a message to the students that their mother tongue, as well as their culture, is not important. We even have cases where schools have *English Language Policy* (ELP), whereby students are not allowed to speak any language within the school premises except English. Speaking Setswana becomes a punishable offense. Can you just imagine?

On a similar note, making a case on the need for Multicultural Education (ME) in Botswana, Ramahobo (2005) charges that Botswana’s language policy in education is undemocratic and unjust since it oppresses the learner, especially the minority since their languages are not used in the teaching-learning process. She further charges:
Mother Tongue Education (MTE) is a major component of multicultural education since language is one of the major cultural elements that students and teachers bring to schools, classrooms and to all interactive processes. Further, our cultures are expressed through our language. ...A peaceful classroom yields a peaceful school, and peaceful schools result in peaceful societies. The maximum realization of peace is human development: that is, high academic achievement, low poverty levels, less diseases, high literacy rates, easy access to information and so on. The prerequisites for violence on the other hand are discrimination (institutionalized or non-institutionalized; legalized or non-legalized), hatred, intolerance, prejudice, indiscipline, disregard for the rule of law and general citizen frustration. The maximum realization of violence is war, which results in lack of human development and its reversal. ME as a peace instrument must therefore address, in more direct manner, issues of racism, ethnicity, linguistic and cultural diversity, age, sexual orientations, tolerance, prejudice and xenophobia in order to build love and respect for social justice (p.3).

The lack of the promotion of African languages in the curriculum, with special reference to Botswana, deprives the learner the opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue, and to some degree disadvantages them from learning the wider diversity of their cultures. Ramahobo drives her point home by making reference to Cazden (1985) who shares that Africa has lagged
behind in most human and physical development for the simple reason that they have neglected the use of mother tongue education. In Africa, classrooms are prisons in which children are not free to think critically and express their thought on the subject matter, but they are more conscious about their expression in English. Children in Africa learn more outside the classroom than inside. Outside class, they are able to discuss concepts in their local languages and critically examine these concepts (Ramahobo, 2005. p. 10). There are certainly multiple factors that affect democratization of education in Botswana, language is a key factor given the arguments above. Language, democracy and education need a continued dialogue and advocacy for reform in this regard.

Botswana’s Citizenship Education

Lynch (1992) posits that in the North, education must develop the concept of responsible environmental and economic stewardship and consumerism linked to sustainable development, responsible world economic and political co-citizenship and the North’s responsibility for the ‘shaping and sharing of a new global community’, based on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and market principles. In the South, it must provide the human resources development to pull the majority out of the slough of poverty and ignorance and for the generation of income-earning opportunities, the encouragement of entrepreneurship and wealth creation and the building of citizenship stature to participate fully in the shaping of the new world community (p.23). The importance of education in any society cannot be overemphasized. It is the
vehicle through which nations hope to produce citizens for human tolerance and mutuality and above all, citizens who can play a role in the shaping of the socio-economic and the political life of the state. This form of education is referred to as education for citizenship in Botswana, and probably in other parts of the world too.

Citizenship education embraces the fundamental values of the political community, a realistic and scholarly knowledge of the working of political institutions and processes, and skills of political behavior required for effective participation in a democracy (Freeman, 1980 in Parker, 2003). At independence, the Botswana government believed that in order for the country to heal from the wounds injected on it by the colonizers through missionary education, (which had nothing to do with teaching the citizens about participation in their country’s development or culture), Education for Kagisano included among other things, citizenship education or education for social harmony. Therefore one goal of this study was to find out how the concept of citizenship education was understood and used in the context of Botswana.

When perusing through most of the syllabi, it came to my realization that Botswana’s Ministry of Education sees the need to develop a curriculum from Lower Primary (Standard 1 to 4), Upper Primary (5 to 7), Junior Secondary (Form 1 to 3) and Senior Secondary (Form 4 to 5), that is related to the needs of learners as well as the nation. The Social Studies syllabus, from all the afore stated levels, places emphasis on citizenship education and of late, especially at
Lower and Upper primary, Cultural Studies has been introduced as a way of fostering the teaching of citizenship education. It stresses that the learner-centered approach should be used in delivering content which covers topics such as; relationships within family and community, rights and responsibilities of citizens (abuse, conflict resolution, peace, violence, civic rights), authority structure (socio-economic traditional and modern structures), culture, the physical environment and resources and HIV/AIDS (Lower Primary School Syllabus, 2002, p. 29). The Upper Primary Social Studies syllabus, module four (governance and citizenship) goes an extra mile to cover topics such as patriotism and peace. As students proceed from primary school to junior and senior secondary schools, these same topics are covered but this time at an intense and more pronounced level.

Ramatsui (1988 in Holm & Molutsi, 1988) observes:

Going through the current draft of Junior Secondary Social studies Syllabus, it is evident that the nature of the Botswana system of democratic government is presented in detail to the students. They are expected to know the structure and duties of the three branches of government (i.e. the executive, the judiciary and the legislature), the system of checks and balances which results, the character and operation of the multi-party system, the ways in which civil and human rights and freedoms are guaranteed, the operation of justice system, and the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. Our syllabus also seeks to develop
informed citizens who can affectively perform their role as voters.

Students are thus expected to identify the main development issues facing Botswana as well as the most serious social problems facing Botswana and other African countries. They should be able to compare Botswana’s situation with that elsewhere (p.91).

However; the catchiest question to pose is: is what is outlined in the syllabus manifesting itself within the school system and even beyond? Has citizenship education been successful in producing effective, patriotic, participative and progress-oriented democratic citizens?

The answers I gathered from teachers at both schools regarding whether schools were fostering democracy and citizenship show different feelings and various senses of understanding. For instance, the Head of Sciences at one school said that in order for schools to be successful in teaching democracy and citizenship education, first, they ought to change their mindset since most of them are persistently hanging on to the old mentality that *the teacher teaches and students listen*. An English teacher at Kanyi felt that teachers were doing their best despite the fact that lack of resources was crippling their performance level. An agriculture teacher at Kwedu also had his own view:

> We have a long way to go. The interaction between teachers and students is still not flowing and teachers are honestly not approachable. I mean, basically it is difficult because once a teacher becomes friendly and gets close to students, people become skeptical and think that you are in
love with the student. So in a sense, there is still a gap and I personally feel that we need to mature and improve on this. Democracy is about dialogue and sound social relations.

There was a general concern amongst the interviewees that though the concept of citizenship education is important in a nation that is a democracy, schools have their own structures that may fail to effectively implement citizenship education goals. The Senior Teacher Librarian at Kanyi, addressed this question this way:

This issue of democracy, citizenship, rights, responsibilities, justice and all that stuff, is just a question of Western ideas versus the African tradition. In an African sense, children have no rights though on my part at times I try to make them understand that every human being has rights. I do not punish unless the punishment is explained and agreed upon by the student. I make them understand that every transgression is punishable as per the MoE rules and regulations, “That [corporal punishment can be administered by the head or delegated staff].” We do what we feel is good for the students though they may see it as undemocratic. So generally, the way students are treated and taught to some degree does not adhere to the principles of democratic citizenship education.

It appears as if educators understand citizenship education vis-à-vis democracy but what transpires within the school set-up in many instances does not promote good citizenship, let alone democracy. There is a conflict between
African values and Western philosophy on children upbringing. The Head of Pastoral department at Kanyi shared:

To be honest with you, Botswana’s education does not promote good citizenship. It is not user friendly - it does not cater for the slow learners and generally there is a misplacement of students that consequently affects teacher’s planning and delivery of content. Additionally, in an African set-up children do not have rights. However, when we look at June 16 (the day of the African Child), we may think otherwise. Through the guidance and counseling department, we try to address the issue of rights and good citizenship. Our students need to be involved in the running of the school and the introduction of school fees next year is going to deter some students from continuing with their education, which would defeat the whole purpose of citizenship education. Worst of all, our curriculum does not prepare students for formal employment and the most upsetting thing is that more often than not, teachers are left out when it comes to designing the curriculum. Generally, the subject of democracy and citizenship in a Botswana context is complex because we also have our own African values.

A history teacher at Kanyi took the matter further:

Citizenship education can only come into existence if we can begin involving parents and students in the formulation of the material to be taught. We need to empower students first. We need to change the
curriculum and focus on subjects that teach democracy. Democracy ought to be taught and practiced all year round, rather than just waiting for election time. For instance, videos, debate sessions, assemblies, clubs etc could be used as starting point for teaching democracy and practicing good citizenship.

A lot appears to be at issue regarding democracy and citizenship education in Botswana. What is on paper seem not to be in line with what is happening in schools on daily basis. Phorano (1988 in Mmolutsi and Holm, 1988) cautions that democracy can only become a reality when a school begins to refrain from being an elitist, reactionary and hierarchical institution to be a base for the sons and daughters of the peasants to take power and to learn and to live democratically, and to equip themselves with the scientific knowledge necessary to lead their country into the future and end hunger, nakedness, ignorance, disease and exploration (p.94).

Valuing Democracy and Voting Against all Odds

_Young people as an interest group have a duty to exert political influence through the ballot. In this case, their vote is their power and their voice._

_-Independent Electoral Commission Botswana (2004)._  

The importance of the right to vote, especially by youth, cannot be overemphasized. Youth’s votes can significantly play a decisive role in the political process of a government. “Youth participation can effectively ensure substantive representation of the youth in positions of power and decision-
making. Otherwise chances are that the youth and their distinct interests are more likely to be ignored by policy makers (1EC, 2004, p.7).

The student interviewees indicated that the way in which schools were run seem not to be willing to incorporate them although generally they value democracy and the casting of their votes. The reasons advanced were that at least via their ballot box, one chooses a person they know has leadership potential and even if they were to mess-up in future, you would not have to blame anyone but yourself since you voted for the individual in question.

Expressing the importance of voting, a student at Kwedu said:

Voting is the way through which we express our democracy be it in school or at the national political level. There is nothing painful like being led by a person you never voted into power. In fact at times I wish we could be voting for those people teaching us. In school we are honestly denied the chance to vote.

Asked whether they have ever participated in the national elections, a female prefect responded:

Yes, I have participated in national elections at one point but right now I do not see the need because Botswana is almost a one-party state. You vote for people and then the next thing they do is to steal land and money from the government so as to take care of their families. So what is the use of voting? The opposition parties are also not doing enough to unseat the ruling party; I am just tired of this whole thing. Here in school,
for instance, we were never voted into power, the teachers decided whom they wanted into power and that was it. Now look at what we are doing, supervising the washing of dishes at the dining hall and writing the names of noisemakers during study. To me that is not democracy.

The administration and teachers in schools decide who they want to be in the student leadership regardless of whether the student body likes that person or not. Another student also warned:

Voting is absolutely necessary since it shows a sense of responsibility and maturity. I have seen people making blunders by not voting and the moment their lives are affected, they start crying foul. If you do not vote eventually you become affected one way or the other. We need to show our care, political vision and above all, our patriotic spirit by voting. If we cannot vote, who else will Mr. Jotia?

The Chief Information/ Education Officer at IEC, shared that if surely democracy is about the rule of the people, then the people themselves should choose a government that will listen to their views. “It is for this reason that at IEC we focus on public awareness and political consciousness,” he said. The officer stated some of the following issues that are of importance especially regarding youth,

A) Voter awareness- voter apathy is a reality in Botswana especially among youth; therefore IEC is advocating the inculcation of voter awareness in the curriculum.
B) Politics and democracy in school- we are trying to come up with programs that will help students in schools to be empowered and better informed about our national politics. Politics and democracy are about taking a deliberate step to participate and make a sound choice.

C) General conscientization of the masses to participate in elections so as to nurture Botswana’s democracy.

Making a comment regarding youth and voter apathy, Tafa summed up the problem:

Voter apathy is virtually institutionalized. The electoral processes have no tangible meaning for the majority of youth since they cannot run for an office nor have access to government development projects. The electoral processes are highly bureaucratic and most of the people are lazy to go through the cumbersome process, for instance, registering and then keeping your receipt for three months of which when you loose it you have to start the whole process all over again. Also, only rich and powerful people in society can stand as candidates that make it impossible for youth to participate and compete for offices. The youth, together with the workers and poor peasants do not have the money to compete equally as candidates. Voting must translate into material benefits for the people in terms of jobs, education opportunities and other positions of responsibility.
According to Botswana’s vision 2016, the country envisions a democratic, transparent and accountable nation by the year 2016. This dream could only become a reality if youth, an invaluable resource of Botswana, can take a positive step and translate their rights into responsibilities. One way is to register and actually cast their vote or stand for political office (IEC, 2004, p.7).

Summary

The socio-economic and political reforms in Africa in general, and in Botswana in particular, have triggered continued dialogue on democracy and the involvement of the civil society. The relationship between education, democracy and development is also crucially important if a society is to progress along democratic lines. In this chapter, it is clear that the definition and understanding of the concept of democracy cannot be narrowed down to one word or definition. It goes beyond the mere traditional, minimalist and simplistic definition of government of the people, by the people and for the people. It also does not only entail the so-called free and fair elections. It is evident from different interviewees’ perspectives that democracy cannot exist if the voices of the masses are muzzled and their participation is limited or marginalized.

In this chapter, it appears as though within the school system in Botswana, democracy is a highly controversial issue going by the perceptions of teachers, students, administrators, officials in the Ministry of Education and Independent Electoral Commission. Democracy in a school system is about inclusion and making reference to popular participation in the decision-making
process by all stakeholders. However, there are dark spots in the participation process as some voices are excluded from expressing their views. There seem to be more autocratic and authoritarian tendencies in schools displayed by those in positions of power, who ultimately strangle and suffocate the voices of the less powerful, thus compromising democracy.

In the next chapter, I make a detailed discussion about the findings by taking into account the *deep democratic theory*, which is the theoretical underpinning for this study.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The Quest for Deep Democratic Participation: Democracy in Danger.

This chapter presents a summary of the study and also discusses the findings and draws conclusions from the data presented in Chapter 4. It also addresses the implications of the research findings to education and democracy in Botswana’s education system in particular, and to Botswana’s democratic process in general. The chapter additionally draws from the literature presented in chapter two and provides a discussion for the implications for action and recommendations for further research/study, which can ultimately contribute towards the improvement of policy issues in education and provide a platform for the better understanding of the concept of democracy. It further explains my philosophy of deep democracy by drawing from the voices of the participants and makes an urgent call for policy reform within Botswana’s education system.

Summary of the Study

This dissertation is an investigation of deep democratic practice in Botswana Secondary Schools. It explored how students are prepared for participation in an increasingly democratic political environment given Botswana’s concept of Education for Kagisano. Drawing from the theoretical framework of deep democracy (Green, 1999) this study adds a fresh dimension to the concept of democracy and education and seeks to help build citizens who can advocate and nurture democratic habits from the school environment and beyond.
Botswana’s democracy is still young and can only be developed and sustained by citizens who are versatile democratic political actors. Therefore, the role of education in building a nation that is socio-economic and politically successful cannot be overemphasized especially within the African context where colonial education was used to impose a culture of silence amongst the citizens. Wolk (1998) posits:

We cannot have classrooms and curriculums that silence children and their teachers, control and regulate their thinking and learning, rate them and label them and then expect them to take part in what is supposed to be a democratic, pluralistic, and participatory nation. Schools that nurture apathy and passiveness in children help propagate apathy and passiveness in society (p. viii).

The above statement is directly relevant to Botswana’s situation in that the manner in which schools are run today still reflects the colonial legacy.

The Ugly Face of Botswana Schools: A Threat to Democracy

Adeyemi (2000) states that a democratic classroom is deemed to be a situation where the teacher and the students work hand-in-hand in an atmosphere devoid of hatred, fear, uncooperativeness, unfairness, inequality in any form, and other negative traits to achieve the goals of learning and overall goals of the school and the society (p. 390). Contrary to this claim, I observed in both my research sites that the relationship between teachers and students was such that teachers are seen as superior figures who have all the powers to
decide how the learning activities are to be conducted as evidenced by the unceasing use of the lecture method that basically dissolves students into passive figures. As discussed in Chapter Four, it is only through subjects such as history, social studies, development studies and guidance and counseling, that students are mandated to take charge of their learning activities by engaging in debates and questioning the teacher’s assertions where necessary. Lipset (1981) mentions as indicated in the literature review that any situation by members of a group that promotes high participation has a potential for democracy. Therefore democracy is about participation.

During my interviews with the PEO for social studies, he stated that in Botswana the delivery of content by teachers in many subject areas is such that they forget they have students in class “who are human beings.” He emphasized that social studies has taken the initiative to teach students the foundations of democracy by opening up the learning atmosphere and allowing students to interact freely among themselves as well as with their teacher. He added that his department values democracy and that they have decided to introduce voter education/civic education from primary school so that students can grasp the basics of democracy from grassroots. Osler in (Harber 1998) concurs by saying an education system should respect and promote human rights education by giving every human being an opportunity to learn, participate and contribute to a country’s development. Therefore, in this case social studies is doing a commendable job by exposing students to voter education at an early stage.
One troubling issue is the use of corporal punishment in schools, which has a silencing effect on students. Caning has its origins from the country's colonially imposed authoritarian system of schooling (Tabulawa, 1995, Prophet, 1995, Marope, 1995). Teachers in Botswana schools are often armed with sticks, sjamboks and board dusters during their teaching and even outside the classroom it appears as though corporally punishing students even for minor offences is a tradition. At Kanyi, I observed students being corporally punished for coming late to school, having their shirt hanging out of their pants, being late for morning registration, assembly, lesson, and failure to attend Saturday study and even for talking in class without the teacher’s permission.

In one instance at Kwedu, I saw a teacher corporally abusing a student for having failed a test. This was a perplexing experience in that at least under normal circumstances one would expect the teacher to find out the circumstances that contributed to failing the test.

Discipline is very important in every society; however, in the case of Botswana schools corporal punishment is being abused and eventually violates the rights of students as human beings. In a study on *Educating for Peace: Politics and Human Rights in Botswana*, Scanlon (2001) established from an interviewee that:

They [schools] believe that children become unruly, that *Ditshwanelo* (A human rights organization)[my emphasis] teaches people to focus on their rights and to think they're allowed to do anything they want to do, and
some might even have chosen to attribute school strikes etc. to the effects of this human rights awareness issue... It’s a matter of just saying you have entitlements, you also have duties towards others around you. So clearly that is an area, which we’ve identified as requiring attention, even at the teacher training level, so that teachers themselves are eventually steeped in the whole human rights culture. If they are expected to teach something they don’t understand obviously it poses some difficulty (p. 16).

A study by Muchado (2002) on The Perceived Needs for School Counseling Services in Primary and Secondary Schools in Botswana, reported that when students were asked about how they feel about being beaten (corporally) in school, they mentioned that caning makes them feel angry, hateful, sad, hurt, wronged, oppressed and even go to the extent of considering leaving school altogether. On the other hand, when teachers were asked about corporal punishment they stated that punishing students corporally is not abusive; rather it is meant to discipline the child and to control the classroom especially in instances where students become rowdy and disturb the learning process.

In view of the above response, it could be argued that indeed Education for Kagisano is an important national philosophy, however, a lot still has to be done in order for teachers to understand the relationship between democracy, education, discipline and human rights. For change to take place, first the MoE
ought to revise its policy of school discipline and punishment that mandates the administration and teachers to cane students. Students are punished for minor offences and the writing is on the wall that the MoE as well as school administrators are failing to enforce the right policy/regulation regarding corporal punishment. Procedurally, punishment is supposed to be administered by the headmaster, a teacher or boarding master or matron or parent to whom authority has been delegated. However, reality in schools has it that teachers administer punishment as much as they please and they do not even keep a punishment record book as stipulated/expected by MoE. Basically the policy does not work and the best thing is to revise or abandon it altogether.

Students are human beings and as such they have to be treated humanly. Botswana’s education system upholds the shallow colonial mentality that corporal punishment is African, which is tantamount to saying that African culture is abusive/violent. That does not make sense especially in a country such as Botswana, which supposedly is an example of a successful story of African democracy.

In another study, Corporate Punishment: The Brutal Face of Botswana’s Authoritarian Schools, Tafa (2002) reveals that he observed students being caned in schools for coming late, not doing home work, fighting, using abusive language etc., and he even observed a whole school head holding a student’s head (a late comer) with his left hand, then tilting it to the left and then whacking the student’s right cheek three times. In another incident, he states
that a local newspaper reported during the course of his study that an expatriate teacher was deported for deprecating caning as barbaric.

On the basis of these experiences, it is not surprising as indicated in the literature review that Botswana’s youth are apathetic because the way they are treated in schools promotes the dominance of those in positions of power, thus sidelining them from the decision-making process and even silencing them through brutal and degrading punishment. It is therefore not surprising that one of my interviewees as reflected in Chapter Four argued that Botswana’s schools were run like prisons given the manner in which students are treated. On a related note, Murangi and Abosi (2002) are probably right when contending that in a Botswana classroom, to secure compliance with instructions or create a conducive learning environment, school authorities impose discipline. Corporal punishment is counter-productive to democracy and promotes a sense of rebellion amongst students, which eventually can fuel them to engage in strikes or display destructive behavior in vengeance as indicated by Good (2004). This ugly face of violence through corporal punishment needs an urgent solution that could help widen and improve deep democracy in the learning environment.

Centralization of Power in Schools Versus Democracy

_Having equal respect for all its citizens is a prerequisite of democracy. It is only education that makes it possible to gain acceptance as equal citizens. Excluded from the educated mainstream, it is impossible to cultivate a_
sense of one’s value as an individual and this feeling of inferiority negates any possibility of participating on equal terms.

-Shantha Sinha (2005).

Let it be made clear that the idea of Kagisano in Botswana’s society embraces matters to do with social justice, which can become a reality if democracy, fairness and equity are practiced. Kagisano values a sense of belonging together and sharing social responsibilities. Therefore, schools in Botswana have an obligation to first build a sense of community that consequently could create an environment where democracy can be practiced and nurtured. Vanqa (1998), when discussing Botswana’ philosophy of Kagisano, can be understood to be sharing this view when asserting:

Above all, schools and colleges must operate as a community in order to realize Kagisano. That was what Patrick van Rensburg envisaged when he expressed the view ‘that the secondary school in a developing country can be a focal point for development in the surrounding communities (van Rensburg, 1974). However, President Khama had warned that Kagisano should not be a slogan, ‘but [an] idea for our nation’ (Khama, 1971).

My research findings point to the fact that too much centralization of power in schools leaves out other stakeholders in the decision making process which violates the ideas of Kagisano and puso ya batho ka batho (democracy). The school heads are given too many powers and they are expected to be accountable for everything that happens under the school’s roof. The MoE puts
the administrators in a tight corner since eventually they try to monitor or supervise everything that happens within the institution so that if anything goes wrong they can have first hand information. Bassey (1999) adds, “Very surprisingly, after independence, most of the characteristics of colonial education were retained in Africa. For example, African educational systems are without exception controlled centrally by the Ministry of Education, which determines the appointment of teachers, curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials and philosophy” (p.84).

On the basis of my research, let me hasten to say that both Kanyi and Kwedu have hardworking and committed school heads who strive to do the best for the school. They have tried to decentralize power by entrusting, heads of departments, senior teachers and teachers to pursue tasks on their behalf. Of late MoE introduced Senior Management Teams (SMT) as a way of trying to distribute power in the school management, but this still leaves out the students.

At both schools for instance, I realized that the school heads have made an effort to distribute power by introducing Houses and House leaders. Houses are teams of both teachers and students which hold their own assemblies on certain days, pray together, have assembly activities, e.g. drama or just announcements and this makes it easy for teachers to manage a small group of students. The students are also given an opportunity to share biblical scriptures or even make announcements. Houses also compete against each other in sports.
However, despite the existence of this power sharing mechanism, some teachers and even students still feel that they are left out in the decision-making process and that the school heads have total control in the school. For example, at Kanyi, one head of department said:

Although I am a head of department, there are some things I just see happening and when I try to question I am told that the administration runs the school and that the head is directly accountable to the MOE and not to teachers. Personally I am against some of the things done in this school, especially the administration of corporal punishment with special reference to cases where a student is punished at the assembly or in front of the whole school. That is embarrassing and to me is more of a double punishment for the student.

According to my research, at issue is the fact that the school head is the supreme autocratic manager who has absolute authority to take decisions individually and implement them on the whole school. At times their decisions come as announcements to teachers and students and are not subject to change regardless of how the input of other stakeholders might be. Both teachers and students alluded to this fact during my research. Such actions stifle democracy. Hutchinson and Hunt (2000) share that “It is by listening and observing and participating with democratic educators and students, parents and community, that we forge the meaning of democratic education.”
Students at both schools disclosed that they liked the idea of *Houses* because it has made them feel closer to their teachers who are ever willing to be approached if there is a social problem or when they need academic help. Although a good idea, the bottom line is that no house leader can make a decision with his or her house without getting the approval of the school head. So, although *Houses* are an important instrument for democracy, schools should work on ways in which they can empower both students and teachers. Participants in a study by Muchado (2002) reported that students’ empowerment and respect for their rights is an issue that is being overlooked by teachers, parents and school authorities since they do not give them a platform to engage in decision-making. Students felt that they were denied the right to speak and choose what they want. Muchado (2002) mentions “Many students in this study reported that teachers have sexually harassed them, on the other side, teachers deny any act of indiscretion or desire to establish any relationship with student other than that of teacher – student” (p.142). Contrary to the views of the students, Muchado’s findings show that teachers emphasized the fact that students should focus on studying hard and stop raising issues about their rights. Borrowing from a study by Murangi (1991), Muchado (2002) posits that poor student-teacher relationships within the school environment especially in the classroom breeds the “I do not belong” syndrome and it is passive aggressive attitudes, which ultimately create a wedge between some students and the school (p.140).
If Botswana’s education is to address the values of society, it is necessary that those in driving seats of power should start respecting and practicing the idea of seeing schools as community centers as advocated by (Freire, 2000, Wolk, 1998, van Rensburg, 2004, Dewey, 1935) who both believed that schools should prepare young people to be of service to their family, community and the nation at large. This can be made possible today by widening the doors for participation by decentralizing power. Education is intended to prepare people for life and above all, in emerging countries it is to make the educated be concerned with the political, cultural and material progress of the people (Vanqa, 1998: p.129). Structure for student’s voices should be expanded since it is apparent that schools in Botswana are still social environments where learning, practicing and promoting the existence of democracy is regarded as the least important option instead of being a necessary day-to-day rule.

The Prefectship System in Schools

It should be reiterated that Education for Kagisano points out that democracy in Botswana’s education system should be promoted by giving every person a voice in the running of the affairs and that each individual should be allowed to participate directly or indirectly. The school and classroom world under the philosophy of Education for Kagisano are to be reconstructed and, widened in order to positively address democratic realities of citizens by enhancing spaces for participation. Dialogue is very important in this regard since it also fosters development of future leaders and also introduces citizens to
the operations of deliberative democracy. In Botswana, schools have introduced
the prefectship system as a wake up call to democratic needs enshrined within
Botswana’s education philosophy. Needless to say, it is clear as established by
this study that a lot still has to be done in order to fully give students a platform
for decision-making and creating a climate for leadership training.

Molosiwa (2005) indicates that for a longtime in Botswana the prefect has
been the official management representative to the students, security officer,
general director of student life, and information agent for school administration
and so on. He further charges that the powers of the prefects have been and
continue to dwindle and that the unfortunate thing is that the “prefectorial”
government has never been based on democratic ideals since the incumbents
are selected by the school administration with little input from the teaching staff,
while students have no role whatsoever to play in choosing their leaders. This
causes friction in the student community. Molosiwa continues to make a case
against prefectship, which he sees as undemocratic by quoting Sybouts and
Krepel (1984) who contend:

One of the fundamental assumptions of democracy is that people are
competent to govern themselves and their efforts will result in
organization ‘of the people, by the people and for the people’. Such an
organization necessitates appropriate social and political ideals,
understandings, attitudes, skills and willingness to live, as well as to die
for the common good. However, these tenets are not automatic but must
be developed. This development comes appropriately through practice and philosophy of ‘learning by doing’ in a setting resembling that of ultimate citizenship. Participation by students in school government truly represents such a setting (p.3).

The scenario in Botswana schools is that the prefects are not representatives of the student body although both administrators claimed the contrary. The problem as correctly argued by Molosiwa, emanates from the fact that the student body does not have the last say on who should become their leader. As stated in Chapter Four, the administration has absolute power to refuse to accept a student leader despite the fact that the student body might be having confidence in that individual. I asked one prefect at Kwedu about how they were elected to power and the answer I received was:

My name was called at the assembly during the introduction of prefects. I think the administration chose me, as has always been the tradition.

A member of the student body also furiously charged that the prefects are there to represent the administration since the people they wanted to be in power had their names rejected by the school authorities. This is definitely a cause for concern because schools should be exposing students to democracy by fully allowing them to vote for their leaders and respect their vote. The ballot box must be used to directly expose students to the functions of democratic elections as it happens during the national elections. This exercise would help curb the
problem of spoiled votes that occur due to lack of voting experiences by the electorates.

Democratic politics is about consultation and active voter participation in the country's development effort (IEC, 2004). Therefore, schools could be utilizing the voting of prefects' opportunity to make students understand the importance of active voter participation. What they [schools] are doing is contributing to voter apathy by denying the students the opportunity to elect their leaders. That is a blow to democracy. The IEC is heavily involved in voter education programs whose objectives are to empower voters to clearly understand their constitutional rights and responsibilities and defeats its purpose to learn that schools fail to properly collaborate by using the prefectship system to initiate voter awareness activities for the students. The IEC cannot win the war against voter apathy alone; it takes a collaborative effort of the entire nation and educational institutions should be seen to be playing a role in this endeavor. As discussed in Chapter Two, voter apathy is a troubling issue especially amongst youth in Botswana and yet schools seem not to be doing enough to curb this problem.

During my research, the Chief Information/Education Officer at IEC, mentioned that voter awareness issue is a big problem in Botswana and that they are trying to have it inculcated into the curriculum. He said the IEC visits schools especially during the national elections to talk about elections and the voting process. The officer also alluded to the fact that some schools still have a
problem of distinguishing between democratic empowerment and politics, “teaching democracy in school is not political, it is just a way of empowering the citizens by giving them the opportunity to be better informed so as to make better decisions. Politics is when you take a deliberate step to persuade an individual as to which party to choose.” In addition, a teacher at Kanyi denounced the prefectship system and said it fails to address the needs of the student body and suggested that the SRC should be instituted in schools. However, he was quick to mention that administrators are against the SRC since they see it as a radical political body.

At Kwedu progress has been made regarding the replacement of the prefectship system with the SRC although the teacher in charge (The Rightman, as he requested to be identified) was still negotiating the logistics with the administration in liaison with the student body. He advanced that the prefectship system was toothless and not worth having since it fails to train real student leaders and the election of prefects to power in his school was cumbersome and undemocratic since the school authorities had an upper hand regarding who should be a prefect and not. When asked about the aims of introducing the SRC, he said:

The aim of the school council will be to facilitate the interchange of ideas and concerns between staff and students and to ensure the smooth running of the school. It should also seek ways to improve student facilities and the general well being of the students. All matters of concern
and interest will be open for discussion no matter how large or small but it is recognized that some issues will not be resolved at school council level. The council will also be a dynamic and enterprising, actively seeking better systems and ways of doing things not just responding passively to problems when they occur. It will have a major responsibility for communication of information between staff and the students quickly and efficiently. Members of the council will be both the eyes and ears of the school, alert to new ideas and the concerns of the students and staff.

The Rightman further mentioned that the responsibilities of the council would include academic, sports/clubs, boarding issues, health/environment hygiene, entertainment, collaboration with teachers and the administration etc. He intends to use the ballot box during the elections of council members and also have members of the student body as well as teachers to run the elections. It is envisioned that the council will consist of 10 students (5 female, 5 male) and 2 members of staff (1 male, 1 female). Those students contesting for an office will be required to come up with a manifesto that outlines issues they want to tackle during the course of their term.

On a positive note, it was good learning that there are teachers whose goals are not only to teach but to also produce future leaders. It was also impressive to learn that the school head at Kwedu showed his progressive mindedness in this regard by supporting the introduction of the SRC although everything is still at the embryonic stages of development and implementation.
Democracy certainly needs progress-oriented educators and administrators if at all Batswana are to succeed in building a harmonious society of political conscious and development-oriented citizens. That is what *Education for Kagisano* encompasses.

All in all, although both of my research sites had the prefectship system in place, it violates democratic practice and is toothless since the students are not involved in the running of the affairs of the institution besides the fact that they supervise meals, studies, cleaning of the school environment and reporting the wrongdoers to the school administration. It is for this reason that I contend that prefects are the eyes and ears of the administration that do not have any powers whatsoever. Their decision-making potential is suppressed and generally the school authorities strangle their voices and deny them full exposure to how democracy functions.

If schools in Botswana are to nurture and strengthen democracy as an essential pillar in the national principles, full equal participation by all citizens should be deemed purely imperative. The curriculum needs to change to address citizenship education largely for both students and teachers during their training. In-service training on democracy and education should be implemented. This will help deepen democracy. Hutchinson and Hunt (2000) correctly argue, “The development of a democratic learning community must begin with who its participant members are. If it does not, it simply is not a democracy (p.2).
The School: A Location for Democratic Possibilities

To achieve democracy, staff and students need to articulate a common vision, identify aims for democratic teaching and learning, as well as develop and implement programmes to address them. This means that all stakeholders should be willing to practice democracy in a variety of educative contexts (Harber, 1998). This study established that teachers, students, school heads and other officials in various government departments including those in the MoE, see the teaching and practicing of democracy in school as a necessary social action that addresses elements of citizenship education. However, according to the participants, there is still need to create a positive climate in schools that would accommodate and nurture social relationships that value and respect democracy. There is also need for a paradigm shift regarding curriculum and pedagogical issues since currently educators are seen to be implementing curricula through the *I teach and you listen approach*, which is an obstacle to democracy and is also contradictory to active participation within a democratic learning atmosphere.

There are limited opportunities for teachers to create a democratic teaching-learning environment because they have very limited time to cover the entire syllabus in order to prepare students for the national examinations. The education system dictates to educators to be result/exam oriented therefore allowing almost all the students to contribute in discussions would consume time and temper with their lecturing. Romano and Merryfield (2003) assert, “Even
though we are saturated with articles about improving the state of our children’s literacy, the old adage of children should be seen and not heard prevails” (p.54). During my observations it became clear that most of the teachers were using the lecture-method in the delivery of content and that absolutely made the learning process a teacher’s show despite the fact that student-centered methods are encouraged.

In a study by Batane (2002) on Technology Use in Secondary Schools in Botswana, it is reported that during the teaching-learning process student participation was mostly limited to answering questions from the teacher. She contends that although there were some teachers who tried to involve students more in their learning, the majority of teachers’ strategies where contrary to principles of constructivism that view the learner as an active participant within the learning environment. My findings concur with hers and are both a poignant testimony to the fact that democracy in schools is still at a young age of its development. In another study by Harber (1998) on school reform and democratization in South Africa (Gauteng Province) after the collapse of apartheid, it is revealed that students regarded schools as authoritarian institutions as evidenced by rigid curriculum that placed the teacher at the center of the learning process that encouraged students to remain passive. He further shares that the students said they were made to learn for the purpose of examinations, which were the only form of assessment. Harber uses the results
of his findings to make a case that colonization has affected African schools since the way they are run even today still reflects on the authoritarian colonial legacy.

The study admits that school democratization is a big challenge in Botswana as well South Africa and that in order for democracy to exist, classroom methods will need to change so that students could critically be engaged with texts and be able to make constructive cases on the basis of their understanding rather than just following predetermined key facts. A democratizing school must be prepared and equipped to teach its pupils how to participate productively. If a democratic approach to schooling is to become the norm in the future, the development of the appropriate skills will need to be part of the curriculum - indeed, to be part of the very fabric of school life - from the earliest years: only thus will children be able to develop the ability to handle empowerment and participate actively and positively throughout their schooling, to whatever degree is appropriate at their age level (Harber, 1992, p.25).

Lack of student-student and teacher-student interaction as well as the absence of meaningful dialogue during the teaching-learning process, is tantamount to declaring a no democracy zone within academic institutions which denies students experiences to learn from one another. The foundation of democracy is interaction and the value for diversity. Reformed teacher training programs should have to change the current state of affairs.

On the basis of the above findings, it is worth maintaining that schools need to empower the learner and make participation part of the fabric of a
democratic institution. Full democratization of the curriculum, pedagogy and school management, certainly cannot be achieved at the wink of an eye, but the need for change of mindset especially by those in authority cannot be overemphasized. My research provides some evidence that teachers, students and administrators subscribe to the notion of teaching and practicing democracy although it is clear that there are varying degrees of understanding of what democracy in a school means. This study is therefore crucially important in that it tries to explain the meaning of democracy within the scope of the theory of deep democracy, which puts emphasis on the understanding and valuing and respect of differences among the members of a community so that one can live with others with sound habits of the heart.

Crippling Democracy: Teachers’ Poor Conditions of Service

This study found that other problems affecting full democratization of schools were poor conditions of service for teachers. Most of the teachers stated that they were demoralized and disappointed by the MoE since to date it has failed to ‘push’ the department of Teaching Service Management (TSM) to pay their parallel progression money. Teachers alluded to the fact that the Botswana Federation for Secondary School Teachers (BOFESETE) with the support of other teacher’s unions, at one point took the government to the highest court on the land so that they could have their dues paid but to no avail despite the fact that they won their case against the government. One frustrated teacher said:

_Nna rra ke bona go siame go ruta le go tshela democracy, jaanong ga_
As for me sir I find it okay to teach and live democracy, but there is no way teachers can teach well because TSM refuses to pay them. We are so frustrated and demoralized and conditions of service in the teaching profession is honestly horrible and there is no way we can deliver our services properly given the frustration.

According to Mmegi, (25/03/2004) the parallel progression issue has sparked debates and furious reactions from some ministers and members of parliament in Botswana who think that enough was not being done to address teacher’s concerns. According to Mfa, Assistant Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration, there are over 22 000 individuals who are owed parallel progression back payments, but only several hundreds have been paid their dues. In another development regarding the parallel progression matter, the Assistant Minister of Education is reported to have announced that those teachers whose parallel progression money would not be paid by the end of the year will no longer receive any payments since there are other important issues to attend at the beginning of the year. This sounds as though teachers do not deserve to be paid their dues for the services they have rendered. Mmegi (17/11/2005) reported:

Teacher organizations have vowed to take legal action if the government fails to pay their members who are eligible for parallel progression arrears. The threat comes after the Assistant Minister of Education, Moggie
Mbakanyi, told parliament that by December 31\textsuperscript{st} 2005 no teacher would be paid the delayed arrears. The payments will have stopped irrespective of whether or not all eligible teachers have received their dues.

*Mmegi* further reported that the statement by the Assistant Minister triggered furious reactions especially from the president of Botswana Teachers Union (BTU), Japhta Radibe, who uttered that failure by the government to pay teachers will be a serious contempt of court since they (teachers’ organizations) took the parallel progression case to the High Court which ordered the government to pay all teachers who qualified for parallel progression. As if not enough, Radibe elaborated that the Assistant Minister was making a joke since the union was never consulted about the bizarre decision. In an interview with *Mmegi*, Mbaakanyi contested that teachers themselves were to blame since they failed to show up to claim their monies and that the parallel progression chaos cannot go on forever because it destructs the core business of the Ministry of Education, which is to ensure that education is delivered.

During the research phase, I talked to teachers who expressed their disappointment with the government particularly regarding parallel progression and some reported that they even considered quitting to explore avenues somewhere since conditions of service were generally appalling. Maundeni (2002) observes that teacher’s dissatisfaction in Botswana is a living reality and states that in 1988 Botswana Teachers Union (BTU) and Botswana Federation of
Secondary Teachers (BOFESETE) were visible in the national news when secondary school teachers refused to mark that year’s school examinations.

According to Maundeni, in 2002 both unions cooperated again and refused to supervise end of year examinations and extra curricular activities and resorted to launching a one-week industrial action over the government pay structure, which they perceived as discriminatory towards teachers. For the first time in years, BOFESETE organized strikes that sent a clear message to the authorities that policies could not be imposed on teachers. It also wanted the general public and the policy makers to realize that there were serious problems at the ministry of education (Maundeni, 2004, p.56).

A participant stated that democracy is being compromised in their school because of a tradition of poor communication and lack of consultation all the way from the MoE down to the school authorities. Some teachers also mentioned that parents disappointed them because they were not upcoming in school activities such as Parents Teachers Association’s (PTA) meetings, open days, fund raising activities to mention just a few. Parents were reported to be showing up at schools during a time of crisis such as a strike or when their children engage in some misdemeanor that eventually lead to the school authorities threatening them with suspension or expulsion.

One principle engraved within the theory of deep democracy is that democracy means paying attention and that failure to pay attention to matters pertaining to a community cripples democracy. Democracy requires all of us. It
cannot survive - it cannot exist - without *all our voices*. Without this we do not
have democracy, we have stagnation. A democratic nation cannot embrace silent
classrooms. Democracy thrives on the ideas and communication, on asking
questions and seeking solutions, on participating in the complexities of life (Wolk,
1998, p.202). The tension and rivalry that exists between teachers and the
government bruises efforts to fully democratize schools.
CHAPTER 6

Recommendations

Creating Spaces for Deep Democratic Engagement

This study demonstrates that a hierarchy of power and privilege as perpetuated by the most powerful voices within Botswana’s schools has marginalized the student voices, thus providing an uneven and rough atmosphere for the birth and growth of democracy within the system. There would be no reason to dispute the fact that education has a significant role in political democratization of the state. Therefore, in order to facilitate the democratization of schools, which in turn will help build a vibrant and sustainable democracy in Botswana, this study recommends the following:

Opening More Participatory Structures

Generally school reform should be given a priority if at all schools are to flourish as democratic spaces which teach citizenship education so that students as future leaders can play an essential role in the sustainability of Botswana’s democracy. Participants in the study show that the system has some defects regarding the empowerment of students’ voices and as such the school environment has to implement some student-centered strategies which will make students to be partners in the educational process rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. In a democracy, it is important to extend power to those who are least powerful and giving voice to those who have traditionally been silenced in mainstream decision-making. And, particularly as student bodies
grow larger and more diverse than ever, it is important to create a school culture that is willing to hear and respond to different students and different types of student voice (Silva, 2002). Freedom of expression should be enshrined in the school rules and regulations as well as in curriculum and pedagogy.

There is need to respect and value diversity of opinions so as to make all stakeholders to feel as an integral part of school community’s democratic endeavor. Quoting Carr (1991), Tabulawa (2003) contends that schools should be democratic spaces so that teachers, parents and students can acquire the qualities of mind and social attitudes that are the prerequisites of a genuinely democratic society. It is by listening and observing and participating with democratic educators and students, parents and community, that we forge the meaning of democratic education (Hutchinson, 2000). Botswana’s citizens can only make a difference in their democratic system if the education system provides a platform for growth through participation, since currently the system is skewed and discriminatory, hence the need for urgent reform.

Democratizing the Student Leadership Through SRC

This study reveals that the present prefectship system of governance is toothless and undemocratic since students do not directly elect their leaders. Firstly, the school administration should have its “hands off” regarding the voting of students’ leaders. Continued imposition of student’s leaders ought to stop now and pave way for a true representative government of the people-SRC, which will be brought to power through the ballot box. The SRC elections must be used
as an educative exercise on voter awareness and eventually could help solve the national outcry on voter apathy as reported by the IEC. We cannot isolate realities of national politics from educational institutions especially that Botswana schools are supposedly teaching civic education that presumably embraces the *dos* and *don’ts* in a democratic setup. Low levels of civic and political literacy have been linked directly to poor citizen participation, something seen as highly problematic for the effectiveness and ultimately the survival of democracies (Bean, 1998; CEG, 1994; SSCEET, 1989).

The SRC needs to be used as a democratic structure that helps solicit student’s voices and a mouthpiece between the school administration, parents and the student body. My study found that there are serious inadequacies regarding students’ channels of forwarding grievances or complaints to the administration. Students are afraid of approaching teachers and school administration to file complaints and it is because of this feeling of fear that students eventually bottle-up their worries and in some cases end up resorting to violence through strikes. SRC will also provide meaningful platforms for student’s leadership opportunities by engaging in discussions with the school authorities on matters related to school management, curriculum and the general welfare of the student community. To further enhance development of future leaders, the SRC can also liaise with teachers, parents and school administrators to organize and facilitate workshops that benefit youth on topics such as HIV/AIDS, teenage
pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual harassment, environment, gender equity, citizenship, voter education to mention only a few.

“Doing Democracy” in the Classroom

In Chapter Four, this research provides a solid account on the fact that teachers limit and or deny students involvement in the learning process. Democracy cannot be taught if the teaching styles are undemocratic as reflected by too much power and control of the learning activities by educators. Most of the lessons I observed indicated the perpetual existence of the banking model of learning whereby learners were treated as passive receivers/deposits of knowledge. Teachers should have a pedagogical paradigm shift and resort to using teaching methods which promote pronounced interaction in class as advocated by the constructivists who argue that in the teaching-learning process, learners should be allowed to construct their knowledge and interpret learning according to their past experiences and socio-economic and political backgrounds.

Constructivist model regards learning as a *give and take* process where the learner is at the center of the learning activities within a collaborative social discourse where the teacher is a facilitator of knowledge and not a dictator in the teaching-learning process. According to Tabulawa (2003), the learner-centered pedagogy views students as active participants in the learning process rather than meek recipients of ready-made factual knowledge from the teacher. This pedagogy is seen as democratic since it demands a relationship between
teachers and students in which dialogue is an important means of learning.

Botswana's education system has to be reformed to give students autonomy in their learning process.

Classrooms must become areas where virtues of eloquence are promoted through open discussions, debates, drama, and free expression of ideas in writing. O’ Brien (2003) mentions:

If schools want to be places where students prepare to be highly literate individuals, they must be places where students are encouraged to be strong citizens, and that means participating in healthy debate. Schools should be laboratories for democracy where issues are actively debated and every voice encouraged to speak. It is in this culture of democracy that literacy flourishes as students work to hone their skills and become better readers and writers, speakers and listeners (p.27).

Deep democracy advances the ideal that within the learning process, educators should provide platforms for enquiry by challenging learners to actively participate, explore, question texts and have productive dialogue with other learners. Democratic teachers can also arrange for class meetings, promote writing of journal and school magazine articles; this will enable students to voice their concerns and share opinions. This progressive and inclusive way of approaching the teaching-learning arena is in itself an empowering social activity. Freire (2000) saw that the need to educate the oppressed was to foster them to critical consciousness through the questioning of their political and economic
situation and setting up democratic, no dictatorial practices in the classroom that could be used in other governing situations (p.62).

In a Botswana context, democratization of teaching must start with the reduction of student-teacher ratio. As of now, teachers run classes of 40-45 students which makes it difficult for the teacher to implement progressive pedagogical styles such as group work, individual projects, individual presentations, discussions, role-playing, the list is long. On the basis of the above, democracy can become a reality in the classroom if teachers can begin promoting student’s critical thinking and problem solving skills that consequently would help students to question and challenge both academic and social injustice. The best way to teach democracy is to do democracy.

Change in Assessment and Evaluation Procedures

One reality in schools is that they are so obsessed with grades to the extent that individual development is compromised over grades which are basically discriminatory in nature since they classify students and send a message that student A is superior to B because they score higher grades. Democratizing curriculum must automatically lead to a change of assessment and evaluation procedures. Teachers in this study stated that they do not have time to allow every student to talk in class because they have to finish the syllabus so that students can be ready to sit the examinations. There is too much emphasis placed on tests and examinations and even the assessment procedures reflect a lot of subjectivity. Some students confessed that they spend some time
memorizing content so as to be able to pass the examinations. Practically, testing and evaluation measures are not compatible with *Education for Kagisano* since they do not reflect/embrace the national principles.

All assessment, even test-based, is subjective. The difference is that when we assess children within the dominant paradigm, we end up with numbers and percents, but when we assess children within a democratic and naturalistic belief system, we end up with *human beings* (Wolk, 1998, p.112). Traditionally fixed-response tests/assessment such as multiple choice fail to enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic way and conforms them to narrow minded thinking since they are only challenged to reflect recall, interpret knowledge and do not apply knowledge by making critical analysis of a situations. The framing of questions is confusing and is deliberately structured to confuse and fail a learner. It suppresses the cognitive capability of the learner. Tests should promote civic competence by challenging learners to apply knowledge in making reasoned decisions and arguments which demonstrate mastery of content which is applicable and relevant to the learner’s real world.

A democratic assessment cherishes the notion that learners are able to look at an issue and think critically and then make informed decisions. Students’ assessment must be designed such that it promotes inquiry and discovery. For instance, continuous assessment based on projects and research activities can be used to measure the learner’s understanding of the taught concepts rather than giving a one time decisive comprehensive examination.
Teacher Education Reform

Botswana’s socio-economic and political development needs to be spearheaded by informed and competent human resources who can successfully promote a democratic public culture. To fully achieve democracy, teacher education program should implement a democratic civic education curriculum. This study provides indisputable evidence that teachers lack understanding of the concept of citizenship education and others view the teaching of democracy as a political endeavor which is contrary to their code of regulations. Some teachers equate the teaching and practice of democracy in school as a hot potato issue that should only be left to those teachers who are teaching social studies, history and development studies who some teachers mislabel as the politicians. It is because of this myopic understanding of the concept of democracy that teachers fail to accommodate diverse viewpoints during teaching and often close students out during content delivery. A teacher who does not understand democracy cannot produce democratic learners unless it happens through some divine miracle.

Therefore, there is urgent need to transform teacher education so that student teachers can be exposed to concepts such as critical pedagogy, democracy, diversity, freedom, equality, justice and cultural studies in education. The NCE states clearly that the principle of democracy has to be incorporated into the education system. As such, teaching and practicing democracy by teachers should not be an option in the teacher education curriculum; rather it
should be indisputably prioritized from the onset. Addressing education and democracy in Botswana, Monyatsi (2005) cautions:

The first commission on Education of 1977 took further the principle of democracy and emphasized that the structure and organization of education must reflect the four national principles (*now five with Botho*) and that any features of education system that impaired democracy should be changed. It was therefore emphasized that schools themselves were small communities and the life of schools and colleges should give expression to Botswana’s basic principles including democracy so that young Batswana could be expected to understand and cherish it. Unless this were pursued and achieved, and schools and colleges continued to show quite opposite tendencies, it would be meaningless to speak of democracy and national principles (p.356).

Monyatsi drove the nail right into the head because my study established that not all subjects in the curriculum were addressing the national principles and teacher’s attitudes to *Education for Kagisano* were wanting. Teachers should model democracy regardless of the subjects they are teaching-this is a requirement according to *Education for Kagisano* and yet teachers are failing to actualize the national principles in their teaching methodologies. During training, teachers must be exposed to free public spaces where they can engage in discussions and debates regarding school life and social relationships so that
they can in turn use the same strategies during their teaching. Civic education should be introduced in their curriculum.

Too much centralization of power in schools has dissolved some teachers to silent authority obeying figures. This silence is transformed into their way of conducting the learning environment, which is reflected by their authoritarian tendencies in dealing with students. Apparently there is tacit feeling amongst some educators that citizenship education is less important compared to the major and minor subjects that they are trained to teach. That is purely ironic and shows a deformity in the teacher-training program, hence the urgent need for reform to include democratic education in teacher training. Democracy in teacher education can endure only if institutions and individuals translate their formal statements of commitment into actual democratic teaching, learning and living processes (Harber, 1998). Democratic citizenship education in teacher training program in Botswana needs a fresh look.

Affirming Language Diversity

It betrays historical logic for one to confirm that colonialism has collapsed in Africa whereas English remains the dominant and powerful language of government and administration, medium of instruction, communication tool in science and technology and international relations. In Botswana, English is the official language and this is evident even in the education system because it is the medium of instruction punishable through low grades for those students who do not understand it. Since ‘independence,’ it was a requirement *if not a must*
for every *Motswana* to pass English especially during the final O-level examinations. Students who failed English were automatically failed the O-levels despite the fact that they had passes in other subjects. Botswana continued to ‘dump’ those students who failed English into the streets and could not enter a college of education or university to pursue further studies. It was only in the late 90s that ELP was changed to allow students who failed English to pass the O-levels provided they have passed other subjects. However, English is still the medium of instruction in Botswana’s schools and this state of affairs confirms Botswana’s legacy of colonially inherited school curriculum.

Democracy has to affirm diversity in schools. Failure to promote local languages in education can devastatingly affect student’s learning process and their general performance. According to Batibo and Smieja (2000), there are about 25 languages spoken in Botswana and yet none of them are taught or used to instruct except for Setswana (national language), which is taught as a compulsory subject. To date very little has been done to incorporate the indigenous languages into the curriculum.

Participants in this study, especially students; confirmed that teachers punish them for speaking indigenous languages in class. They revealed that even within the general school environment they are expected to speak English. I observed one lesson where a student was trying to drive a point home in response to a question but could not communicate well in English and the teacher could not allow the student to use Setswana. Other students even
laughed at the struggling student and the teacher’s response was, ‘you need to improve your English to avoid embarrassment,’ as though English was the magic language that reflects educational and intellectual maturity and success.

Addressing the issue of English and power in Botswana, Molosiwa (2003) argues that English is associated with socio-economic power and that many jobs require people who have done well in English at school. Molosiwa further states that although public schools are funded by government, parents are increasingly striving to send their parents to expensive English medium schools so that they can master English which would elevate them to a position where they will be regarded as ‘educated’ and ‘most empowered.’ In a study by Mpondi (2004), *Educational change and cultural politics: national identity-formation in Zimbabwe*, he poses that there is a challenge in language use in Zimbabwe and that there is need for viable programs where both mother tongue and English compliment each other. Mpondi reveals that in Zimbabwe, Shona (one of the indigenous languages) is almost a dying language in schools despite the fact that some students are not performing adequately because of English and indigenous languages are not used to account for the learning problems associated with English language. The same is true for Botswana where code switching is not promoted during the teaching-learning process to better explain concepts and facts.

If at all schools are to be true democratic spaces in Botswana schools, I contend and recommend that there is need to promote bilingualism in the
curriculum. Given the findings of this study, it is fitting that we begin to address
the issue of democratic citizenship education from the lenses of multicultural
education which respects and values language diversity in the learning process.
Democratic education ought to be operationalized in Botswana by affirming
diversity and allowing indigenous languages to be part of the curriculum. It does
not make sense to talk of Botswana’s independence and Botswana being a
shining example of democracy whereas its education system remains rooted in
its colonial history contrary to the expectation and vision of *Education for
Kagisano*.

In every democracy, democratic or citizenship education must preserve
indigenous cultures and languages by promoting and respecting diversity. Some
students fail to actively participate in the academic and social processes of the
school because of the barriers created by English. The inferiority complexes
attached to indigenous languages in Botswana must be challenged, refuted and
be abandoned so as to give birth to democracy in school that ultimately could
nurture the success of Botswana’s democratic political system. Batswana need to
be proud of their indigenous languages.

Ramahobo (2005) shares that mother tongue education is good for
education, and education is good for development. Mother tongue education is
indispensable to development. Multicultural education is education for peace, and
peace is a prerequisite for development. Citizens should be encouraged to have
pride in their social identity by being allowed to interact and learn through their
languages. According to Bassey (1999) it is not surprising that Paulo Freire and Donald Marcedo argue that educators should use native language for literacy in order to help students appreciate their own culture. They conclude that “literacy [should] not be viewed as simply the development of skills aimed at acquiring the dominant standard language,” but rather as cultural politics, which is those values that challenge dominant, oppressive values in society, or as Henry Giroux tell, “Educators need a language that makes (students) sensitive to the politics of their own location” (p.91). Linguistic discrimination in the curriculum and school environment in general defeats the purpose of democratic education and disables students in their critical deliberations within a democracy. Botswana should move away from self-imposed linguistic discrimination and promote the use of indigenous languages in learning institutions. We cannot “celebrate” colonialism forever, this is an era where the winds of change must take control.

Recommendations for Future Research

The future of Botswana’s socio-economic and political development and prosperity lies within the palms of its citizens. Critical, diverse, versatile and educated citizenship plays a key role within the development and sustainability of a democratic process. Schools in Botswana must become platforms for sound social interaction and transformations where citizens are educated not only to perpetuate and affirm the existing status quo but to also constructively develop critical discourses and propose a new paradigm for the better.
The data in this study has exposed and confirmed the shortcomings of schools within the democratic Botswana. This study is on, *The quest for deep democratic participation: schools as democratic spaces in the post-colonial Botswana*, and it makes a challenge and provides a starting base for further related research on Botswana’s education system and its relationship with the socio-economic and political dynamics of the state. Future research areas can include:

A. Teacher education program in Botswana and how it provides opportunities for critical intellectual engagement on democracy and civic responsibilities.

B. Possibilities for Multicultural Education, democratization, empowering curriculum and pedagogy within the framework of Botswana’s *Education for Kagisano*.

C. School Leadership training and how it addresses or fails to address the birth and continued existence of a democratic culture.

D. The relationship between traditional Tswana ways of children upbringing and how that nurtures or impedes their critical and active participation in schools in particular and in Botswana’s national politics in general.

E. Critical analysis of Corporal Punishment and its negative/positive impact on the production of “voiceful” and or “voiceless” citizenship.

F. The democratic successes or failures of *Education for Kagisano* since
Botswana’s independence.

G. The relationship between Botswana’s education system and national politics.

H. Comparative studies on democracy and education in African states and how it influences or fails to influence participation in national politics.

I. How has the education system in post-colonial Botswana legitimized inequity along class and gender lives?

J. Challenges associated with implementing democratic education in a non-western education setting.

Concluding Remarks

Second to HIV/AIDS drug, if there is anything else that Africa in general needs urgently, particularly Botswana, is a vibrant and sustainable democracy whose pillars are the intellectually transformative and critically conscious citizens. Therefore, education has a major role in training intellectuals who can venture into the future with an open and dynamic democratic mind.

Botswana’s philosophy of education, *Education for Kagisano*, is a noble idea that has helped Botswana structure an education system that would help the country heal from the scares of colonial education. However, it is evident from my research as well as from the viewpoint of (Tabulawa, 1995, Tafa, 2002, Good, 2004, Harber, 1998, IEC, 2004, Molosiwa, 2005, Muchado, 2002, Ramahobo, 2005, Monyatsi, 2005, Batane, 2002) that the ideals and objectives of *Education for Kagisano* have not yet been attained, as one would expect. This
is a troubling scenario according to the realities established by this study and there is definitely more to be done to better the situation.

This study reveals that there is work to be done in Botswana in ascertaining that schools are spheres for democratic possibilities that produce informed learners who can be of service to their families, communities and the nation at large taking into account the democratic aspirations. Education must be used to cure social imbalances imposed and enforced by the state bureaucracies. By understanding the concept of democracy and Botswana’s national principles in general, Botswana’s citizens should join hands in taking Botswana to a high level of socio-economic and political promised land. Above all, it is only through democratic education that matters to do with participation, equity, gender imbalances, multiculturalism, social justice and harmony, power and empowerment can better be addressed in Botswana. This study provides a starting point to a lot of work ahead. “He who brings kola brings life,” the struggle continues!
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Appendix A: Permission to Conduct Educational Research

2062 Bridlington Lane Apt. C
Columbus
Ohio 43229
February 7th 2005

Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 005
Gaborone
Botswana

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref: Permission to Conduct Educational Research: Agreement Lathi Jotia

This letter serves as a follow up of the application I filed electronically seeking permission to conduct an educational research in Botswana. I have attached another set of application forms.

I am a citizen of Botswana currently pursuing a PhD. in Cultural Studies in Education in the USA. My research is entitled: The Quest for Democratic Participation: Schools as Democratic Spaces in the Post-Colonial Botswana. In a sense, my study seeks to establish how students as citizens and future leaders are exposed to democratic practices that ultimately will help them to fully participate in the shaping and sustaining of our democracy. I therefore intend interviewing teachers, students, parents, administrators and other relevant personnel especially in the Ministry of Education.

I intend resuming my study mid- April-July 2005. I would like to assure your office that the data gathered from this exercise will be used accordingly and inline with the ethical outlines of a research and will solely be for the purpose of completing the dissertation. The respondents will remain anonymous. It is my hope that this research will provide insights which can be used to better or strengthen our education system in line with the expectations and guidelines of our national principles.

Looking forward to your considerate response. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Agreement Lathi Jotia
PhD. Candidate
Appendix B: Permission to Conduct an Educational Research in your School

2062 Bridlington Lane Apt. C
Columbus
Ohio 43229
USA

14\textsuperscript{th} March 2005

The Head
Kwedu Sen Sec School
P O Box 2000
Kwano
Botswana

Dear Sir

Re: Permission to Conduct an Educational Research in your School.

I would like to extend a request to conduct a research study in your school in which I will invite you, teachers and students to participate.

I am a citizen of Botswana currently pursuing a PhD. in Cultural Studies in Education in the USA. My research is entitled, \textit{The Quest for Democratic Participation: Schools as Democratic Spaces in the Post-Colonial Botswana}. This study seeks to establish how students as citizens and future leaders are exposed to democratic practices that ultimately will help them to fully participate in the shaping and sustaining of our democracy. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute towards the development of education policies that will generally impact our democracy and the national principles positively.

As per the standard research procedure in Botswana, upon submitting a request to the Botswana Office of the President, I have indicated that your school is one of the research sites I want to operate in.

Thank you in advance for your contribution in this study.

Yours truly,

Agreement Lathi Jotia
PhD. CandidateN
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APPENDIX D Interview Questions for the Heads (Principals)

1. Can you describe your idea of democracy?

2. Describe your democratic ideals as a leader.

3. Given your democratic ideals, how do you approach power distribution in your school?

4. In what ways is democracy expressed in your school? What barriers are there to democratic applications?

5. Do you think decision making in a school should be democratic? If yes, then how does decision making in your school demonstrate democratic practice and principles? Please give examples.

6. Can you give examples of the extent to which students, parents, and community are involved, or not, in the school’s decision making process?

7. Do your teachers express support of democratic practices? If so, in what ways? Can you speak to curriculum (topics and content that mirror democratic education) and to instruction (pedagogy that reflects democratic principles)?

8. Are there faculty who ascribe to democratic approaches? Can you describe their curriculum and instruction?

9. Would you consider your school democratic? If so, in what ways do you? What do you perceive as educational gain or losses to the school?

10. Could you speak to the role of rights, responsibilities, and justice with regard to students in your school? Is the discipline of students ever an issue for you? In what ways?
APPENDIX E: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. What is your philosophy of education? Explain.

2. Could you please explain if you think Botswana’s education system promotes citizenship education?

3. Please provide your definition of democracy. What would a democratic school look like?

4. Do you consider your school to be reflecting democratic principles? Can you give examples? Please explain.

5. In what ways does the decision making process in your school promote democracy?

6. From your perspective, please describe the involvement of students, parents, students, and community in your school’s decision-making process. Give examples.

7. Does any concept of democracy manifest itself within the school curriculum and in your teaching methodologies? How so? Please give examples.

8. Are there instances which occur/occurred in your school which made you feel that democratic ideals were being compromised?

9. Could you speak to the role of rights, responsibilities, and justice with regard to students in your school? Is the discipline of students ever an issue for you? In what ways?

10. Do you think school is a place for fostering democracy and active citizenship? If so, in what ways do you see your school promoting these values?
APPENDIX F: Interview Questions for Students

1. What do you think is the purpose of schools?

2. What is democracy?

3. What makes a country democratic? Do you think your country is a democracy? Explain.

4. What would a democratic school be like?

5. Do you think your school is democratic? Why or why not?

6. What experiences in your school makes it democratic?

7. What additional experiences would you add to the school if you were to make it more democratic?

8. Can you describe barriers to democracy in your school? Why do you think this is? Please give examples.

9. How does your school teach about democracy?

10. How do teachers, students and administrators relate in your school?

11. Do you know about Botswana’s national principles? What are they? Can you describe? Are these principles practiced in your school?

12. Do you feel the need of voting in your school? Explain? Do you vote in your school?

13. Have you ever voted during the national elections? Explain.
APPENDIX G: Research permit from Ministry of Education (Botswana)

20 May 2005

Dear Agreement L Jotia

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH: Agreement L Jotia

We acknowledge receipt of your request to conduct a research that will investigate the democratic practices that take place within Botswana Secondary Schools and how they contribute towards the preparation of students in becoming democratically active in Botswana's young and growing democracy.

You have been granted permission to conduct your research entitled:

The Quest for Democratic Participation: Schools as Democratic Spaces in Post-Colonial Botswana

You are however informed that the findings of your research should be used to form part of the dissertation to fulfill the award of PhD at the Ohio University, USA.

You are also reminded to submit a copy of your final report to the Ministry of Education, Botswana.

Thank you

[Signature]

M 1 Mokubung
For / Permanent Secretary
APPENDIX H: Letter from Institutional Review Board (Ohio University)

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2: research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: The Quest for Democratic Participation: Schools as Democratic Spaces in the Post-Colonial Botswana

Project Director: Agreement Lathi Jotia

Department: Cultural Studies in Education

Advisor: Stephen Howard

Rebecca Cale, Associate Director, Research Compliance Institutional Review Board

Date: 4/18/05

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.