"We all love this country"
White Batswana in urban Botswana
A Minor Field Study

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A Master Thesis in Cultural Anthropology
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September 2001
ABSTRACT

"We all love this country”. White Batswana in urban Botswana. The department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, Uppsala University, 78 pp. Uppsala.

This thesis examines the White urban Batswana and how they create their identity as a minority. It describes White Batswana and their social interaction with other ethnic groups in Botswana. The thesis also brings up the problems and prospects they have to deal with. It is based on fieldwork carried out in December and January 2000-2001 among White Batswana in the two biggest cities of Botswana, Gaborone and Francistown.

The White Batswana in this study see themselves as Africans since they are born in Botswana, as the majority of their parents and grandparents. Yet they differentiate themselves from the Black Batswana, among other things on cultural grounds. Some White Batswana have experienced a negative attitude from Black citizens when claiming to be Batswana or Africans.

In contrast to other countries in Africa, the Batswana has not had any major conflicts between the different ethnic groups. However, the Batswana are internally divided, which becomes apparent in the choice of spouse. The perceived cultural difference is an obstacle, and the various tribal stigmas are difficult to break free from. By focusing on values that are different between Black and White Batswana people develop fixed ideas about the other. Changes in cultural values could modify attitudes and make it possible for the Black and White to interact more smoothly. If White and Black Batswana went to the same schools, some dissimilarities could perhaps be overcome and make the stigma less dominant.

Keywords: Botswana, race, identity, minority, ethnicity anthropology

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This study was made financially possible by a scholarship from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), granted through the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology at Uppsala University.

The author would like to express her gratitude to Sten Hagberg, who took the decision to grant me the scholarship after I had explained my idea. I would also like to thank my supervisor in Sweden and Botswana, Ph.D. Björn Lindgren, who gave me support and new ideas of how to write my thesis. Professor Neil Parsons who showed me places in Gaborone and opened his private library for me. I am also grateful to all the people who made this study possible by agreeing to be interviewed and allowing me to use the interviews as the base in my thesis.

Special thanks go to Richard Blomstrand for planting the idea to do my master thesis in Botswana, as well as for helping me getting settled in Gaborone and checking up on me. Stella Rundle, for helping me with informants and arranging accommodation in Francistown. Steve Howells, for coming to Botswana for my birthday and being my friend. Marjut Saarela, I am grateful for being your friend, thank you for the flight arrangements and for spending Christmas with me in Botswana. Calho, for sweeping my floors, doing my dishes and giving me your view of a life, different from my own. Kelly Robinson, for taking time during your holiday to give me comments and corrections regarding my English. Stefan Evertson, for doing the map and figure. Mrs Sieglinde Nilsson, thank you for a great birthday cake – my first with fresh strawberries!
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

When we analyse ourselves about who we are, it entails something more than the rather negative reflection on who we are not. It is also a matter of autobiography: of things we know about ourselves, of the persons we believe ourselves to be. My study will examine how White Batswana create their identity as a minority in the country of Botswana. During my studies in anthropology, I never really encountered any literature regarding research on White people: this led me to do a study of a White minority group.

The symbolic expression of ethnicity is multi-vocal. The English South Africans for example, identify themselves as English rather than [South] Africans (Crapanzano, 1986). They do not suggest that they are just like any other English, but that Englishness is something significant that distinguishes them from other South Africans.

Similarly, White Batswana in urban Botswana see themselves as African in general and as Batswana in particular. The White Batswana especially emphasises their Africanship when other Whites threaten their territory, and thereby their country’s stability.

One informant, Emma, states:

“You are an African, absolutely. You read in some newspaper reports, especially in South Africa at the moment, they tell the Whites; ‘go back to where you came from’, but they are from there. I mean we don’t know anything other than Botswana. We were born here and most people grew up here. I’d hate to go and try to live anywhere else, you can’t. Living in South Africa, I would be very worried being White in an African country with
Yet, White Batswana also differentiate themselves from Black Batswana. Anthony P. Cohen states:

One aspect of the charged nature of cultural identity is that in claiming one, you do merely associate yourself with a set of characteristics: you also distance yourself from others. This is not to say that contrast is necessarily the conscious motivation for such claims, but it is implicit and is understood, the more highly charged the situation may be. (Cohen, 1994:120)

What I was told constantly by the informants was the difference between their own culture and the Tswana culture. This, they say, was the only reason for the two groups not interacting to the extent one might assume. All of us have a profound sense of who and what we are, and this sense of psychosocial identity influences our behaviour and our relationships with our lives.

Cohen continues:

The confusion of liminality, the blurriness of being ‘betwixt and between’, or of being in the social equivalent of no-man’s land is somehow confined temporally by the ritual process and spatially to the initiates’ lodge. It is ended by the next ritual phase of re-aggregation. (Ibid.:128)

This is something that agrees with the Whites in South Africa, particularly with Vincent Crapanzano’s English South African, and Zimbabwe, but was never brought up by my informants. According to them, Botswana is a great country that does not have any problems. What I traced during the interviews was something similar to what Anita Jacobson-Widding calls “the discourse of the darkness: night talk and the discourse of the daylight: day talk” (cf. Jacobson-Widding, 1990). Day talk is the harmony between the White and the Black communities in Botswana whilst night talk is the problems that are not mentioned willingly.

Leonard Bloom (1971:156) denotes that the centrality of a person’s values will support his attitudes. The idea of what is good or bad, moral or
immoral may be held firmly. The more value-loaded the attitude, the more central and integral those attitudes are to the individual’s personality. Subsequently, it is more unlikely that his views will be shifted in a different direction.

There are few matters that create tension in relations between White Batswana and Black Batswana, but the informants repeatedly bring up two. First, values rooted in religion, way of living, cattle, material, etc. secondly, interests such as in rugby and cricket or football. The White Batswana are mainly Christian and so are most of the Black Batswana, but the Black Batswana also have their traditional religion. Thus, the Black Batswana have their traditional values that differentiate from the White Batswana’s Christian values. For example, the bridal dowry and responsibility for the closest family which for the Black Batswana extends beyond spouse and children. Sports are the one major spare time interest for all Batswana. Rugby and cricket is dominated by the White Batswana, whilst football (soccer) is dominated by the Black Batswana. Therefore, there are not so many ways in which the two groups meet naturally. Voluntary associations are commonly based on shared interests like same occupation or leisure-time interests.

In Paul Connerton’s (1989) study on social memory he stresses for a distinction between three lines of memory (1989:24f): personal memory, which is who you are, your relatives, where you live et cetera; cognitive memory, physical objects, plants, animals et cetera; Finally habit memory, which is more embedded than cognitive and deals with the habitual patterns of behaviour. Connerton emphasises that habit memory is created and reproduced through bodily practices embedded in rules of etiquette, gestures and other abilities. I would like to draw a parallel to Connerton’s memory with culture, since we learn the patterns of behaviour easily in our childhood, but we give them up with great difficulty as adults. I would say that culture basically is conservative. This is why it takes long time to see a
complete change in culture. The people’s memories in different cultures will vary because their mental maps are different. The map that is required in childhood, and this semantic code (ibid.:28) Connerton states is the key to the whole operation of memory. But even within the same cultures there are different memories, depending on sex, education and occupation. Our memories are located within the mental and material space of the group and it is not because thoughts are similar that we can evoke them, it is rather for the cause that the same group is interested in those memories, and is able to evoke them, that they are assembled together in our minds.

By the very nature of the way we are taught our culture, we are all ethnocentric. Ethnocentric refers to the fact that our outlook, or world view, is centred around our own way of life, leading to the exclusion of others. Ethnocentrism is an exaggerated tendency to rate one’s own ethnic group as superior to other groups. It is associated with rigid insistence that the standards of one’s own group should be the standards of all groups, and usually includes an acute sensitivity to ethnic membership. It is the social equivalent of individual morbid conceit and when it hardens into chauvinism, it is as disruptive as an individual whose life is dominated by megalomania. However, as anthropologists who study other cultures, it is something we should constantly be aware of, so that when we are tempted to make value judgements about other way of life, we are able to hold back and look at the situation objectively and recognise our bias. Food is probably the most common manifestation of ethnocentrism. We are ethnocentric because we are not taught to question our own way of life. Instead we only evaluate other practices against ours as a standard. Human beings raised in a cultural setting are and will always be ethnocentric.

The same applies to race. There is no direct connection between race and culture. Nations and states, language and culture, are the products of history and cannot be understood apart from a study of their internal

1 I do not mean male-centred chauvinism.
development and external relations. Moreover, the fantastic social and technological development of the last five hundred years has occurred within far too short a time for any genetic changes to have taken place and are spreading throughout the world far too rapidly for genetic factors to have any influence. In this study, I want to show that there is a stigma that is preventing the White Batswana from interacting to the full extent with the Black Batswana.  

1.1 Geography

Landlocked Botswana is 600,000 square kilometres and is about the same size as France. South Africa binds it on the south and south-east, across the Limpopo and Molopo Rivers. In the north-east of Botswana is Zimbabwe, while Namibia wraps around the western and northern frontiers. In addition, Botswana shares 100 meters of Zambezi River frontage with Zambia at Kazungula (Parson, 1984:4).

Lying at an average elevation of 1000 meters, the majority of Botswana is a vast and nearly flat sand-filled basin characterised by shrub-covered desert or savannah. In the north-west, the Okavango River flows in from Angola and Namibia and disappears into the sands, forming channels and islands that comprise the Okavango Delta. In the north-east, where the basin reaches its lowest point, are the great salty clay deserts of the Makgadikgadi Pans. Covering nearly 85% of Botswana, including the entire central and south-western regions, is the Kalahari Desert, a semi-arid expanse of wind-blown sand deposits and long sandy valleys and ridges stabilised by scrubby trees and bushes (Samatar, 1997:190, Parson, 1984:4).

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2 This stigma is of course not an exception for the White Batswana; it concerns all people.
Most of the population lives in the east and south-east, close to the borders of Zimbabwe and South Africa. This is due to the rivers with permanent water supply and the developed infrastructure (Parson, 1984:9f). The population is estimated to nearly 1,6 million people (UNAIDS, 2001). What needs to be taken into account are the effects of excess mortality due to Aids, which probably results in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex.

1.2 Fieldwork, Background and Method
In Botswana the government does not divide people into groups depending on skin colour. This means that I do not know how many White Batswana
there really are. However, according to the CIA (CIA, 2001) approximately one per cent of the population in Botswana are Whites. Because one per cent of a population of 1,6 million is 16,000, I thought this would be a good minority group to examine.

I went to Botswana in December 2000 to find my informants and upon arrival, I had no doubt whatsoever that I would find the number of informants that I was looking for. I was amazed that older people were not interested in being interviewed as I, in my naiveté, thought they would be. The only reason they gave for not participating was, “I don’t want to stick my neck out”. I never got to know why.

I spent most of my time in the capital, Gaborone. I also went for a short period of time to the second biggest city, Francistown, for a couple of interviews. This means that this study mirrors the climate and the mentality among the Whites in the two major cities in Botswana, Gaborone and Francistown.

Through people I know at the Red Cross in Stockholm, I got hold of people in Botswana that know of different sorts of accommodation in Gaborone. I came in contact with a woman that attended an apartment contracted by a Swedish company. It was located close to the University of Botswana, a few kilometres from the main mall. These blocks of flats are commonly known as the Bombay flats by its tenants. This is due to the amount of Indian immigrants that live there.

In the flat, I had a kitchen where I cooked most of my meals. When I ate out, it was mainly accompanied by informants or people I got to know while I was in Botswana. The restaurant at the Bull & Bush, owned by two Irish brothers, is also the bar where the majority of the White go. Sanita’s, owned by the Swedish couple Mr and Mrs Nilsson, is a garden centre that also has a lunch restaurant and it is very popular among the White community. Another popular place is the terrace at the President hotel.
I came to Botswana anxious of what I was going to find regarding the relationship between the White population and the Black population. One thing that I had been told about was the lack of tension between these two groups which for me sounded remarkable, especially with the knowledge of what had happened in Zimbabwe earlier that year. Another issue is Apartheid in neighbouring South Africa which affected Botswana in one way or the other. On the other hand, I had also been told about the so-called reversed racism in Botswana. One particular case was a young White male who told me he was ordered to report himself to the Immigration department to prove he was in the country on legal grounds. This man was not born in Botswana, but had been living in the country for several years with his parents; his mother, a White Motswana and his father, a European immigrant. The background is that he had been offered a job with a high position at the company he was working with. A woman, a Black Motswana, was also interested in the job for herself and was friends with people at the Immigration department. When the young man showed up at Immigration, the official asked to see his residence permit. When he gave the official his passport, the official simply pulled out the permit, and tore it up. The man was told that he did not have a permit and had to leave the country within ten days (2000). This man’s story made me interested in going to Botswana and do this study.

To find literature on White Africans in Botswana turned out to be fairly difficult. There has been a study done on White and Black farmers in the Tuli Block by Isaac Mazonde (1994) and on Afrikaner farmers in Ganzi by Margo and Martin Russell (1979). There has been a lot written about the Germans in Namibia. Unfortunately, most of this literature is written in German, a language that I do not master. Therefore, I have had to rely on

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3 The so-called war veterans loyal to President Robert Mugabe attacked and killed White farmers, and occupied land.

4 This is what it has been called even if I believe there is only one kind of racism; when one ethnic group discriminates another with race as a means of difference.
studies done in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Vincent Crapanzano (1986) studied the dominating group who is (in 1986) a minority in South Africa.

There is a glossary at the back of the paper with definitions of words that may be of use for those who are not familiar with Setswana. To make it all less confusing, I will say Botswana throughout the paper unless the interviewees specifically say Bechuanaland. In the history chapter Botswana will be called Bechuanaland up until independence. For the same reason, I will refer to Zimbabwe where it sometimes correctly should be called Rhodesia.

In my study, different groups will repeatedly be mentioned. These groups are White, Black, Coloured and Asian/Indians. These are classified as follows: White are Europeans, Black are the indigenous African ethnic groups, Coloured are various mixed groups, Asian/Indians are immigrants indentured labour and traders from Asia, mainly India.

Gaborone is a fairly new town, established at the time of independence, so to find informants in the right age group, born in Gaborone was out of the question. I had to rely on people that had moved to Gaborone. I met a lot of expatriates at the Bull & Bush, that gave me information of White Batswana and those in turn gave me more names. In Francistown, I got hold of the informants through an employee at the Supa-Ngwao museum who has a large network of people.

I made sixteen interviews during my two months in Botswana. I chose to use eleven of them in the study. The decision not to use the other five informants was made in accordance with the criteria I chose for this work (see below). The informants, seven men and four women, range the age of between 23 and 48 years old. The criteria for choosing the informants were:
• Born in Botswana, South Africa or Zimbabwe (due to the lack of hospitals in Botswana up until the 1980s⁵),
• Carry a Botswana passport,
• Have an originally European decent from all parts in the family and finally;
• Live in Botswana.
I have changed the names of the informants to preserve their anonymity.

The other five informants were either not born in Botswana or their descent did not fully originate from Europe, something that I found out during the interviews. At first I thought I would use them anyway, but since I was determined to make this qualitative study solid, I did not want to bargain the empirical basis for my study in order to broaden the quote of informants.

I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended answers. My questions were arranged in a certain order, but I allowed the informants to penetrate those questions they regarded as important to them. The method is called “the interview guide approach” by Anders Rudqvist (1991:8). I used this method since I found it natural and meaningful, allowing me to direct the interview as a conversation and make the informant forget about the tape-recorder. I always asked the informant to choose the place for the interview, since I wanted to meet them in surroundings that made them feel at ease. During the interviews, I used the tape-recorder when the informant agreed to that, and took notes. In the few cases where they objected, I only took notes. The use of the tape-recorder allowed me to concentrate to full extent on what the informant said. It also gave me the chance to observe the informant’s moves and behaviour during the whole interview (cf. Brown, 1996:62; Rudqvist, 1991:10). It would have been impossible for me to give my informant that attention if I have had to concentrate on writing down

⁵ Many White Batswana were delivered in hospitals in the neighboring countries.
the answers. Even if some of the informants initially were aware of the tape-recorder, they soon forgot about it. Pierre Bourdieu (1999) argues that when a researcher and informant meet, most often there is a asymmetry involved since they often occupy different places in the social hierarchy. Therefore, the communication between researcher and informant is effected by social structures and the asymmetries surrounding them. Bourdieu (1999:609) claims that every time an interview takes place, there is symbolic violence. I never encountered that asymmetry during my interview relationships, maybe due to a shared place in the social hierarchy, or that a methodical and active listening reduced the symbolic violence.

George E. Marcus (1995) writes in his essay on multi-sited ethnography, that any ethnography is an ethnography of the world system (ibid.:99). Marcus traces this new mode of ethnography to a constructivist approach where the local is positioned in relation to other localities in order to establish a pattern of associations and connections. He stresses that the multi-sited ethnography already exists since the ethnographer comes from one “site” that is different from the field. Multi-sited ethnography embed the global in the local since the combined knowledge of local conditions leads to theories about the global.

Transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews are very time-consuming. Nevertheless, I transcribed the interviews when I returned to Sweden. Listening and writing down comments and stories gave me a chance to hear what I at the time of the interviews not necessarily regarded as important.

1.3 Outline of thesis
The following chapter deals with the history of Botswana. I have focused on the White history of Botswana since the White Batswana are the main objects in this study.

The third chapter describes the group, the informants, their descent, family, education and profession. I try to give a picture of who the informants are. I use their decent as far back as they know of. We look into when their
ancestors arrived to Botswana and also what their profession was. I also look at their education and choice of profession.

The forth chapter examines the social relations among the White Batswana. They talk about their interaction with the Black community, their relationships and their friends. Here I found it very interesting to see their choice of marriage partner and whom the informants have as friends. The attitude they show regarding the Black citizens is also emphasised.

The fifth chapter highlights the problems and prospects in Botswana from the perspective of Botswana as a peaceful island surrounded by countries with conflicts. It also discusses the issue of HIV. Underneath the surface of the *African miracle*\(^6\), I found a people worrying about Botswana’s problems such as crime, HIV and economy.

The final chapter expresses the informants’ thoughts about the future, for themselves and for Botswana.

I have included three appendix. The first, presents a more detailed description of the informants, the second gives a brief chronological history of Botswana and, the third is a glossary of Setswana words and other expressions.

**CHAPTER 2**

**HISTORY OF BOTSWANA**

What then is a nation? A cynic once defined it as a group of people who live in the same country, believe the same lies about their ancestors, and hate their neighbour with the same intensity! He overstated his case, but a sentiment of nationalism cannot arise without territorial focus, a feeling for a shared past and a common future, and a sense of being different from surrounding groups. (Gann, 1962:67)

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\(^6\) Botswana as the outstanding country in Africa with no war and an economy that has only gone up since independence.
Botswana is the former British protectorate of Bechuanaland, and it adopted its new name upon independence in 1966. Botswana has a different history compared to other African countries. It has never been in a war, not even a civil war, and this is very rare for an African country. Botswana was never a colony either. It sought help by asking to be protected by the British from the Boer\(^7\). In contrast to other countries in the region, it was not a radical or Marxist guerrilla that came into power, but an elite of young, conservative and well educated men.

At the time of independence, Botswana was one of the least developed countries in Africa. It had a poor infrastructure, and the social infrastructure lacked qualified personnel (Samatar, 1999:95). The majority of people had to live off what they could grow. Those who were better off also had cattle. Botswana was dependent upon the money that its men earned as guest workers in the mines in South Africa. The country was also dependent upon foreign aid. At the time of independence, Botswana had an income of US$17 per capita (Mazonde, 1994:1). However, thanks to a flourishing diamond industry, it has grown into one of the wealthiest countries in Africa. The economy, apart from the diamonds, is dominated by cattle raising and mining. Botswana’s economic progress since independence has been one of the few success histories of the African continent (Chabal, 1996:34). Twenty years ago, the country was one of the twentieth poorest countries in the world. Today, it is considered the richest non-oil producing country in Africa. Economic growth can be ascribed to mineral and beef exports, tourism and foreign aid. Diamonds are by far the most important source of income for Botswana. The discovery of diamonds in 1967 dramatically changed the pace of development in Botswana.

This amazing growth happened when much of the continent was struggling with colonialism. At the same time Botswana was surrounded by countries at war with themselves. To the east, the Rhodesian war spilled over into

\(^7\) Boer means farmer in Afrikaans.
Botswana. After its resolution in late 1979, civil war intensified in Namibia, to the north and west of Botswana. In South Africa matters were hardly better, with military raids into Gaborone by the South African Defence Force.

Two prolonged and serious droughts in the 1970s and 1980s caused enormous losses of livestock leading to a demand for major food aid programmes in remote rural areas. Despite these obstacles, Botswana remained a haven of peace in turbulent Africa, with a sound government, a free market economy and fortuitous mineral discoveries.

Botswana’s early history is largely unknown, but archaeological discoveries suggest that parts of the country were inhabited at a very early stage. The first known inhabitants of Botswana were Khoesan (Bushmen), who continue to inhabit the remote regions of the Kalahari Desert in eastern Namibia and western Botswana. It was probably not until first or second century AD that the agricultural and pastoral Bantu groups, who migrated from the north-western and eastern regions of the African continent, arrived to Botswana (Sillery, 1974:9).

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the majority of the Bantu people in Botswana lived east of the Kalahari sands. Henrik Hop is said to be the first White man to encounter the Bechuanas. Hop was a leader of an exploration in 1761 and first heard of the Briquas (Bechuanas) through rumours from the Corana-Hottentots (Lichtenstein, 1971:63). By the early nineteenth century, much of the suitable grazing lands around the fringes of the Kalahari were settled by pastoralists. Europeans had arrived in the Cape and were expanding northward. In 1801, the government of the Cape ordered two Englishmen to make the first expedition to see "the Beetjuanas". These men were Mr. Trüter and Dr. Sommerville, and their report is the earliest firsthand account of the Tswana (ibid., 1971:61). Many travellers followed them; Henry Lichtenstein reached Kuruman river and
met the Bechuana in 1804 (Lichtenstein, 1930:366). In the party that had come with the king, no woman was seen; Lichtenstein was informed that the women were at home because they had to work (ibid., 1930:371). By 1817, the first Christian mission, the London Missionary Society, was founded by the Scotsman Robert Moffat on the Kuruman River south of Botswana (Tlou and Campbell, 1984:130). Moffat baptised his first converts in 1829, the same year he also visited the Ndebele chief Mzilikazi and they became friends (Sillery, 1974:21, 22).

David Livingstone arrived to the African continent in 1841 and he made extended tours to the interior. He was injured in an encounter with a lion and was sent to recover at Robert Moffat’s missionary at the Kuruman river. There, Livingstone met Moffat’s daughter Mary, whom he married. In 1847, he began his missionary pursuit and established his mission at Kolobeng (west of Gaborone). At Kolobeng, Livingstone taught kgosi (leader) Sechele how to read and write the English language (Tlou and Campbell, 1984:131).

The Dutch-descended frontier farmers of the Cape Colony, known as the Boers, felt pressure from the British in the Cape and began their Great Trek across the Vaal River. Boers crossed the Vaal River into Tswana and Zulu territory, where they settled down. Between 1844 and 1852, the Boers set up a series of fragmented little republics bent upon establishing trade links with the Dutch and Portuguese, independent of the British connection in the Cape. When the British recognised the Transvaal’s independence in 1852, the Boers informed the Batswana that they were under the control of the new South African Republic. They also informed the British that the Batswana were acquiring firearms from White traders and closed off the road through the Transvaal (Tlou and Campbell, 1984:143f, Parsons 1994:123). The Boers also believed that Livingstone supplied firearms to the Tswana (Sillery, 1974:27). The same year, the Boer raided the town of Setshele and Livingstone’s mission was destroyed along with it (Sillery,
The Tswana leaders, Sechele I and Mosielelele, refused to accept White rule and rebelled. The Boers however, embarked upon a destructive rampage into the Tswana communities. The Tswana, incurring heavy losses and rapidly decreasing territories, sent their leaders to petition the British for protection. Great Britain offered to act as arbitrator in the dispute.

Thomas Morgan Thomas became a Christian minister inspired by Robert Moffat and David Livingstone’s writings. He sailed with the London Missionary Society to Cape Town in 1858. He travelled though Botswana the same year to reach his goal, Matabeleland (now southern Zimbabwe), where he met the Ndebele chief, Mzilikazi, and encountered the Bechuanas (Thomas, 1970:45,46,49). He also passed Kolobeng where he saw Livingstone’s premises and destroyed mission, as well as the destroyed town of Sechele (Parsons 1994:123). Thomas travelled though Shoshong which consisted of about 30,000 inhabitants under the chief of Sekhome.

In 1867, the German traveller Karl Mauch announced the discovery of gold in the Tati (south of Francistown), which led to Africa’s first gold rush (Sillery, 1974:41). By 1877, things had heated up so much that the British finally decided to annex the Transvaal and launched the first Boer war. The British were also in need of labour for the mines in Kimberley (South Africa), but found it difficult to get labour from Botswana as long as the Bechuanas felt threatened by the Boer. The war continued until the Pretoria Convention of 1881, when the British withdrew from the Transvaal in exchange for Boer allegiance to the British Crown (Tlou and Campbell, 1984: 143ff, Parsons, 1994:164). When the British had withdrawn, the Boers pushed westward into the Molopo Basin, to what had been known as the Bechuanaland. The British viewed this as a threat to their road north into the supposed mineral wealth in Zimbabwe. The Tswana continued to seek British protection from the Boer, as well as from a possible threat from Ndebele from the north. In 1885, the land north of the Cape Colony
and south of 22°S latitude and east of 20°E longitude became the British
Protectorate of Bechuanaland (Parson, 1984:20).

By selling cattle, draught oxen and grain to the Europeans who were
moving north in search of farming land and minerals, the protectorate
enjoyed some degree of economic independence. With the construction of
the railway through Bechuanaland to Rhodesia and a serious outbreak of
mouth-and-foot disease in the 1890s, the transit trade was destroyed
(Parson, 1984:21). By 1920 the commercial farmers in South Africa and
Rhodesia were producing grain in such quantities that Bechuanaland no
longer had a market. In 1924, when South Africa pressed the Tswana chiefs
for joining the union which they refused, economic sanctions were brought
against the protectorate and their beef market dried up completely (Parson,
1984:23). This, along with a few years of drought and increasing tax to the
British, sent protectorate workers migrating to South Africa for work in
farms and mines. As much as one quarter of Bechuanaland’s male
population was away at one time. This in turn led to the decreasing power
of the chiefs and breakdown of the traditional land-use pattern (Parson,
1984:24f).

In 1923, Khama III Ngwato died, and his son Sekoma succeeded him, but
he too died after a few years. The heir to the throne, Seretse Khama, was
only four years old so his uncle Tshekedi Khama left his studies in South
Africa and became the regent of Ngwato (Morton, 1990:47). In 1929,
Bechuanaland received the new commissioner, Charles Rey, to develop the
protectorate for British gain. Between 1926 and 1940, Bechuanaland’s men
working in the South African mines increased from 3,400 to over 15,000
(Parsons, 1994:266).

After WW II in 1945, Seretse Khama went to England to study. In
England, he met Ruth Williams, a White woman, whom he married. This
startled the government in South Africa due to the South African Mixed
Marriages Act\(^8\) of 1949, (cf. Kelley, 2001) and along with the act, South Africa’s first step towards apartheid. Seretse’s uncle was not happy over the news either, but things settled. The British government blocked Seretse’s chieftaincy and he was exiled to England (Morton, 1990:124ff, Parson, 1984:29f). In 1956, Seretse renounced his right to power in Ngwato, reconciled with his uncle and returned to Bechuanaland with his wife to serve as vice-chairman of the Ngwato Council (Morton, 1990:131, Parson, 1984:30).

In 1960, the Bechuanaland’s People’s Party was formed, two years later Seretse formed the more moderate Bechuanaland Democratic Party (BDP). The BDP formulated a schedule for independence and drew support from local chiefs and traditional Batswana (Morton, 1990:175ff, Parson, 1984:30). The British accepted the peaceful transfer of power and at the general elections in 1965, Seretse Khama was elected president (Morton, 1990:183, Parson, 1984:31) and Gaborone replaced Mafikeng as the capital. On 30 September 1966, the country, now called the Republic of Botswana, was granted its independence (Morton, 1990:194, Parson, 1984:31).

Seretse Khama guaranteed continued freehold over land held by White ranchers and adopted a strictly neutral stance towards South Africa and Rhodesia. The reason for this was his country’s economic dependency upon South Africa. Botswana was one of the poorest nations in the world and the wages of Batswana mineworkers in South Africa formed an important part of the country’s income. Moreover, they were reliant upon the food imports from South Africa.

\(^8\) The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Acts, Act 55, were anti-miscegenation legislation enacted to keep South Africa’s four racial groups clearly separated, and served as a major part of apartheid ideology’s foundation. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Acts were ushered in response to an intensified ideology of Afrikaner. Nationalism, a term related to the White South Africans of Dutch descent that saw the maintenance of racial purity of each of the four race categories as a fundamental necessity in South Africa.
Seretse Khama died in 1980, but his party BDP still commands a substantial and democratically elected majority in the Botswana parliament.

CHAPTER 3
THE GROUP

Dane Kennedy has written a comparative study on the White settlers in Rhodesia and Kenya. In it, Kennedy points out that the White settlers usually have been portrayed as ruthless and cruel (Kennedy 1987:187). There is no doubt that colonialisation brought difficulties to Africa. However, what we might tend to forget is to look at whom the settlers were and why they came to Africa in the first place. These people came from Europe and settled in an unfamiliar environment and turned into an ethnic minority. Most of them came to stay, to start a new life, raise a family having great expectations of a better life than what they could have had in Europe. As Lewis Gann puts it:

Most settlers who wanted to emigrate did not choose to come to Africa in order to satisfy hidden desires to dominate the inhabitants, but simply as a result of economic considerations or chance. All the same, some Whites in Africa did gain a sense of power and of self-elevation as the result of African submissiveness, and this sometimes affected their attitude towards Black men. (Gann, 1962:78)

Kennedy (1987:6) states that the influx to Rhodesia and Kenya occurred within the context of a significant shift in the pattern of emigration from the British Isles. Through most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European emigration had first been an outlet for the poor, and in the British case, particularly those of the Celtic fringe. They were driven from their homes by economic necessity. But by the end of the nineteenth century, and more markedly, in the twentieth century, a different social element began to leave Britain’s shores in growing numbers. These were persons of middle- and upper-class backgrounds, motivated to emigrate either because their traditional social standing had deteriorated in a changing Britain, or because they possessed certain educational or professional skills in high
demand in developing countries such as Australia and Canada. To the same extent as Kennedy (1987:7) found that Rhodesia decoyed the majority of its White population from neighbouring South Africa, so did I with the White Batswana. I found among the informants that the majority of their parents or grandparents had immigrated from South Africa. Looking at the background of the informants, there is a greater number from South Africa, although the people of British origin certainly predominate.

The informants are;
- Brian, born in 1966
- Anthony, born in 1970
- Emma, born in 1964
- Nathan, born in 1961
- Martin, born in 1975
- Jean, born in 1958
- Elizabeth, born in 1970
- Adam, born in 1977
- Stephen, born in 1975
- Thomas, born in 1954
- Georgina, born in 1952

When people differ from other people, they interpret life differently. These interpretations are not random (Goffman, 1986:17), but tend to be influenced by language and values characteristics to a society. Botswana has two languages; one official language, English, and a national language, Setswana. All of my informants speak at least two languages, most of them three. Languages most often spoken are English, Setswana and/or Afrikaans. Some also speak Kalanga, Ndebele, Shona, Kalahari, Spanish and a ‘mining language’ called Fanakalo. Afrikaans is commonly known since the majority of the informants went to school in South Africa, where it was a compulsory second language. Emma says:

“In those days, there were no private secondary schools here. So a lot of children, when they finished primary school here, went

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9 A language that originated on the mines in South Africa. It is made up of many languages such as English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa, and spoken all around the Southern Africa.
to a South African boarding schools and in those days it was compulsory to take Afrikaans in South Africa. So no matter where you came from or what citizen of what country you were, you had to. I mean there are a lot of the Black children as well from Botswana that went to school in South Africa that also speak Afrikaans.” (See appendix 1)

It seems as if all the men speak fluent, or at least comprehensible Setswana. If this is due to more interaction with Blacks in childhood years or schooling in Botswana, I cannot really say since both women and men went through their junior schooling in Botswana. Brian says:

“[I speak] Afrikaans, English, Setswana but that wasn’t in school but when I was growing up. The local kids. They were the only friends I had. And also Kalanga.” (See appendix 1)

Anthony is the most exceptional. He is not yet thirty years old and he speaks English, Setswana, Kalanga, Kalahari, Ndebele and some Shona.

The women who do not speak Setswana say that it is due to schooling in other countries. Georgina says that Setswana was not taught at junior school when she attended it. It is only recently that Setswana has been introduced into the curriculum. Elizabeth continues:

“My Setswana is not very good because, basically having grown up in boarding school, before I went into boarding school I could speak all three fluently, then I lost Setswana and Afrikaans and I could only speak English. Then I went to school in South Africa where we had to speak Afrikaans as a subject, you know. That is why my Setswana is really very basic. They can understand me just.” (See appendix 1)

3.1 White Batswana Kinship

The study of kinship has always been a core topic in anthropology. Today, kinship systems are not used as frequently as it was in the middle of the twentieth century. In this study, I will show a glimpse of the White Batswana kinship system.

Man’s kin are those persons with whom he/she is genealogically connected through his/her father and mother. The White Batswana reckon descent in
the cognatic (or bilateral) way, kin on both sides are regarded as equally important. Though cognatic (or bilateral), this ethnic group has traditionally given the father’s side a certain priority since the father’s surname is passed on to the children. Divorces do occur, but none of the informants had had such an experience in their families. The preference of a marriage partner is what I would call ethnic endogamy. There is a rule of exogamy, but this concerns only the close kin: a man should not marry his mother, sister or daughter. A cognatic (or bilateral) way of reckoning lends problems to the genealogies. For each generation one moves back in time, the number of kin is doubled. This gives the people in this form of system difficulties in naming their ancestors more than three generations back in time. Therefore, they often do not have knowledge of more than one century worth of ancestors.

I have chosen to pick out one family to show how people have married and from whom they descent. See Figure 1, page 24.

The majority of the informants were born in Botswana at the hospital in Francistown, the government hospital in Lobatse, or the mission hospitals in Molepolole, Gaborone and Mochudi. Two of the informants were born outside the country. They attribute this to the lack of hospitals, compounded with health risks. Thomas says:

“I was born in Bulawayo [Zimbabwe], but we all lived in Botswana. In those days Serowe was non-exciting. In the ’50s there was nothing in Serowe. I think almost everyone was born outside the country, there were not that many people. Ellen was born here, my wife. But a lot of the other people were born in South Africa.”

(See appendix 1)

Stephen explains why his mother decided to go to South Africa:

“Medical reasons. The hospitals weren’t good in Serowe and in any case of complications, whatever, my mother preferred to go outside. I was basically back in the country within a week, and
they say as long as my father was a Motswana then it’s OK. At that stage.”
(See appendix 1)

Stephen adds that during a period of Botswana’s history, you did not necessarily receive the same citizenship as your parents. It used to be that a child born anywhere of either a Motswana mother or father automatically became a citizen of Botswana. Enacted in 1984, the law said the children of a man married to a foreigner were entitled to the benefits of citizenship, while those of a woman married to a foreigner were not. In the case of an illegitimate child, the child got the mother's nationality. This law was challenged in 1990 in the Unity Dow case. The law was changed again in 1995 and any child born of a Motswana (mother or father), can claim citizenship. A child born of Batswana parents living in another country is automatically given citizenship if their birth is registered in Botswana. At the age of 21, they will have to take an oath of allegiance to Botswana and have their citizenship confirmed.

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10 So if the father was a Motswana, the child got Botswana citizenship; but, if the father was a foreigner, the child did not automatically get citizenship.
11 Unity is a Motswana (now a Judge) married to an American. Their first child was born before the marriage, so the child automatically got citizenship from the mother. The next two children were born “in wedlock” and they were refused citizenship.
12 A lower court ruled against Dow in 1991. She then appealed to the High Court, which in 1992 decided the suit in her favor and overturned the Citizenship Act as unconstitutional. Three years after that, the government implemented a new law giving native-born men and women in Botswana equal rights to transmit their citizenship.
Figure 1. A cognatic (or bilateral) system of White Motswana.
Most of the informants originate from the United Kingdom (UK), and the majority of the ancestors arrived to Africa in the 1900s. The main reason to come to Botswana was to join the missionaries and practice trade. Only two of the informants have parents born outside Africa, and they were born in the UK, and arrived in Botswana before it got its independence. Anthony’s father came to Africa in the 1950s:

“My father came from the UK in the '50s with the British South African police and was a policeman in Zimbabwe, which was Rhodesia in those days. After this he went to Rhodes University in South Africa. I think to study anthropology, and there he met my mother.” (See appendix 1)

The informants’ parents were engineers in the gold mines, worked in the diamond industry, worked for the government [British], quarries\textsuperscript{13}, were bookkeepers, mechanics, farmers, policemen, designed foundations for buildings, or they were traders.

Stephen’s parents who are born in Botswana are the only traditional cattle farmers:

“I suppose you can call my parents farmers. They have a cattle-post that they check on every weekend, but during the weeks they run a shop which my grandfather opened over 50 years ago. They used to give the Batswana rations during the droughts. They also have a few other businesses in Serowe.” (See appendix 1)

Another occupation that was very common among the parents was that in the mining industry. Jean’s father worked for the Native Labour Association, which was a branch of the chamber of mines of South Africa. The association recruited Black labour from Southern Africa for the mines in South Africa, and Francistown was the central point where they loaded people on to trains and sent them down to the mines in South Africa. As Jean states:

\textsuperscript{13} They take stones out of the mountain and then break it up into stone chips for buildings, etc.
“He spoke six or seven African languages that he picked up dealing with the different people. There were always a lot of fights because they sometimes had a thousand men in one place and they’d be all different tribes and there would be arguments and fights and stuff. Because one tribe considered themselves to be slightly higher standing than another and wanted to be in the foodline first or whatever and scuffle would turn out and that. He would just fly in there, single-handily basically and pull out the ringleader, you know the guy that started the scuffle, and beat them with his fists and say; ‘all right you want to fight, then have it out and done with’. Of course, as a White man, they would never lay a hand on him. You know, if they did they would end up in jail. I have spoken to people he worked with, even after he died, and they thought he was wonderful, and these are Black people you know, and they thought he was absolutely wonderful because he could sort out things like this in just two-two.” (See appendix 1)

All of the informants’ grandparents come from Africa, apart from three kinship lines and the two UK-born grandparents. They mainly come from South Africa but also from Botswana, Kenya and Rhodesia. Three branches are unclear, but all lived and worked in Africa. They worked either for the government (British), owned quarries or were missionaries or farmers. Also the informants’ grandparents lived and worked in, if not in Botswana, then Africa. It seems that either the families have been in Africa for generations or are relative newcomers, arriving after the independence.

Both Brian’s parents immigrated to Botswana before he and his brother were born. He states:

“My paternal grandparents were coffee farmers in Kenya. The other grandparents were farmers as well in South Africa, sheep farming and then they went into diamonds, in the Kimberly area.”
(See appendix 1)

Emma’s grandparents owned a quarry in Botswana. Emma’s father came from South Africa to help them with the business and brought his wife (Emma’s mother) along.
Stephen is the only informant with a missionary background. Due to that, his family is one of the oldest in the country. His ancestors left the UK in the 1800s.

The informants’ siblings are either in Botswana, live in South Africa or have emigrated. Those who have chosen to emigrate have gone to Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Spain.

Jean tells me that her mother took her and her sister over to Australia in the hopes they would both settle there. Jean states:

“My mother felt that Africa was no real life for young people, especially young girls and she’d hoped we both settle there. Unfortunately for her, I had failed one year at school so I had to come back to repeat that and never went back again.”
(See appendix 1)

Jean is the only one I spoke to whose parents that made an effort to move their children from Africa. Georgina has four brothers and sisters. The younger sister and the older brother now live in Canada. Their parents moved there as well. Georgina says:

“So we’re spread, basically in Botswana and Canada. My little sister comes home from Canada every three years. She dearly loves to move back here but she feels responsible for looking after my ageing mother. They moved over in 1976. And my late dad passed away in 1980, in Canada. Mother never wants to come back. They came over on holiday 1979 and 1982; she has never been home since. Mother really likes Canada. My older brother, he’s been out a couple of times and his children have been out. His wife [Canadian] came out once in 1972 and decided to never come back.”
(See appendix 1)

The apartheid system was never incorporated in Botswana, as it was in South Africa and to some extent in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Even so, the Batswana of course experienced the segregation during their time as students in the South African, or Zimbabwean schools. This affected them in a sense, but not to a degree where they would implement it in Botswana.
Quite the contrary it seems as if they more took a dislike to the system and to the people that practised it. In this way the White Batswana also express a concern regarding the attitude the White Southern Africans bring with them to Botswana.

3.2 Education
It is not until the last decade that it has become really common for the White Batswana to send their children to the governmentally run schools. This has of course contributed to the more freely mix among the different ethnic groups. Even if some Black Batswana have been sent to private schools, there have only been a few families with that ability. The most important reason for the White Batswana to send their children to private schools has been the lack of skilled teachers. Elizabeth says:

“I was turning six when I started in Rhodesia. Boarding schools from day one. I came home to Botswana during the holidays. I think it made me very independent, I used to love it. Even when I was in high school and that, my brother and sister didn’t really like it but I did. The first three years of my school I went to convent, the boarding was strictly for girls. We were only White, very much White. Even when I was at college, there was the last lecture that was Whites-only basically. It was only four years later that the ANC took over.” (See appendix 1)

Only two of the informants did all their schooling in Botswana, Anthony and Nathan. The rest went to Zimbabwe or South Africa, either from day one in Junior school or when they started secondary school. Thomas says:

“I went to school four years in Serowe, it was just a little school with 15 people or something with all the standards in it. The rest of the schooling [was] in Pietersburg [South Africa], technical college. All schools was mixed boys and girls, the college was boys-only. At that time in South Africa there were only Whites, there were nothing else in South Africa. It is only in the last eight years they have started to mix. Whites only, but not by choice.” (See appendix 1)

Jean, who says she was a colonial child, remembers the independence of Botswana and the changes in school:

“I started here in Francistown. My [first] four years at school here in Francistown, I attended a White school, it was the
colonial era and just into independence. In fact I can remember clearly our first two Black children in the school and the excitement it actually caused amongst us. I did my first four years of primary school here, then I was sent to boarding school in South Africa.” (See appendix 1)

Georgina, as the other informants, did all her junior years in Botswana. No one seems to question the teachers’ competence when it comes to lower schooling, but beyond this level, almost everyone went to South Africa or Zimbabwe for higher education. Georgina attended the John McKenzie-school in Francistown, which still operates. She says:

“Then from there I went to Mafikeng [South Africa], just across the border. It was the closest school. When that closed down I went to Pietersburg [South Africa]. I went to collage in Bulawayo [Zimbabwe]. It was a private collage. We had a mixed race, Indian, African, well I am African but I mean Black African from Zambia, then Northern Rhodesia, from Botswana. Total mixture of cultures, and religions. We never had a problem getting together or getting on together. It was mixed with boys and girls too, you know we never had a problem at all with race, religion, colour, boys, girls. Nothing. Even today both my boys did their junior school in a multiracial school in Orapa, when they went to high school, they went to Mafikeng as well. And they were actually quite taken a back because it was for Whites-only, they were not used to that, but they were in South Africa. Then, when during their course of their school years, they started to introduce other races, and you know other South African school kids could never understand why they [her sons] never had a problem with that. But they had been growing up with it and they hadn’t seen any wrong in that.” (See appendix 1)

Martin attended his pre-school in Francistown. Then he went to South Africa and did his twelve years of schooling there:

“We had about twelve people from Botswana going to school with us. They were friends of the family. You see, in Botswana, how it works here is all the families, all the people that are White; those families are all friends. My last two years it became an integrated school. It had Asians and locals coming in and when that happened, not much changed in a sense. It was a small school, 780 children. The year when I left, my final year in 1993, there were 18 Black people attending school and I think there were 8-10 Asians. It was OK, you know at boarding
school, you have a fight everyday, but it was not much racial tension at that time. But I think that after the year after I left, there was a lot of violence that happened. I think that most of the children from Botswana… Their parents pulled them out of the South African schools and sent them to Zimbabwe, because Zimbabwe was more stable than South Africa at that time. Now it is the opposite everyone is going back to South Africa, fleeing out of Zimbabwe. It is total confusion [in Zimbabwe].” (See appendix 1)

3.3 Profession
After finishing their studies, everyone, but Georgina who brought up her children, got a job and started working. No one seems to have had problems in gaining employment, three of them went to work in their families’ businesses Kin-based organisations are based on loyalty to specific persons, in opposition to bureaucratic, that are based on loyalty to abstract principles. When a person gets employed by one of his kinsmen, it may be called nepotism; but one may also call it logic when it comes to solidarity and loyalty in order to help kin first, and keep the money within the family. Administrative work and labour work differs even between the informants. Nathan started to work in Gaborone within his father’s business:

“Maintenance, carpentry, building, plumbing, electrical all of it. I started with him and finished when he sold the business and then I started my tea factory with tea tasting courses. I had to blend all the teas here, from Malawi and Sri Lanka. Do the blend here and pack it and distribute it. I did that here. After that we moved to Cape Town started [with] mushrooms, came back here and worked for a school doing maintenance for them as well as after hours I used to run mushrooms as well. We had a mushroom farm here. It is closed down now. I have my own business now in maintenance and my colleagues are mostly [Black] Batswana.” (See appendix 1)

Stephen came back from Varsity in Cape Town and got employed by the accountancy firm Deloitte & Touche:

“I was at Deloitte & Touche for three and a half years. Then I worked for Land Rover for a year I just started at a new place and have been there for three months now. It is very good. Good money too, compared to Deloitte & Touche. Deloitte & Touche is more like a training institution so you don’t earn a lot. It is a
good job to have in Botswana, because basically the situation is
improving, but until recently there haven’t been a lot of
qualified Batswana accountants. They’ve had to get expatriates
in, as in anything else. If you as a Motswana can do a job an
expatriate can do, good stick.” (See appendix 1)

After Emma’s time in Cape Town as a student she came back to Botswana
to work. She was a bookkeeper and worked for a number of companies
until she got pregnant. Just after her daughter was born, Emma and her
husband, Nathan, decided to leave. Emma says:

“In the time when we were in South Africa I didn’t work, I
stayed at home. I started to work as a bookkeeper [when we
came back to Botswana] again. Then I went to work for Medical
Rescue for a couple of years and was then offered a job at the
same school [as Nathan] as a school secretary and I changed
from bookkeeping to secretary and now I work for a legal firm
as a legal secretary. My colleagues have mostly been [Black]
Batswana. Obviously at Medical Rescue I was the only one
[Botswana citizen], where the majority is expatriates because of
the qualifications required. But at all the other business there
have been mostly [Black] Batswana. Well, at a few companies
the top managers, manager director, would be an expatriate. But
my colleagues would be [Black] Batswana.” (See appendix 1)

After Brian had worked in Harare, Zimbabwe, for a couple of years, he
came back to Botswana. Before he moved to Gaborone, he worked for a
couple of years in Francistown:

“It is a Botswana company; they are part of the Anglo-American
so they have been with De Beers. They had a contact in Zambia
so they sent me because I am single. It is too expensive to send
families up there. Schools... In total 12 people, three of us from
Botswana, the rest of them are from Canada. Flown in here, they
are specialists in the job, when they have finished they are sent
back. They are only here on contracts.” (See appendix 1)

Elizabeth remember a conflict with Black Batswana at work. She explains:

‘I first went into training at the Marang [a hotel], but didn’t stay
very long, because... It is a funny thing because the Africans
here are very anti-the-Whites coming into the same as they do,
to take their jobs. There were a lot of conflicts. I didn’t have the
energy to fight that. Then I wasn’t really enjoying it so I went
into, accountancy. I got into that and have been there ever since.
I am working now at ULC; it is a financial institution. All my colleges are Batswana. Only the manager and myself are White, the development officer which is basically the branch manager, is Black, our receptionist is Black, our tea girl is Black our typist is Black. The other lady in accountant is Coloured.’

‘They don’t act the same way as they did at the Marang [a hotel]?’ I asked.

‘No, because basically I am more qualified than they are and I have been there for a lot a lot longer than most of them. I have been with the company for seven and a half years. They say I am furniture,’ she says and laughs. (See appendix 1)

Tourism is one of Botswana’s major sources of income, therefore, I thought it would have attracted quite a few people to work within it. Strangely enough, only one of the informants ever worked in the tourism industry.

When Martin came back to Botswana after finishing his schooling in South Africa, he arranged safaris:

“I did the touristy things for about a year. Otherwise I have been, well, by trade I’m a mechanical engineer, I was trying to get into beef and did that for two years it was OK but it got boring. I wanted different experiences.” (See appendix 1)

3.4 Summary

Botswana has two languages, English and Setswana. The informants speak English, Setswana and/or Afrikaans. What I noticed was that all the men speak fluent or comprehensibly Setswana. Most of the women do too, but the ones who do not attribute this to schooling in other countries.

The White Batswana have a cognatic (or bilateral) way of reckoning kin. Thus they have a cognatic system in which, traditionally the children have been given their father’s surname. Due to the group’s preference in marriage partner, I have chosen to call them ethnic endogamous.

The majority of the informants were born in Botswana at the hospital in Francistown, the government hospital in Lobatse, or the mission hospitals in Molepolole, Gaborone and Mochudi. Two of the informants were born outside the country. They attribute this to the lack of hospitals, compounded with health risks.
Their parents all married White Africans, except two, who married Europeans. All grandparents, apart from three branches who’s descent is unclear, come from Africa. They mainly come from South Africa, but also Botswana, Kenya and Rhodesia. The three unclear branches lived and worked in Africa. Six of the eleven informants are married. One is married to a non-African. The rest have married (White) Batswana and one a (White) Rhodesian. The informants’ siblings are equally distributed either in Botswana, live in South Africa or have emigrated.

Most of these people originate from the United Kingdom (UK), but for the majority, their ancestors left in the 1900s. The main reason to come to Botswana was to join the mission and trade.

Only two of the informants did all their schooling in Botswana, the rest went to Zimbabwe or South Africa. After finishing their studies everyone, but one, started to work. No one has had problems with employment, and three of them got into their families’ business. Their employment is equally divided between administrative work and labour work. Only one had a clash with Black Batswana colleagues, but not any more.

**CHAPTER 4**

**SOCIAL RELATIONS**

The two societies in Kennedy’s (1987) study, Rhodesia and Kenya, are sternly stratified along racial, ethnic and cultural lines. Kennedy (1987:189) explains that the settler culture was first and foremost the expression of the White community’s position of predominance in the colonial order. The power to shape and control social identity, to determine the difference between themselves and others, was crucial to that predominance. The consequences were deeply conservative. Although colonial circumstances altered the cultural context of White immigrants’ lives, the change followed
no linear course of accommodation. No conformable adjustment of traditional values to new conditions, no integration of Europe with Africa, nor that of White and Black took place. On the contrary, the central feature of the settler culture was its avoidance of contact and interchange with the indigenous population. It was characterised by the effort to isolate and institutionalise White settlement within a rigid set of physical, linguistic, social, economic and political boundaries. As Gann explains:

Most immigrants, except for a small number driven out by political or religious persecution, leave home for one reason only - to gain a better chance in life. Provided they can better themselves and make money, they are not interested in political changes. Contrary to the old American right-wing stereotype of the alien with a bomb in his pocket, it is the new colonist who tends to accept things as they are; and it is the stay-at-home who is often a radical. (Gann, 1962:70)

In Gaborone there are specific restaurants, bars and clubs that the White Batswana and the expatriates prefer to frequent. These places are not closed for the Blacks though, and they too go to those bars. However, White and Black Batswana do not socialise and there is a very distinct dividing line between the two groups. This also holds for the Coloureds and the Asians neither of whom interact with other groups.

Even though this dividing is obvious to anyone who comes to Gaborone the informants do not see it as racial tension but cultural differences or class division. Most symbols do not have visual or physical expression, but are ideas, which make their meaning more evasive. Erving Goffman (1986:4) deals with different kinds of stigma. What can be drawn, as a parallel is what he calls *Tribal stigma*, which is of race, nation and religion. He claims that this stigma is transferred through lineages and taints all members of a family (cf. Bloom, 1971:48f). Goffman (1986:23) argues that we find that members of a specific stigma category tend to gather in small groups. What we also find is that if one member interacts with a member from another group, both of them have to change their mode of thought about the other,
but the rest of the members who have not interacted reacts in a peculiar way. Ethnic endogamy and the inability to interact in a way that the minority assimilates into the majority can explain the stigma.

The attitudes we normally have towards a person with a stigma, and the actions we take in regards to that person, are well known, since these responses are what benevolent social action is designed to soften and ameliorate. By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma to be not quite human. On this assumption, we exercise varieties of discrimination through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce the person’s life chances. We construct a stigma-theory (Goffman, 1986:5) and ideology to explain the person’s inferiority and account for the danger the person represents, sometimes rationalising animosity based on other differences. Class theory is also mentioned as a reason for the dividing of ethnic groups.

Thomas states:

“I think that most of the people socialise and there has never been a problem here. The Asians keep to themselves they all keep to themselves at the end of the day. Just normal, at the end of the day mainly where the racism comes from is not people. If you’ve got a million dollar, you go to a million-dollar club, the fact that you are Black or White, actually don’t mean a difference. If you have got that amount of money you go to something that suits your money. If you have no money you go to a hospital that everyone goes to, if you have lots of money you go to the best. That’s where your big story comes in more than anything. I mean the ordinary local guy doesn’t want to mix with the guy that have got a whole lot of money, he’ll be embarrassed. They stick to their group and other people stick to their own preferences.” (See appendix 1)

4.1 Interaction

Botswana was only supposed to be a protectorate, but it was subject to colonial rule with a colonial government (British). However, in contrast to other countries, the tribes had their Kgosi [king] at the bottom of the colonial order. Because it was only a protectorate, achieving their

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14 Thomas mentions the dollar to make an example with a known currency.
independence was fairly easy. Basically, they did not have to fight for it. Historically, Botswana had their Kgosi and at the time of independence they got a Black government straight away.

Adam, the youngest of the informants at 23 years of age, says that the interaction between White and Black is all right. He states that the Black Batswana are relaxed and there are no problems:

“The guys are very relaxed; they don’t normally have that many problems, apart from the youngsters that now and again get too drunk at the bar. It is nothing major. Everyone is relaxed and does their thing. There’s no problem. I suppose it does divide on its own. People stick to who they know. Who they want know or who they don’t want to know. Generally, it is a hell of a lot of mix. The rugby club plays with the University of Botswana, so we’re meeting all those guys. When I went to school in King’s Wood, I would say about 30 per cent come from Botswana so that’s White guys, Black guys, Coloured guys and you name it. It’s all friends and that. At school here, at Northside, Broadhurst and everyone, they are all the same, very mixed. It does split up, coming into the Bull&Bush [a bar], it seems to be, but everyone tolerates each other. The Lizard Lounge [a club] is much more mixed. It is also a lot smaller club. There is not a lot of room where you can designate that this area, you know what I mean. You only got one bar. They hardly have any problems either, so it’s fine. It does work.” (See appendix 1)

Anthony, when discussing the cultural differences says that it is difficult to socialise across the cultural boundaries. The values differ between the Black Batswana and the White Batswana. He also says that to be able to mix the two, either a White person has to enter into the Black culture or a Black person has to enter into the White culture. If this does not happen, the two will not mix.

“It’s not the colour, it’s the culture. There are different ways and different way of thinking. You work together and you do socialise together, but it is difficult to make that real bond, which I would say is like a good friendship. Sometimes it is difficult to be at ease, you know. When you go out in a big group and they are of different colours or different races or different cultures, you sometimes are not sure of what is acceptable, how to act. Whereas when you’re with your own
cultural group, you know and feel relaxed. It is difficult to explain how it is. Indians [east] don’t mix with us at all. I guess their religion holds them very apart from anybody else. White people and Black people here sort of share the same religion; both would be Christian. Indians are Muslims or Hindu and they are very much with their group than marry outside their group. We have Indian friends but the two Indian friends we have in our group their mothers are White people.” (See appendix 1)

The term ‘race’ is used very loosely. It is a biological concept which assumes that people are distinct from one another and that they have hereditary differences. Thus, the classification of humanity into races, based on physical appearance, is arbitrary. Thinking that people are different makes it easier to develop fixed attitudes towards them. Race relations are not a unique kind of social contact. They include all other of interactions (economic, political, ideological), in which people either do or do not get on with each other. The manner in which relations are shaped depends on the general social environment, and is, of course, strongly influenced by economic factors.

Stephen finds the interaction very easy, but has found it difficult to come to Gaborone and not be accepted in the way he was in his hometown. He says:

“I don’t find it difficult at all. Botswana is the Black people’s home. Black people have always run this country. That is what I believe. There is no hatred that has been formed. It has always basically been their land. White people have come in and it has always been a good relation. I would think that a place like Zimbabwe with a big war and what went on in South Africa, Apartheid, I don’t know about other places. There is always a war. No one is really interested in Botswana if you know what I mean. I enjoy it here. My family has always been here. In Serowe you are part of the people. Coming here [Gaborone] people don’t recognise you. If you say you are Motswana, they say you’re Motswana on the papers. But if you’re actually in Serowe they actually treat you as a Motswana. It is mainly Gabs [Gaborone], it is a big city, as far as Botswana is concerned it is. People go away from their cultural ways. Whereas in the rural places it is a good feel. That’s what I am saying, if you’d gone to these places you would’ve got more of an idea of how people actually, like my dad, are involved in the community and that sort of way. I think you do get certain people where you can see
have quite a bit of hatred towards White people, but I mean on the topic, generally people I don’t think follow.” (See appendix 1)

As Stephen says, moving into Gaborone can be difficult when you are used to socialising within different groups. Jean too thought it was a huge difference to move from Francistown to Gaborone. Francistown was her hometown and Jean’s father was a quite prominent figure in the community, especially among the Black community. She says;

“Because Batswana, when they get to know you, they get to know your whole family. If you are a friend of one person, you are a friend of the family. People were very friendly and most of all I was accepted by all races. When I went to Gabs [Gaborone] it was a huge shock because I found that Black Batswana was very suspicious of me. For one thing I spoke Setswana fairly fluently and it was not common down in the south whereas up in the north, it was. So I was sort of kept on length by the Black Batswana because they weren’t sure of me. There weren’t that many White Batswana down in the south, certainly not that I came across. The expatriate community welcomed me with open arms but it was because I was White and I actually had nothing in common with them.” (See appendix 1)

When it comes to the general interaction, Jean places a lot of emphasis on individuals. She knows a lot of people from different ethnic groups. Jean says that you know a lot of people, but when it comes to socialising and close friendship everyone sticks to their own group:

“I don’t believe we have got a racial tension completely in Botswana at all. Whites, even White Batswana that was born here, they are second or third generation Batswana still see themselves as White, not as Batswana. You know there is a distinction, they are White Batswana and the same I think with the Asians and to some degree with the Coloureds. The Coloureds probably mix far easier, you know they don’t have that rigidity as much. There is no sort of tension as such, but there is a sort of separation. To some extent it is a class thing, rather than a race issue, I think it is a class issue, which is probably just a hangover from the colonial days. You know the old days were all sorts of management and professional people who were mostly White, and now the Black Batswana is raising
Jean brings up her idea about the lack of socialising between the Black Batswana and the White Batswana as a question of class rather than race. It is what Thomas also emphasised. This reasoning makes sense if we recall what was previously mentioned about education. As long as the level of teaching is not acceptable, the amount of skilled people will not increase. This affects the Black Batswana to a higher degree since the White Batswana usually have been given the opportunity to obtain a good education and more qualified jobs with higher wages.

Emma and her husband Nathan tell me they never had an attitude problem or that anyone ever thought that they should not be a Motswana. Emma explains:

‘I have never had an attitude problem. You know being White. They have actually been brilliant. I think that is what makes this country so special. They are such a giving people. They are very tolerant, accepting. They just think it is fantastic when you take out your omang [Botswana national identity card]. And even now, you still get a reaction ‘Ahh, you have got an omang’. They are quite amazed at that you have an omang, they see you are born here, but never any attitude, bad attitude. And now Sarah is learning Setswana. If she would speak to anyone in Setswana they just think it is wonderful. They are so accepting. From that it is really lovely working. I don’t speak it [Setswana]. I can understand it, but I don’t speak it and I have no hassle at all. They will tease me now and again. No, they don’t have any bad attitude towards me at all,’ she says.

‘Well you get one out of .... a thousand that got a problem,’ Nathan adds.

(See appendix 1)

Brian currently works in Zambia and has come across a difference in attitudes between the citizens of the two countries. He says that the locals are happy to see the Whites coming to Zambia because they know there will be jobs for them when the Whites come. In Botswana the Blacks are said to feel threatened that the Whites are taking their jobs. Brian states:
“It is a bit different. It actually is the non-educated people that feel threatened. But you get the industrial workers, which is different. You get a labour with good qualifications, but they [Black Batswana] still feel threatened when the White qualified engineer is coming in. While an educated person probably understands why they [government] let people in. But all together it is you get the expatriates coming in and they will be staying here for ten years and haven’t trained anybody, doesn’t train any locals. He wants to keep his job because maybe in England there is no job for him, so he is going to stick to his job as long as possible. [It is a] difficult situation.” (See appendix 1)

Elizabeth has noticed a change of attitude among the Blacks. She means that the Blacks can be very racial and can pass very racial remarks:

“I have only noticed it in maybe the last two-three years, that they are becoming more aggressive towards the Europeans [Whites in general]. But you can also understand that, I mean the expatriates come in, they earn plenty in salary, they get all their housing and everything and Batswana gets paid peanuts. You can also understand their anger in a way, you know. Some of them judge all Whites as expatriates, some of them have a chip on their shoulders about these things you know. But some of them just go with the flow, they have for so long I mean. My hackle goes up with the expatriates. I mean, they get all their living expenses for free. They get accommodation, their kids school fees are paid. Basically their salary is just take-home money to buy clothes and food. And they are earning salaries of P10-20,000 a month plus they are getting everything. Then you find that a Motswana is getting paid P1,000 a month.” (See appendix 1)

Anthony Cohen (1985:15) brings up a variability of meaning when he points out that the consciousness of a community needs to be preserved through the manipulation of the symbols. Here, the symbol of a Motswana is changing to fit the frame of one particular individual that Martin talks about:

“So [there is] a lot of change between the White Batswana and the Black Batswana. Because if they say; ‘you are a White man,’ you say, ‘I am a Motswana, I was born in this country’, then he says ‘yeah, but your mother wasn’t’. Even if your mother was born here, he goes on to grandmother and further. You see they are taking it that far back. They are not worried about you, they
say you are a White man and not born in this country, you’ll say that you were and they’ll just say that you weren’t. You personally were born here, but your ancestors weren’t so you are not from this country and therefore you are not a Motswana. That’s how they look at it.” (See appendix 1)

The White Batswana then, is considered a less authentic Botswana citizen since they are White, no matter how far back the ancestors have lived in the country. The border that characterises a Motswana is thus floating to fit the Black community. In an African setting, it seems as if Black people more often than not think of themselves in terms of tribal affiliations, given that they come from an area where there are enough different tribes. When face to face with the Whites, they speak of themselves as Africans and of the Whites as Europeans, anything but as Africans.

Georgina is very happy with her staff and claims that there are no problems what so ever between her and the Black Batswana. What she sees as a problem are the non-Batswana. She feels that the non-Batswana do not understand that Botswana is a young country and reckons the non-Batswana compare their own home country with Botswana. She says:

“‘But back home we can get this, this and this’. ‘Hang on now, you are not back home, you are here [Botswana] and accept what we have got to offer’. If they [non-Batswana] are prepared to realise that it is a bit slow and behind other countries but it is a new country. It takes patience to help and train the locals. And if you have got patience and help train them you have no problem with it. I know a lot of people, thought of to stay say; ‘how can you do it’? I say, ‘explain to them, they have taken longer to be educated because their education started later than our’. All my ladystaff start as tea girls here, now they are computer operators, the whole lot. They have all been brought up through the stages and now I am quite happy with them. I can go away and leave them to run their accountant department. We get on very well and they come to me if they have problems with boyfriends and husbands, we talk to each other, we are a team. They are not afraid and don’t think that they are any lower or better than me and I don’t think that either.”

(See appendix 1)
Georgina seems to have a great understanding for her local staff. Everything works fine and they all work as a team. Even so, I cannot help but to regard her attitude to be a bit paternalistic, but then again, she might be a bit protective due to her knowledge of this study.

Both Martin and Stephen have experience from the town Serowe which is south of Francistown, and they explain the difference between those places and Gaborone. Stephen explains that there are a lot less people in Serowe. It has four or five White families that have been there for the last 50 years. They are very involved with the local people. For the Whites in Serowe, interaction is different. Stephen states:

“In Serowe you get people that stay, here [Gaborone] people come and go. There are basically five or six families that have been there [in Serowe] and stayed there for so many years and through that… Like my dad, through farming, cattle, a lot of Black people and that sort of thing. So they socialise a lot more with the Black people. My father was born in Serowe and grew up there. I think there you… even myself when I go back there I speak Setswana a lot more.” (See appendix 1)

Martin calls Serowe a tribal town, and if you are not a Bangwato (the people that come from Serowe), then you are not really welcome:

“You are accepted, I mean you can go there and do your business, do whatever you want to. But at the Kgotla meetings, the local meetings and that, they prefer that only the locals are there. If you interfere there with what they think, they stop making it public meeting. They accept me because my fiancée was born there, she was born in Serowe.” (See appendix 1)

How is it, that Elizabeth and her siblings came to grow up with a more amicable attitude towards the Black Motswana than her Afrikaner father and his family? Elizabeth thinks it was her mother who influenced both herself and her siblings with a friendlier attitude. Elizabeth's mother has lived all her life in Botswana and so has Elizabeth and her siblings. Elisabeth says:
“Even when I was at school in South Africa, I used to get into fights, you know. Because I think we were brought up with, you know they [Black] are people, everybody is a person and some people just look a little bit different than others. My grandfather [maternal] was very anti-racial anyway he didn’t tolerate it. We didn’t have to do much with my father’s family [while] growing up. My grandparents, my mother’s family, have been quite a big influence in our lives you know. [The] South African [part] not so much, we used to visit them and that, but our grandparents and my mother’s family were a part of our lives you know. I think it was just basically how we grew up. You are used to having Black neighbours and used to having to go into the same shops as Blacks. Those things were just very normal for us. My father did change. You know, I think it took a while, but from what I remember [of] him, he wasn’t very [racial], he used to get angry with them [Black Batswana] because they are a really lazy nation. He used to get mad with them, but he was never, you know, racial towards them, basically. He just let them know their places and that they did it right.” (See appendix 1)

What we have observed is that some of the informants are experiencing a change of attitude about the Black Batswana. I gather that the negative attitude in Gaborone, that the people moving into the city have experienced, comes down to the fact that Gaborone is a city that no one actually comes from (cf. Peppler, 1989,73f), but everyone moves into. This convey a preconceived idea that people, and in this case White people, cannot be Batswana, only expatriates. This is understandable since the number of White Batswana is comparatively low. From what I can perceive, it seems as if the change of attitude, also taking place in Francistown, started only during the last decade. Whether this depends on the influx of expatriates that work on contracts or the influx of immigrated White South Africans and Zimbabweans that bring, what some informants call bad attitude, I do not know. What is meant by bad attitude is the unwillingness to accept the Black Batswana as equal citizens with same rights as any White.

The conclusion that I have come to is that there are too few White Batswana that have been the subject of the so-called reversed racism to validate its existence. The focus that is projected on the expatriates and the
pressure from the foreign groups is also a way to emphasise the Black’s status as genuine Africans, and in this case, particularly as Batswana.

4.2 Marriage

Within the ethnic endogamous marriage of the White Batswana, marriage is commonly perceived as a relationship between the individuals concerned, allowing the persons to choose their spouse through romantic love. They also seem to practise a form of virilocality, meaning that the wife tends to move with regard to the husband’s work. The majority of the informants, either themselves or their parents, have moved to places on the husband’s employer’s or the husband’s initiative.

Looking at whom the informants have married, six of eleven are married and only one, Elizabeth, is married to a non-African. The rest have married a (White) Motswana apart from Georgina who married a (White) Rhodesian, who has become a naturalised Motswana. Brian explains his experience regarding interracial relationships:

“Relationships here, there is a line there and I think it is just the way we have been brought up. It is a cultural thing. Because I know Black friends of mine will not get involved with a White girl, for them it is not acceptable, by their family or even by themselves really. I can take a Black girl to the Bull&Bush [a bar] and be friends but we won’t get beyond that. From her side it is not going to be accepted and from my side it won’t be accepted. It has always been like that. If I get involved with a Black girl, I’ll lose my friends. Even if it would be someone they know. It won’t be open, but you will not be invited to their house anymore or invited to go out with them. If I did get involved with a Black girl and we had children, they are not going to be accepted. In school and that.” (See appendix 1)

Not one of the informants has had a cross cultural relationship with a Black Motswana. This is due either to what the informants said were cultural differences, personal taste or parental disapproval. They also mention friends that have married across the borders and tell me it is very difficult. Anthony believes that his parents would be supportive if he was to marry a Black woman, but he does not put much faith in his friends:
“The difficulties are the cultural differences. The roots of Tswana culture compared to our culture are very, very different and especially when you marry somebody. I’m not saying it is impossible, and a lot of people are traditional and there are a lot of mixed marriages and they are happy, but you find that one of the two has gone over to the other culture almost completely. There is no mix of the culture in a marriage. It is difficult. Our culture is very insular and we look after the family unit, in a lot of cultures you look after everybody. If you are the one making money it is all 60 other. It is also different between our culture and Tswana culture, Batswana people are very promiscuous [this statement will be dealt with later in this thesis] and White guys are scared of that.” (See appendix 1)

Elizabeth and Martin both have partners that are not White, but they are from one of the other minority groups in Botswana, the Coloureds and Asians. Martin is engaged to a Coloured Motswana, but he never had Black girlfriends. Martin was strictly told by his father that they were not to be dated:

“My father threatened to castrate me if I did. Some of my friends have had mixed [relationships]. Most of the White people in Francistown have had either a relationship or a one-time encounter. Just maybe for them to find out or just to see, for the experience. I have no idea I don’t think I would ever… A lot of my friends and a lot of people I know in Francistown will deny it. If you are in Botswana and you are in the White clan, then it is known publicly that you have slept or so with a Black lady or White lady. If you have slept with a Black man you are not coaching you know, you are not really part of the clan. In a sense you get pushed out of your community in a way, not by family but mainly by friends. You get really intimidated by your friends.” (See appendix 1)

Social interaction shapes the boundaries that creates the identity of an individual and a community (Cohen, 1985:12). Martin talks here of the White clan, yet another concept which is marking the boundaries, or differences, between the two Batswana groups. ‘They’ are a category that is used quite frequently to refer to the Black Batswana. This idea of what differs between ‘us’ and ‘the other’ is a well known characteristic of identity (Hylland Eriksen, 1993). The White clan seems to keep a grip on

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15 In the Tswana culture, it is custom to support your closest kin, which can go up to 60 people.
the White Batswana, but apparently not strong enough, to keep them away from having interracial sexual relationships.

Elizabeth married an [east] Indian. Her husband is from Bombay, India, and has been in Botswana for about six years; they have been married for three years. It turned out to be quite a cultural shock to her father’s side of the family because they are, as she puts it, ‘very South African’. The reactions Elizabeth met were mixed:

‘Some of them [friends] were very shocked, some of them are still not talking to me. A lot of them, it took them a while to accept it, but there is nothing they can do. [I have not had any] Black boyfriends. Not as in relationship, but friends, yes. I guess I would have married a Black guy if I’d loved him,’ she says.

‘How would people have reacted?’ I asked.

‘Probably worse [laughs]. [East] Indians are not so dark. I did have a Coloured boyfriend at one stage. My father wasn’t very amused. My father changed it into being just my friend. But funny enough, when I married Arun, my father got on with him amazingly well and he was really, really South African. But if I would have married a Black man my father probably would have climbed the wall,’ she says and laughs. I don’t think my mother was really, really happy to start off with [either],’ Elizabeth says. (See appendix 1)

Elizabeth continues to talk about people she knows, who are in mixed marriages:

“They say it is difficult, more difficult than a marriage of your family. Even the same race with different culture; European, but a Jew and a non-Jew. It isn’t just the colour of the person, but also the culture of the person. The main obstacle is the culture and the tradition. The tradition is very deep and very old. Myself, we get invited. I don’t mind the cultural thing, but their religion is not my scene. I have my own religion, and own traditions and own culture and I feel we can give and take. All our children will be taught both and they can decide what they want. People that pressure their kids will probably find them ending up on drugs when they are being pushed around.’”

Martin has a male cousin that married a Black Motswana woman. He states that the marriage would have worked out if the woman had not been having affairs with other men:
“My cousin was actually married to a [Black] Motswana, and she’s got three kids. OK, it didn’t work out because she ended up going all over the place. It would have worked if she wasn’t very *loose* and available to any guy. Otherwise it would have been OK. I mean, they had a good relationship they never had any problems.” (See appendix 1)

That one of the spouses has to forsake their culture to make the relationship work is not unusual or extraordinary for Botswana. As Bloom argues:

Social values *do* change, and as part of the process of social change the attitudes of groups or individuals will often change correspondingly. But some individuals are more resistant to the influence of social change than others, and not all socio-economic and political change is equally effective in generating permanently modified attitudes (Bloom, 1971:153).

However, it seems as if it is more common that Black Batswana rather than White Batswana give up their culture. I believe this has to do with the strong influence from the west that is being spread by TV and music. Media has with help of globalisation, made a rapid impact on the third world. It is frightening to see how young people have developed such craving for a country like the United States.

Nathan and Emma talk about their experience:

‘I have a lot of Black friends, but no, no Black girlfriends,’ Nathan says.
‘I went out with a Coloured chap, but never with a Black man. I think it is definitely cultural. We know a few people that are married in a Black and White marriage and it is difficult. You find that the man or the woman who is Black or White also make a difference. It is not easy for them at all,’ Emma says.
‘You often find that the wife will go off and do her thing and the man will go and do his. That is what I have seen with people I know. They don’t socialise together,’ Nathan adds.
‘She has her friends and he has his friends. Time and time this happens. The kids have no problems. They have absolutely no problems, they are so totally accepted. What we have found is that a lot of White Motswana that we know, have tended to marry other White Motswana. Nathan and I have known each other since we were children and there is probably four other
couples we know at least that have married other Motswana they have knew [from] when they were at school. I think that also is a cultural thing. We are familiar with each other’s background. We have often spoken about [if] our children will, because each generation, the Black people are not as rural as they used to be. They are far more westernised, so those differences are getting narrower and narrower the further we go. I mean it is every possibility our children will. If they do, then that is fine. In our days there weren’t so many Black Motswana in school. We didn’t mix probably as much, but now it is a big mix. It is basically about the education, we want Sarah [their daughter] to have a wonderful husband, someone that is able to take care of her and make her happy,’ Emma states.

‘So that means that the Black, when they change their culture... a White would never change?’ I ask.

‘I doubt it...’ Emma hesitates with her answer.

(See appendix 1)

The psychologist Erik Erikson (1968:16) when discussing the identity in crisis, examines also the change in a person's culture. He states that, at a crucial moment, the development has to go one way or the other, which results in growing differentiation. What is being changed is the Black Batswana’s traditional values, not the White Batswana’s. The assimilation is then actually something happening to the majority, rather than to the minority. However, even though there seem to exist a hard attitude in the White community in respect to mixed relations, some incidents do not appear to stir up too many harsh feelings. Jean, not only had a mixed relationship, but also as a result from this affair she had a child out of wedlock.

“I had an illegitimate daughter when I was in my early twenties. Her father was a Coloured. But after that I would have to say that all my relations have been with Whites. My parents reacted very typically, my father said; ‘that’s OK, we can cope with this’. My mother [said]; ‘what are people gonna say!’ We discussed it. There was discussion about I should have the baby adopted, this was in the late 70s and Francistown was still very conservative at that time so she was very concerned about it. But as it turned out, I didn’t have the baby adopted. She seemed to accept that and strangely enough, so did the whole community. They were very supportive, maybe a little bit shocked but they got over that very quickly. There was a little bit of consternation when people wanted to know who the father of the child was because at that time I was socialising with a group of all
different races. That was the most important point, with who the father was, I think there might have been betting [laugh].”
(See appendix 1)

4.3 Friends
In Botswana, it is not something extraordinary for a White Batswana to play with Black children (cf. Godwin, 1996). However, what we also see is that somewhere along the line there is the division between the White and Black Batswana. It might be as the informants say—a cultural difference—with dissimilarity in values and interests. This seems to happen when the children start their primary education and go to separate schools. Would this mean that children do not have a culture since they can mix freely across ethnic boundaries? Or is it that they do not care? If they all went to the same schools, would this dissimilarity not occur? Could it prevent the separation of the dominant cultural values and interests?
The cultural differences might not be such a big issue at the end of the day. The imagined difference might be much bigger, and it is being kept alive by the stigma people have been tainted with for as long as they can remember. The difference between Botswana and countries like South Africa or Zimbabwe is that there has not been a public statement made about it. The informants explain that they have Black friends, but that they are not close friends. They also say that the only reason for this is culture. Martin says:

“When you are growing up, you are always growing up with the local kids. You couldn’t do it odd and away with [only have] White kids to play with or whatever. You just grabbed one of the local kids by the ears and a couple of games would do it. They were OK. They accept us and we have done our fun in times. I just don’t have to have White friends, it doesn’t help.”
(See appendix 1)

In Crapanzano’s study, one of his informants talks of growing up with Black friends:

‘My earliest memories were of not having any White friends, only Black ones. I spoke their language fluently. We used to play with stones or make cars out of a couple of boards and
some old bicycle wheels. Most of the time we just explored the
bush…”
‘Did your parents ever say anything about your playing with
African children?’
‘No.’
‘When did you begin to see them as different?’
‘When I was seven and started going to school. There were two
White kids just about two miles down the road. I used to play
with them. I found it strange at first because there was a whole
different, well, I suppose, sophistication about them. One sort of
became aware of differences that way. I didn’t enjoy playing
with them. I identified with the Black kids.’ (Crapanzano,
1986:188f)

In Botswana, there are some people that do mix freely. Brian says that there
is no dividing line in friendship as there is in marriage: he says it does not
matter whether you are Black, White, Coloured or Indian. He has also
thought a lot about why one should not want to make friends with someone
being Black. He has not been able to quite understand this problem since he
himself has Black friends. The two people Brian mentions first are Tau, a
Black Motswana, that he has known since childhood, and Babur, an east
Indian Batswana, whom he has become friends with as an adult.

Elizabeth too, grew up with most of her friends she has today. She has
some Black friends, a lot of Coloured friends and quite a few White
friends, but states that they do not mix:

“We often end up being the only ones among the Black or the
Coloureds. They seem to be very divided, not always, not in all
situations, but in most situations.” (See appendix 1)

Jean gives a time perspective of how Francistown has become less mixed
since the time when she was young. Francistown was a tighter community
where everybody knew everybody and the local club, Francistown club,
was a very popular venue at that time. The people she socialised with in
those days mixed more across ethnic boundaries than they do today. Jean
also emphasises that in those days, there were not that many expatriates,
and the few that were there were usually a lot older than she was. They
were highly professional people, and, of course, a lot older, so she did not socialise with them. Jean says:

“I’d say that [today] about 75 per cent of them [friends] are Batswana and only 25 per cent of them are expatriates. The Batswana would be of all groups. I would also say it is about equally mixed, the Batswana equally of the different races, you know all ethnic groups or whatever colours you would like to call them. I am not very political correct I am afraid. Of the 25 per cent that are expatriates, they are all White. Some of them have been here for a long time, somewhere between five and ten years.”
(See appendix 1)

Stephen is from Serowe, and while there he was close to the Black community. Today, he socialises mainly with the White community:

“Why, I don’t know. It’s strange. Interest I guess, rugby, cricket. I still see my friends that I made at Deloitte & Touche [mainly Black Batswana]. I see them. It is just a matter of meeting people agree and socialise with them. People that have the same interest. You see a place like this [Bull&Bush] it’s mainly White people. You still socialise, I mean it’s not a prejudice thing. I’m just saying that people that are in a group you speak to them. It just happens in Africa that they stick to themselves. It is the difference in cultures as well. I don’t know why it’s. I suppose it is a different way of life. Like I say, you go back to Serowe and it is totally different.” (See appendix 1)

Thomas also socialises mainly with Whites. He and his wife socialise with Whites that have been there all their lives, which means they do not socialise with expatriates. Three of their friends are missionaries’ daughters. The others work in trading. Thomas says:

“That is what the people originally came from. We have known them all our lives, well at least 20-30 years. They were all born and brought up here. We do socialise with Black Batswana to a certain degree. We have got a number of friends amongst us, most of the socialising is a small group of ten-fifteen people, couples. We spend most of our time together. There is one Black woman and she is the only Black one that is really close to us. I mean we have a number of Black friends that we party with and see, but the closest unit is that group of ten, twelve people.”
(See appendix 1)
Adam and Stephen both play in the local rugby team and say they have met a lot of their friends through rugby and through the Bull&Bush [a bar]. Adam socialises with five or six other men that are from Botswana. He also has a lot of Batswana friends that are at the moment at Varsity in South Africa. He mixes a lot with the expatriates, the majority of whom are South Africans.

“Friends in Botswana I met them through, well Tom and Stephen I met through my sister because she was in Cape Town with them studying, the rugby club. You meet a lot of them through work. The contractors bring younger guys direct from Varsity and they are still into sports and all that. You meet them at the Bull&Bush [a bar]. Black friends are guys at work, guys from school, from the backyard.” (See appendix 1)

Stephen knows his friends through rugby. The younger men meet a lot of people through the rugby club, and then through them they get to know other people. He states:

“There are mainly White people [on the team]. There has been, there are quite a few young Motswana [meaning Black] that come through playing rugby now. As far as that’s concerned there are mainly White people. They started the game and stuck to it.” (See appendix 1)

Emma and Nathan discuss;

‘We have friends from all over the place really, Zimbabwe, UK, Wales, South Africa, Canada. They are ex-pats [expatriates],’ Emma says.
‘Ex-pats and then you’ve got Batswana friends,’ Nathan explains.
‘It is just such a mixture here, really,’ Emma adds.
‘We would have met them from social gatherings,’ Nathan says.
‘A lot of our friends have been here [Gaborone], whether they are expatriates or Batswana that we have known for a long time. We don’t have that many new friends. The friends that we socialise with would be those we have known for many, many years,’ Emma says.
‘Friends from before we left for South Africa. It is a very sociable country. We just phone up. One party will phone up and say, we feel like going into the bush, and off we go. In general you don’t really phone, you can just pop in,’ Nathan explains very enthusiastic.
‘This is what we find very difficult in South Africa...’ Emma starts.
‘...you couldn’t make friends with them,’ Nathan finishes.
‘They weren’t open there we found, we might just have been mistaken I don’t know. That the people used to phone and see if it was all right that you came over. Here you just fetch-up and it is nice. But I must admit that we don’t socialise that much. We both work full time and...’ Emma says.
‘We used to, we’ve quietened down. We used to go out in the Kalahari, go to the swamps fishing... women and men, Black and White we all just used to go,’ Nathan says with longing.
(See appendix 1)

Anthony is the only one that speaks of the people that come in and leave, the expatriates, and how hard it was as a child to lose friends on a regular basis. On the other hand, he is also the only one who has lived all his life in Gaborone, the town no one comes from. Anthony states:

“What happened to me, I am probably a different case. Mostly people here have friends since when they grew up. It is difficult to make friends because people always leave. You find other people who are always here tend to stay in a group. With me, I grew up with a certain group of people and they were ... had sort of difficult background and most of them, well our whole group went into alcohol and drugs, bad lifestyle. I came out of that. I left that group of friends and I spent about a year without any friends at all. Then that’s when I met Brian and other friends started to coming through. My group of what I call really good friends are from about 1990 I’d say and they are my, I guess you divide friends into White and Black friends. I have White friends and I have Black friends. These both groups don’t mix. The Black friends are people I have grown up with since I was small. You know you find people who do mix a lot are the odd ones out. I had friends from the farm here where I grew up and also from [when] I went to school, who are still friends. Then the White friends from 1990. The other group [the bad group], a lot of them are dead, a lot of them are in prison and a lot of them are trying to get rid of alcoholism or drug problems.” (See appendix 1)

4.4 Summary
In contrast to Kennedy’s (1987) study of Kenya and Zimbabwe, the lines between Whites and Blacks have not been so firmly stratified in Botswana. The tribes in Botswana kept their Kgolha and their Kgosi unlike other African countries. The status of a protectorate made their appeal for
independence a fairly easy affair. These differences can be of importance in the post-colonial interaction between the Black and White Batswana.

Culture is emphasised by the informants over and over again. But the imagined difference is strong and the stigma is difficult to escape. The division in Gaborone is very obvious, but the informants do not see it in terms of racial tension but instead of cultural differences or a theory of class. Ethnic endogamy and the inability to interact so that the minority assimilates into the majority can explain the stigma.

Black Batswana and White Batswana have different values. These values are considered too difficult to mix. The result seems to demand that either a White person enters the Black culture or a Black person enters the White culture. This idea makes it easier to develop fixed attitudes towards the other. Race relations are not a unique kind of social contact, they include all kinds of ways (economic, political, ideological), in which people either do, or do not, get on with each other. The manner in which the way of interaction is shaped depends on the general social environment, and is, of course, strongly influenced by economic factors. Since the economy in Botswana has only been blooming since independence, there has been no reason for tension. When it comes to socialising and close friendship though, everyone sticks to their own ethnic group.

The symbol of a Motswana is also changing to fit the frame for some Black Batswana and the White Motswana is considered a less authentic Batswana since they are White.

In relationships, we can immediately spot the concept of stigma that Goffman (1986:5) writes about. The stigma taints all members of the family. There are groups of Whites that tend to gather together, and when one member breaks the boundary, it creates turmoil amongst not only one group, but both Black and White. Bloom (1971:153), on the other hand, talks of changes in social values and I agree that they do change, although
it takes longer for some people to modify their attitudes. What also needs to be considered is the desirability to change, or to preserve the attitudes we have.

Only one informant is married with a non-White, but that spouse is Indian, which is considered more acceptable than a Black spouse. Not one of the informants has had a cross cultural relationship with a Black Motswana. We know now that social values and attitudes change, but the change, and the breakdown of stigma has taken a long time. Botswana seems to be ahead of its neighbouring countries though, which alternate between extremes. The change that is happening takes place within the Black Batswana’s traditional values, not the White Batswana’s. The assimilation is happening to the Black Batswana, rather than to the White Batswana.

If White Batswana and Black Batswana all went to the same schools then, could this dissimilarity cease if the cultural values and interests are so dominant? If the only reason for dissimilarity is culture, how can White children play with Black children? In case culture was the only reason, it would probably be easy to change, but if it is a stigma, which is what I insist, then it is much more difficult to put the preconceived ideas aside and start thinking anew.

CHAPTER 5
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS
The informants constantly emphasised that Botswana never has been in a war, nor has it ever experienced any ethnic antagonism. Life in Botswana seems to be very prosperous in their view. The informants’ stories about their growing up, their friends and the interaction between the different groups resembles a little haven on the African continent. Botswana is said to be a land of good opportunity, a country where you can be successful.
But another side to this happy story tells us about increase in crime and the shocking numbers of HIV positive people.

5.1 Botswana, an island of peace
Most of the informants attribute Botswana’s lack of racial tensions between the Black and White Batswana to two key factors, the peaceful process of independence; and, the first president Seretse Khama’s marriage to a White woman. The absence of civil conflicts is due to the simple reason that there is basically only one tribe in the country, Tswana.

Emma and her husband Nathan state what they believe is the reason:

‘I don’t know if it is the Khama’s being mixed [that] has had anything to do with it [Botswana’s lack of racial tension]. I don’t know, because they [Black Batswana] accept Ruth Khama completely although she is from England, totally acceptance. In a way it was different. Both Zimbabwe and South Africa, when they became independent were under White rule. Botswana when it stopped being a protectorate went straight into Black rule,’ Emma says.

‘British after that didn’t interfere...’ Nathan tries to help out.
‘It didn’t interfere in Zimbabwe and South Africa either, but it was run by the White. That probably had a huge impact. It has always been Black run. And they asked for the protectorate. When they wanted independence it was an easy one. That is the big difference. Even Namibia was run by South Africa for all those years. There is no aggression or intolerance at all here. You feel that very strongly in South Africa, and now they have to pay a long, long time for that hatred,’ Emma says.

‘It really is very friendly [in Botswana],’ Nathan explains.
‘And you can go anywhere and people will welcome you, even if they don’t know you,’ Emma says with joy. (See appendix 1)

Thanks to the harsh climate with poor rains and large deserts, and the colonial states’ indifference for the area, Botswana seems to have been saved from the more common scenario we are used to from Africa which includes tribal wars, racial tensions and violence.

Anthony says that people are used to the stability and that sometimes you hear of a story that involves racial tensions but nothing to get excited about. He says:

“You know we always get to vote the government and the government here is good. And, you know we have it really good here. We have all the rights that anybody can ever need really. You can always get a work if you are a citizen. You never have to worry really that your skin colour will affect your right in any
way. There is none of that. And it has been for a long time like that. People are so used to that that if they see it changing, people would say no it’s not right and then it wouldn’t happen. You look at Zimbabwe there has always been tension, between Whites and Blacks so that tension remains, however stable it becomes, it is always the memory of it. I don’t think it can ever be the same again.” (See appendix 1)

Stephen emphasises that Botswana is the Black people’s home, and that it is the Black people who always have run the country. And since it has always basically been the Black Batswana’s land, no hatred has evolved. Stephen says:

“White people have come in and it has always been a good relation. No one is really interested in Botswana if you know what I mean. It’s just a big desert. No one is interested in coming. I mean when Khama or whatever, was twenty said, ‘can we have this land’ and they [British government] said, ‘go for it’. So it has never been a problem. I think that the Batswana too is a very peaceful people. That’s probably why they ended up here ‘cos they weren’t interested in…. I think they were bullied around quite a lot. That is probably why they were eventually pushed into this area and it turned out to be a [laughter] rich area [laughter]. It is only one language and generally Botswana has been one tribe really. The San are very peaceful as well. They have been sort of wiped-out if you know what I mean. Unfortunately, by the Batswana people. There was a big thing a couple of years ago, they wanted to take them and move them into, like what they have done to the Indians in America, reserves.”
(See appendix 1)

Stephen’s theory is similar to that of Thomas’, who claims that the only reason Batswana are where they are today is because they ran away from everyone. The Batswana ran to a safe country and no one wanted to be there because it was such an inhospitable place in those days. Thomas says:

“That was the benefit, no one wanted to be here. That is why you ended up with one tribe, actually hiding from the guy that in Zimbabwe was up and down the country fighting everyone, chasing people backwards and forwards and the Tswana in the corner. And because it was such an arid, dry, ugly place no one wanted to come here, they couldn’t walk through the place and find water or whatever, so they were just left to themselves. In essence I think that was what happened, no one ever had any
thought about Botswana. After independence there was 80 per cent one tribe and the country has never ever had money. It is a quiet little back end in nowhere, that is why they have succeeded and never had any big wars.” (See appendix 1)

Both Jean and Georgina acknowledge that the first president, Sir Khamá’s actions helped to create their peaceful country. They mean that Botswana has been extremely fortunate since they did not have to fight for their independence, and also because Botswana at the time of independence had nothing to offer anyone. It was a barren, little country with a vast population. The British did not spend any money on infrastructure because the country had nothing to give in return. Diamonds were only discovered after independence, which Jean says was good, otherwise they would still have the buggers\(^1\).

Seretse Khama, is said to have acknowledged all people living in Botswana as its rightful citizens, even if Bangwato, which he belonged to, were the majority. His intentions were good, and both Jean and Georgina argue that everybody knew that he was not out for political gain, since there was none at that stage. To be president of Botswana in those early years was not a very influential political portfolio internationally. Khama is said to be an honest, upright man with good intentions. He was also an undisputed leader; the people had confidence in him. Jean says:

> “Then of course, he married a White woman, any tension that might have risen between Blacks and Whites were immediately dispelled because; here is the leader of the country, married to a White, how could we fight? I think that it has been the saving grace from the beginning and people have just got into that. Where it hasn’t been an issue, Whites living with Blacks and I think also that the number of Whites initially in Botswana around the time of independence was very small and they were settlers and they were mostly businessmen or farmers. There was space enough for everybody, there wasn’t a push for land, and there were masses of land for everybody. There wasn’t really any cause for conflict between the Black and White. Botswana having got independence early, those Whites that were here at the time [they] were given the option of taking

\(^1\) Equivalent to *Bastards* in the sense that the British were unwelcome intruders.
citizenship at that stage, they didn’t have to wait any prerequisite time or anything. Between the tribes, Batswana are not a fighting people. Yes, they fought the Amatebele but they sort of washed off, there wasn’t very much here for the Amatebele to take and the Matebele had other problems, they were busy fighting the White settlers on their side so eventually left the Batswana alone. The Batswana people are a very easy going people, in fact they border on the apathetic [laughter], they are very easy going people and as long as everybody has got space and things like land.” (See appendix 1)

Georgina claims that the people of Botswana were told by Khama from the start that they should not interfere with other people, but let them do their own thing and concentrate on their own surroundings. The knowledge of how Seretse Khama had to fight the British to continue seeing Ruth Williams, and to finally be able to bring her back with him to Botswana might have given the citizens an example of a successful mixed relationship. Georgina states:

“We have had the odd incidents in Botswana but nothing to cry about. I put it down to the fact that when we got independence from Britain, Britain was a White country, Botswana was a Black country our president was Black and his wife was White. Britain had to give it to us peacefully. From then on we have realised that by negotiating and talking to each other, amongst ourselves we can sort things out. I think we are one of the few, if not the only country that has received very little international aid, because we able to stand on our own two feet through negotiation. That’s why we are fortunate.” (See appendix 1)

There is yet another reason for the peacefulness in Botswana, which would be that the Batswana are relaxed, or as some have put it, lazy. Martin adds as well that there are strict laws for firearms and that the permits have to be allocated, and that very few licenses are issued in Botswana. This means that guns are a very rare article in Botswana. Not even the police are armed, since the handguns are banned. Martin states:

“Botswana is a very relaxed country. They don’t get involved in other people’s wars they don’t expect it to affect them. Local wars that you have in other countries and that I mean. You know the usual fistfights, but there [are] hardly ever [any], maybe once in a month, you find someone who have actually stabbed
someone. Probably because he got wasted on booze and that and they are having a fight about his girlfriend or wife.” (See appendix 1)

Something that makes Botswana different to other southern African nations is the concept of tribal land, which literally makes it impossible, or rather futile to fight for land. The government introduced the idea of tribal land. There is state land and tribal land. The tribal system states that the Kgosi in charge of a specific area has the jurisdiction over the land there. It is up to the Kgosi to approve of newcomers and allow them to deal with the landboard.

As a Botswana citizen, every Motswana is entitled to three pieces of land; one as a homestead, one as land to plant and one as a cattle-post to keep his cattle on. There is more than enough land for everybody who wants it. The Kgosi approves it in his Kgotla, in accordance with the advice of the elders, so as to avoid a one-man decision (cf. Mazonde 1994). Thus, if the state actually owns the land in Botswana, who could the Black Batswana take the land back from? It would be the state, not the White people. Therefore, the land occupation that has happened in Zimbabwe cannot happen in Botswana. Jean says that:

“People can settle anywhere basically, you don’t have to stay in your allotted tribal area, you can move anywhere as long as the chief approves of your reasons. We don’t have to fight about land.” (See appendix 1)

Adam’s conclusion about the political stability is that people are too relaxed. He says that the sky could fall down and no one would take a notice. The citizens just keep on going and doing the same thing over and over again. Adam states:

“I don’t know why. You’ve got, it is hard to say, you find it in an employer when you employing the local guys that you find them lazy, but they are not aggressive, so you tolerate the laziness and employ more of them to get the amount of job done as you want. It is just the way this place works. They are lazy, too lazy to fight. It is too hot. It takes too much energy. It is
generally not that much of a problem. There is a lot of resentment from the local guys to the ex-pats [expatriates]. There is a hell of a lot of resentment, but you have to suck up and get on with it. There is nothing you can do about it. They [expatriates] are all here on contracts, been paid god salaries, company cars, houses. There is a hell of a lot resentment. A lot of people use the place to make money. Come here make money, take the money out of the country. You can’t retire in this country it is too expensive. This country is far too expensive to die in. You come here, make as much money as you can and you get out.” (See appendix 1)

Elizabeth also states that the Batswana are very laid back. She says:

“It isn’t that they are basically very laid back, they can’t be bothered to get up and, you know. They are a lazy nation, I mean even if you look in the villages, it is the woman that works, the men sit and drink beer. Who is going to fight the war? The woman? Well, it is pretty much different in the cities. I am not saying it is all like that but… It is a known fact that if you go out with a truckload in the village, you’ll find the woman tending the fields and the men are nowhere to be seen.” (See appendix 1)

This laziness is a perception of Black Batswana not only from a White perspective, but also among Black from neighbouring countries. It seems as if the women are not regarded as implacably as the men are. Whereas the White Batswana have got used to this laziness, it definitely seems to bother the White non-Batswana, and in this regard, it might be a breeding-ground for frustration and resentment on their side. I do not know if the Black Batswana see themselves as lazy. Punctuality and precision are basically Western values that were not found in most agricultural societies prior to the spread of Western culture and the beginning of modernisation. This is not necessarily because Western culture is very different from culture in the rest of the world, rather that there are certain requirements imposed by the conditions of industrial labour that bring about these values.

Parson (1984:24f) holds that the huge amount of workers who migrated to South Africa have affected the land-use pattern in Botswana so that the agricultural and domestic work has been handed over to the women.
However, Lichtenstein’s (Lichtenstein, 1930:371) observation made in 1804, long before Botswana sent its men to work in South Africa, corresponds with Elizabeth's remark. He writes; “in the party that had come with the king, no woman was seen. I was informed that the women were at home because they had to work”. This shows that the Batswana women always have had the agricultural and domestic work allot.

5.2 Crime and tourism

However, underneath the surface lies the threat from HIV that affects a vast amount of the population. Botswana has also been affected by the changes stemming from South Africa’s abolition of apartheid in a negative way. Botswana has also seen effects from the conflicts and attacks on White farmers in Zimbabwe\textsuperscript{17}. This has resulted in an influx of White South Africans and Zimbabweans to Botswana, which has created turbulence in an otherwise peaceful country.

Jean mentions a conflict present in Botswana, where minority languages have not been recognised. There are groups that have their own completely different languages. BaKalanga is one of them. Jean says:

“There is a bit of a rise at the moment about language and cultures. They are rising up at the moment, but it will never come to conflict, well, not armed conflict. The government will give in eventually and allow all these languages to be taught in school as a language or at least for children to be taught in that language when they first go to school, in the primary levels.”

(See appendix 1)

Tribalism is another issue that is considered to be one of the biggest African problems. South Africa is cited as an example where there are many different ethnic groups (Jansson, 1999) who, it is claimed cannot come to terms with each other. In comparison, Botswana has few ethnic groups and one large dominant group. Ethnic conflicts are not an issue there.

\textsuperscript{17} In the beginning of 2000.
Nathan and Emma are well rooted in Botswana and cannot really see themselves living anywhere else. So when I ask them what they identify themselves as, they both burst out that they are Africans. They say:

‘You are an African.’ Nathan exclaims.
‘You are an African, absolutely. This is what you read in some newspaper reports, especially in South Africa at the moment, they tell the Whites; go back to where you came from, but they are from there. I mean we don’t know anything other than Botswana. We were born here and most people grew up here. I’d hate to go and try to live anywhere else, you can’t. Living in South Africa, I would be very worried being White in an African country with that turmoil. And Zimbabwe, but we have never come across that same attitude in Botswana. Yet.’ Emma says.
(See appendix 1)

According to the informants, the increase in crime rate has nothing to do with the Batswana. It is Zimbabweans and South Africans in Botswana who are responsible. According to the informants, it is not in the Tswana culture who commit serious crimes. Besides the increased crime rate in Botswana, the country has also been affected by turmoil in the surrounding countries. Number of tourists have decreased in the Delta area and Kasane (bordering to Zimbabwe) as the result of the war veterans’ land occupations in Zimbabwe. Tourists, especially the package tours, will not go there because Zimbabwe and Botswana share the borders,. The overlanders have stopped trafficking their usual route through Kasane, the Delta, Victoria Falls and to Lake Kariba.

Also, since Botswana borders to South Africa, and the main port of entry is through Johannesburg, people abstain from travelling to Botswana. Newspapers in South Africa writes about tourists getting mugged, shot or raped. This of course leads to a decrease in tourism.
Another reason for crime can be the breakdown of traditional values. Because people live in towns, they are not living a *traditional life* anymore, so the traditional values are being lost. This is also what Cohen suggests:

> Our thesis has been that the symbolic expression of community and its boundaries increase in importance as the actual geo-social boundaries of the community are undermined, blurred or otherwise weakened. (Cohen, 1986:50)

5.3 Botswana, struggling with HIV

Besides these new problems that affect the economy and people’s safety, HIV has made a great impact on the demographics. According to statistics from UNAIDS, Botswana is the country that is affected the most by AIDS (UNAIDS, 2001). With a population of 1,597,000, approximately half is in the age group of 15-49 (786,000). By the end of 1999, UNAIDS estimated that in that age group 280,000 or 35.8 per cent were infected with HIV (UNAIDS, 2001). This is an issue that naturally concerns the informants, but no one really seemed to be worried that any of them would be affected. It sounded more as if it were a problem for the Black Batswana. This might be real when it comes to statistics, but it is also something perceived since White Batswana are not immune to the HIV-virus. Martin states:

> “Look at it this way. In any country if you expect to lose 50 per cent of your population within the next five years, what do you think? Do you think the economy is still going to be strong? They say that HIV affects people from ages between 16-35, which is 60 per cent of the economy and that age is working or studying or has just started working. The whole country is infected. It is not just one or two places. It is not just the main cities or major areas. You can go out to a guy at a cattle post and maybe 50 per cent of his employees have HIV. Not just around the big cities, everywhere.” (See appendix 1)

Of course, HIV’s impact on the economy worries the Batswana as well. Elizabeth believes that the spread of the disease would be reduced if the government educated people and changed the policy that separates husbands and wives who work within the government -they are sent to different locations in the country. Elizabeth says:

> “[The] husband will be sent to Kasane and [the] wife stay in Gabs [Gaborone], on months on end. Now, what do they expect
will happen, that they will stay faithful to each other in the opposite sides of the country? It is not gonna happen. It is the government’s fault. If they keep married couples together, it would be a start, it wouldn’t solve the problem, but it would be a start, you know.” (See appendix 1)

Everyone is concerned and very aware of the HIV-crisis the country is going through. The informants have knowledge of Botswana as the number-one ranking country of HIV victims per capita as compared with the rest of the world. What they do not seem to believe is that the White Batswana get infected. If this is due to the low number of White citizens, which would make the calculation of infected negligible, or that they are out of risk because of no mixing of Black and White, I do not know. What I definitely do know is that if you have this attitude, the HIV-virus will be very dangerous.

Stephen thinks that White people are more concerned about HIV when they cross racial barriers, because they believe they are more at risk. Stephen says:

“I would think in my own mind that a White person is probably at less risk. Or would I say, to sleep with a Black woman or White woman, I would feel less at risk with a White woman.” (See appendix 1)

This is also what Anthony says. He says that lot of his friends would never go to bed with a Black girl because they are considered to be more promiscuous, and the risk of being infected by HIV is thus considered much higher. I do not know if this is idea, that the Black girls are more promiscuous is real or perceived. People who grew up in South Africa also have this idea, which could be one of the reasons why they do not engage in mixed sexual relations. On the other hand, Martin’s idea of how interracial sexual relationship works makes one look at the issue in a different way:

“Most of the White people in Francistown have had either a relationship or a one time encounter [with a Black Batswana].
Just maybe for them to find out or just to see. Just for the experience.” (See appendix 1)

If this is a fact, and people do not protect one another, I imagine that the statistics will come to look different to what the informants think. A lot more White Batswana will get infected. Thomas believes that the Black Batswana are too liberal with their thoughts and actions. Thomas says:

“They [Black Batswana] don’t believe why we should do anything about it. It is a problem White man talk about not the Black. I think it will cause serious problems for Botswana. That is going to be the downfall because those guys [in government] are half the country who are sleeping around. The ordinary people might be the ones to win in the end. Botswana could be a country of very uneducated people again shortly.” (See appendix 1)

Elizabeth likewise believes that the Black Batswana are very promiscuous and in spite of counselling do not believe in HIV. She says that a couple of years ago the Black Batswana did not think it was a Black man’s disease, but something made up by the White people:

“That’s the way they are. You look at them and will find that a lot of them are not married. [According to tradition] the woman had to produce before a man would marry her, to prove she wasn’t barren. I think they have taken it a bit far now, using it as an excuse. They are doing a lot [of] Aids campaigns and that, but in many cases it is too late. If they don’t do something they are going to have a nation of old people and young people, babies. What I am saying is that a lot of the middle are being wiped out.” (See appendix 1)

Stephen adds that one reason for the great number of HIV positive people is the population and a lack of basic education. Again, he claims that the Black Batswana are promiscuous. And Stephen too brings up that the Black Batswana have denied the facts of HIV and Aids just until recently:

“I remember someone at Deloitte & Touche, she was a UB [University of Botswana] graduate, saying that there are no such thing as Aids. People are not dying of Aids. If no one is dying in Aids, that ruins it all. At the hospitals they weren’t diagnosing anyone with Aids. People died of flu or this and that. There is a
case of denial, so people came on their own and didn’t realise how serious it is. I don’t know if it is the whole population or is it just the Blacks. If you look at the population living here, you can’t really tell.” (See appendix 1)

It seems as if they all believe that the spread of HIV is the government’s fault. Martin also mentions the prostitution:

“If they [government] don’t do something about it soon, then we might end up with a very small amount of people in the country. Also people are very sceptical about it. When you explain to them what Aids can do they say no. They don’t believe it is a disease of HIV. They think it is a thing White people are using to scare or stop them from having sex, to decrease the [Black] population. Also in Botswana we have a hell of a lot of prostitutes, male and female.” (See appendix 1)

Prostitution in Botswana is something that the journalist Isaya Banda (Bredberg-Rådén, 2000:548) emphasises in an interview with Ulla Bredberg-Rådén. He states that students who move into Gaborone from smaller towns are attracted by a hectic life of pleasure and get blinded by the city. Everyone wants a mobile phone, microwave oven and a car. To be able to get that, it is easy to take the first step into prostitution to make some extra money.

Georgina says she does a lot to help her staff at work and informs them about the virus. She can talk to the ladies at work, but to try as a White woman to talk with the men seems to be more difficult. The best thing is to have one of the men to talk to them. Periodically, she sends the staff off to a ministry of health for education, and to bring boxes of condoms to be placed in the toilets for the staff. Georgina has also placed all her women staff on pension funds after one of the women died from Aids. They all have young children that will need assistance if a parent dies. Unlike in South Africa, treatment for HIV is available in Botswana. If you are a member of medical aid and know you are HIV positive, you register that with them. After that, all your medicine is provided by Bonet HIV clinic. The medicine is imported directly from overseas, and does not come
through South Africa. In this way the treatment becomes heavily subsidised. Georgina says:

“Botswana has got a problem. I think the government is trying to eradicate [it]. We talk to them, they [the Black staff] have got quite a team relation downstairs and some of the workers, males and females they say; ‘Mrs Robinson, I can walk out on that road and get hit by a car and get killed. Aids is going to take me six years to kill me it is not going to be so quick’. That is the size of the fact. You are then passing it out to your children, then onwards, but no, it doesn’t matter. I mean Botswana is trying. Hopefully we will get, within the next couple of years, to a generation that will accept what we are trying to educate them about. More and more are coming over and understanding it and realising it, but we needed that five years ago. But then it was a White man putting voodoo on them and not accepting that it was themselves passing it on. I think every company in Botswana is trying.” (See appendix 1)

The worrying thing according to Jean, is that it does not matter how educated the children are. Education does not help. She has been involved in Aids work where primary school children are taught about HIV. They know exactly what it is, how it could affect them and how you get it, they have got all the information. Jean says:

“But the moment they go into secondary school, it is all out the window. Just about all 14-year-olds are sexually active in Botswana at the moment. The age of becoming sexually active has actually decreased, so it is a bigger span of people getting infected. Aids is a horrible menace and it is not being taken seriously by Batswana. They haven’t changed, older people in my own generation, 40s and on, we might get a bit wiser and more careful now but the young people 18-29 year old they are in dire straits, killing themselves off left, right or centre. They are all going to be infected by Aids because they are not taking it seriously.” (See appendix 1)

With statistics which claim that close to 36 per cent of the adult population are infected with a lethal virus, this does make people feel despair. Even so, they believe that they are doing what they can to prevent further spread of the disease. The White Batswana do not seem to be too worried about their own health, since they live with the idea of not getting infected themselves
if they stay out of sexual relationship across racial borders. As we know, this is not the reality. White Batswana and Black Batswana have relationships and there are White Batswana with the virus, and there will be more if this attitude does not change.

In Elias’ (2000) report on the HIV/Aids impact on African mining we find that:

In 5-15 years, recruitment systems will be placed under severe pressure and mines will experience a potentially critical loss of skills (Elias, 2000).

The greatest problem in this report is the loss of skilled workers, not the loss of people. Prior to HIV, Botswana had one of Africa’s highest life expectancies, from 62 years in 1985-90 (Elias, 2000) to 47 years today (UNAIDS, 2001).

5.4 Summary
The lack of racial tensions between the Black and White Batswana is constantly stressed by the informants and the major reason given is the peaceful independence due to the colonial states indifference for the area and the first President Seretse Khama’s marriage with a White woman. Another factor is that there basically only exists one tribe in the country, Tswana. Something that makes Botswana different from other southern African nations is the allocation of tribal land and state land; preventing land based conflicts similar to those in neighbouring countries. Another reason for the peacefulness in Botswana given by the informants is what they call the laid back attitude of the Black Batswana.

Underneath this picture of a peaceful island lies the problems of crime and HIV. Botswana has also been affected by the surrounding countries’ turmoil. Zimbabweans and South Africans coming into Botswana are to blame for the increase in crime, which has nothing to do with the Batswana, according to the White Batswana’s perspective. The stigma is there towards the foreigners and it adheres the White Batswana to the Black since they seek the lowest common denominator. Tourism has also
decreased as a result of the war veterans’ land occupations in Zimbabwe. As the main port of entry to Botswana is through Johannesburg, South Africa, people tend to hesitate to travel to Botswana. Another strong factor in crime increase is the breakdown of traditional values. Because people are living in towns, they are not living a traditional life anymore. The traditional values are being lost in the confusion that comes with globalisation.

The concern about HIV is considerable, but that the White Batswana do not seem to recognise that they are in as much risk as the rest of the population. This could be due to the assumption that White and Black Batswana do not have interracial sexual relations. Nevertheless as we have been told, this happens, and the HIV/Aids will affect the White Batswana too. Some informants believe that the government is not doing enough to inform the citizens about the virus. Of course, HIV’s impact on the economy worries the Batswana. Botswana could again become a country with uneducated people, partly due to HIV, but also because of the loss of skilled people that choose to leave Botswana. Prostitution in Botswana is another issue. A particularly exposed group are students who move into Gaborone from smaller towns and get attracted by the city life of pleasure and get blinded in their race to collect as many status symbols as possible.

CHAPTER 6
THE FUTURE
Even if Botswana is plagued by HIV, most of the informants believe in a bright future for themselves and the country. The two main things that they are concerned about are the education that Botswana provides for its citizens and the country's economy. Higher education is said to be incomparably to education overseas. One civil servant at the Department of Education in Gaborone informed me that the government hands out teachers to the districts including a sum of money which supposedly is for
materials (books, etc.) and the building of schools. The money is given to the head of the district and that is how far the government’s responsibility stretches; after that it is up to each district how they use the money.

At the same time, the economy is affected by the HIV virus, as well an unemployment rate of 20-40 per cent (CIA, 2001). This is not really an issue that affects the White Batswana, or at least, not for the informants.

A disturbance of the stability between the ethnic groups in Botswana seems to have to do with the amount of expatriates that have increased in the past years. This imported labour force might be of use for the country in the long run, but it also creates an anxiety among the citizens, especially the Black Batswana who perceive the newcomers as a threat to their own job opportunities.

I believe this is where the issue regarding the so-called reversed racism lies. Neither White, nor Black Batswana want the jobs they can do themselves to be handed over to non-citizens. This is not exceptional to Botswana, it happens everywhere in the world. On the other hand, non-citizens cannot get employment, or are not supposed to, unless they have a skill that the labour force in the country lacks. This reversed racism is due to the influx of White expatriates and, in turn, it backfires on the White Batswana. The young man that was deported unfairly from Botswana was not sent away due to racism, but to save a job opportunity for a Motswana rather than letting the job go to a non-Motswana with a residence permit. Of course, Botswana also has a huge influx of Black expatriates from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and Malawi; these people are not looked upon with joy either, but, as they are Black, they are not spotted as easily. These invisible expatriates are resented because they come to Botswana and take jobs that the Black Batswana consider their own.
6.1 Education
The education that the government in Botswana offers appears to worry the informants in regard to the country’s ability to compete with other countries. They are also anxious to lose educated people from Botswana to overseas, since they earn more there. Elizabeth says:

“All these people are getting educated, they go overseas to the UK, the States. They get an education and they don’t want to come back, because nobody wants to pay them. They stay where they are. So the Botswana government is educating people and they are not coming back to Botswana. Then the teachers are never enough, they push all the kids into one classroom and they teach.” (See appendix 1)

Stephen says that the biggest problem is non-education, and that there is nothing in Botswana you could call education. He says:

“That’s why we all go to school in South Africa. I mean out of my years there is a hell of a lot of guys who went to school in the UK.”
(See appendix 1)

Martin has the same attitude. At the time he went to school in Francistown, there were not that many good schools. There was the private John McKenzie school and the local government one, and apparently, the local government was not up to standard. Martin states:

“If you want to leave Botswana and go to work in another country you will never get anywhere, because the quality of schooling here is very low. They are not trying to keep up with the rest of the world. As you have seen for yourself, Botswana is a very laid back country. ‘If it happens, it happens. If it doesn’t, don’t worry, we’ll do it tomorrow.’ Kind of theme they have got in this country.” (See appendix 1)

Adam, who is young and interested in going overseas, says that the majority of the youth with a higher education go to the United States and do not come back. They get their higher education there and when they get their degrees, they stay. The most popular jobs are IT (information technology) jobs and accounting jobs. The educated do not come back to Botswana, they go elsewhere. Adam says:
“Australia loves employing South Africans [White Southern Africans]. Australians are lazy so there is work. Basically if you are under thirty and have a degree, go to Australia. Best place to go and make money.” (See appendix 1)

For Elizabeth, who has recently became a mother, the issue of education is very important. She does not want to put her son through school in Botswana. Primary education would be acceptable, but no education beyond that, unless it changes. Another issue is the school fee. Elizabeth says:

“You can send them to private schools in other countries, with the school fees you pay here. You look at the private primary school you pay P3550 a term. So you might as well pass them into a private [school] somewhere else, then you know at least they get a good education and… then it gets more expensive the older they get. That is why most children from Botswana go to school out of the country, especially high school. If I could afford to send him [her son] overseas, I would rather do that. But if I had no option I probably have to send him to South Africa.”
(See appendix 1)

Stephen is, despite it all, positive and has hopes for the future. The situation is improving, but until recently there has not been many qualified Batswana accountants. At his work, Deloitte & Touche, they have had to get expatriates in, as in most other jobs that require qualifications. Stephen states:

“If you as a Motswana can do a job an expatriate can do, good stick, if you know what I mean. Me being a Motswana they are happy to have me because they wouldn’t have to go through all the problem of work permits and that sort of thing.”
(See appendix 1)

6.2 Economy
When it comes to the economy, agriculture still provides a livelihood for more than 80 per cent of the population, but supplies only about 50 per cent of food needs. Subsistence farming and cattle raising predominate. Erratic
rainfall and poor soils plague the sector. Diamond mining and tourism are also important to the economy. The GNP per capita in December 1999 was US$ 3,310 (UNAIDS, 2001). Unemployment in Botswana is also fairly high, but it is nothing that affects the White Batswana. Chabal (1996:30) claims that Africa’s economies are worse off today than they were at the time of independence. One major exception to this is Botswana. Even if it has problems, they are certainly better off today than what they were in 1966. Mazonde writes (1994:17):

The national economy, based on minerals, especially diamonds, has grown rapidly at an average of 12 per cent per annum since independence. Faced with lack of opportunities to invest in other sectors of the economy, those who have benefited from this growth have invested in cattle. (Mazonde, 1994:17)

In 1967, Botswana was catapulted into new realms when diamonds were discovered near Orapa (Morton, 1990:188, Parson, 1984:77). Even though most of the people in Botswana remain in the low-income bracket, the country has an enormous wealth in foreign currency reserves (1997 US$ 5,7 billion; newafrica.com, 2001).

Botswana had a scare when communism in Russia ended and Russia’s economy collapsed. The Russians did not sign any agreements and Botswana felt a threat that the Russians would flood the market with diamonds. Anthony says:

“If they would do that then our prune would be nothing. We always say beef, but we can’t support any more cattle than it does now. We can’t rely on beef either. Those kinds of things I can’t say I have an opinion on what will happen. Sometimes you wonder maybe a bit frightening also. The boom in Botswana isn’t those people [with HIV]. The boom in Botswana is diamonds.” (See appendix 1)

The younger group of men does not see much of a bright future for the economy of Botswana. Adam is not really concerned for his own sake but for the country’s, and says that there is not a lot that the government can do, either the government will invest or they will not. Adam says:
“It has grown too big to be just a beef supplier or a holiday resort. The place is growing too big for it’s own good, it is getting too big too quickly. Unless investors keep pumping money in, they might do. Maybe I am totally wrong, hopefully I am. But I just don’t see how it can. It is not logic.” (See appendix 1)

Martin is not happy with the slow progress (or non-progress) in Francistown. They have one insurance company there, the others are in Gaborone. Francistown has, according to Martin, been the same for the last four years and the boom that is happening in Gaborone does not affect it. They are still waiting for the ripple effect from the first boom to come. Martin states:

“Last year we got our Game [South African chain-store] shopping. That’s all we got. Life here is too much of a third world still. Because there are still a lot of villages and I mean there is nothing happening there. Maybe they are just a little bit too laid back in life. [It is] peaceful, but there is also no noticeable economic turn over in town. You can drive through Francistown today, you can go back from where you come from and in ten years time you can come back it won’t have changed. You’ll still drive up the same street with the same name. You’ll still find a hotel on your left, the shop complex on your left and the police station on your right. It will still be exactly the same, it will never change. There is no financial input into Francistown. A lot of people still go to Gabs [Gaborone] to do most of the shopping. Even the motor industry in Francistown. If you need a special part for your vehicle. You have to go to Gabs [Gaborone]. The guys in Francistown will say they can order it for you and it will take them two weeks to get it from Gabs to Francistown. I mean, there is no attempt to speed things up. If it is going at 5 km/h they are quite happy with that, there is no rush.” (See appendix 1)

6.3 Expatriates

Besides the White Batswana, Gaborone is a home to many expatriates. They are mostly from South Africa, but also from other parts of the world. The White South Africans have come to Botswana to find work since they have difficulties to get jobs in their own country due to the affirmative action plan that is being implemented. They come because they see a brighter future in Botswana when compared to South Africa. The
informants point to the fact that the crime rate has increased rapidly in the last decade and they do not feel safe anymore. Thomas says:

“In the last three years we’ve had a big influx of people from South Africa. They are bringing all their South African attitude with them and think that is part of life. I think there is a problem [with expatriates].” (See appendix 1)

The expatriates are mostly men, which increases the number of White bachelors in Botswana. Everyone I talked to says that there is a lack of White women in the country. My own observations pointed in the same direction. A South African expatriate gave one reason to the low number of White women in Botswana - girlfriends to expatriates are not welcome in Botswana, only legal wives are given residence permits in Botswana.

According to the informants, there is an added problem with the expatriate community. Botswana has a big expatriate community and many of its members are White Zimbabwean and White South Africans who do not bring an unproblematic attitude with them. Jean thinks that they are looking for a White haven:

“They come in here with major chips on their shoulders you know. Really it is basically the White South Africans that are looking for a White haven if you like. Somewhere where they can remain White without having to integrate because in South Africa integration is being pushed, it really is. They are just so bloody arrogant [laughter]. It is pity, OK to some extent you can understand though the Zimbabweans fought a war, so did the South Africans to some extent but they never accepted the outcome of that war. They carry a lot of baggage from their past with them it isn’t that long ago either. They have come into Botswana, and Botswana has managed to live without separation, we do live relatively comfortably. We are a very tolerant society.” (See appendix 1)

Emma criticises the attitudes the expatriates have:

“I get quite upset. You get a lot of expatriates coming in and they are complaining about the slowness of things and the, well the attitude sometimes when you go into a shop and you don’t get the service, that type of thing. I say, think about it, a lot of...
people come here and live very well here, they are getting their houses paid for them, their vehicle paid for them. We get none of that being a citizen. We have to pay for everything that we have. And their fantastic salary and then they complain. I have turned around to people and said; if you don’t like it, just leave. It is my country you are complaining about and I don’t enjoy it. We get a lot of people getting in here and living of the land and enjoying all the luxury and still complaining about lack of service and the lack of this.”

(See appendix 1)

If people come to Botswana with the motivation to work, and to invest in the country with their own expertise, perhaps Batswana would be less hostile towards the expatriates. Stephen believes that it could improve the country in certain ways, and boost the economy:

“It is very hard to tell if the people are coming just to make money to take it back to their own country, or are they coming to actually make a living. Do you know what I mean? I think that if they are coming to make this their home then I don’t see anything wrong with it. But if they are coming to destitute the place, then...” (See appendix 1)

6.4 Summary

The greatest problem is the loss of educated people overseas. This is happening because of the lower incomes on Botswana. The majority of people that get their education overseas are said not to come back. The other problem is the non-education that Botswana suffers from. This problem is solved by the White Batswana through sending their children to private schools or overseas. The situation is said to be improving. The country is also experiencing an unemployment rate of 20-40 per cent, but it is nothing that affects the White Batswana, no one had experienced unemployment.

Agriculture still provides a livelihood for the majority of the people, but there is hardly any commercial farming but subsistence farming. Even if Botswana has problems with the economy, they are better off today than what they were at independence. Compared to other African countries they are certainly doing well.
Botswana has a lot of expatriates. According to the informants, there is a problem with the expatriate community. A lot of them are White Zimbabwean and White South Africans and they do not bring an unproblematic attitude with them. The hostility that we find has mostly been towards the expatriates. What we must not forget is that there are both White and Black expatriates, and the hostility is directed towards the whole group. Hostility towards foreigners that come in to a country to work is not unique for Botswana. This attitude is found all over the world when there is a slump in the economy and the labour market cannot offer as many job opportunities, a change of attitude automatically begins.

The reversed racism, I suggest, is due to the influx of White expatriates, which backfires on the White Batswana. The Black Batswana do not embrace the Black expatriates either, but they are what can be called invisible expatriates since they are not recognised as easily as the White expatriates.

Anxiety regarding Botswana’s stability being affected by the disturbances in South Africa, as well as the outbreak of violence in Zimbabwe was great. The decrease in tourism this past year was a direct result of these disturbances since Botswana’s international entrance port is Johannesburg International Airport. Botswana, then, is greatly affected by its surroundings as a result of globalisation.

The future for the Whites in Africa, according to some informants, is very uncertain. Discrimination against the White Africans is growing. The discrimination does not take place in Botswana today in the way it does in South Africa, but if, and some informants say when, the day comes, will the people of Botswana have the authority to take a stand and make a statement?
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

At independence, Botswana immediately got a Black government. This, compared to the neighbouring countries, can have made the difference in the mutual interaction between White and Black Batswana. The lines between Whites and Blacks have not been so firmly stratified in Botswana as they have been in other countries (cf. Kennedy, 1987). Botswana also has something extraordinary, called state land and tribal land. This makes it futile to fight for land. Botswana’s lack of racial tensions is attributed to the peaceful process of independence and the first President’s marriage to a White woman. Tribalism is a non-issue since there is basically only one tribe, Tswana. This also is exceptional for Africa. Following this we can draw the conclusion that Botswana has been saved from the more common scenario we are used to from Africa which includes tribal wars, racial tensions and along with it violence.

Whites in Africa often speak of themselves as Europeans, English, Portuguese, or Afrikaners. In this study the White Batswana sometimes refer to themselves as Batswana or White Batswana. The White Batswana do not consider themselves as British or Afrikaner they see themselves as Batswana. No matter what descent, they all consider themselves Batswana. Not one of the informants mentioned that people of English descent did not recognise themselves as Batswana or African. Still, the informants do not recognise themselves as quite the same sort of Batswana as the Blacks. They all have a tendency to call the Black Batswana locals, whereas they see themselves only as Batswana or White. When in conflict with groups from overseas, they are Batswana. Another factor which unites the Whites is a common feeling of being different to the Blacks. Even so, Whites may sometimes be divided amongst each other along national lines. However, these differences dwindle away when confronted by African nationalism.
The variability of meaning is pointed at the consciousness of community, which needs to be preserved through the manipulation of the symbols. The symbol of a Motswana is changing to fit the perspective of the Black Batswana who see the Whites as Batswana only on the paper. It does not matter if a person or even the parents were born in the country, the further back in history the White call upon their African roots; the further back in history the Blacks confer that the Whites do not descend from Africa. The Whites reckon the problem is the non-Batswana, not the Batswana. This stigma is used when the outside world is threatening. For example, the increase in crime rate is attributed solely to the immigration from the neighbouring countries.

The cultural differences are said to be the main obstacle, but the imagined difference is stronger, and the tribal stigma is difficult to break from. It makes it difficult to socialise across ethnic boundaries. The values are different between Black and White, and holding on to this idea makes it easier for people to develop fixed attitudes towards the other. Thus, to be able to mix the two, either of them has to give up their own culture. It is not the colour, it is the culture, so the manner in which the characteristics are shaped depends on the general social environment, and is also influenced by economic factors.

None of the informants has had a cross racial with a Black, either due to cultural differences or taste. I would say that the stigma emphasises the culture and taints the taste. Changes in the social values might modify attitudes and make it possible for the White and the Black to meet on a more common ground than they are today. The Black Batswana seem to become more westernised, which means that they are letting go of their traditional values and adapting a new way of living. For good or bad, I believe it is necessary to consider for whom and for what reason culture, value and attitude are protected. Cultures are continually recreated by people through interaction, and, at the end of the day, it is the people
belonging to a culture that decide what they want to do, stay as they always were or change, as they actually always have.

The White Batswana are sometimes confronted with a preconceived idea that they cannot be Batswana, only expatriates. This is understandable since the number of White Batswana is so low. From what I can perceive, it seems as if the change of attitude has only just started in the past years and it could be explained by the great influx of expatriates. Another influence on the race relation, may be the change of winds in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Having Black friends as a child, seems to be commonplace. But somewhere, there appears a dividing line between the White and Black Batswana. It may be as the informants say, a cultural difference, with dissimilarity in values and interests. If the cultural values and interests are dominant, I find it strange they do not make a statement until a later age. There may be imagined differences that are kept alive by the stigma they have been tainted by from family and the community.

With globalisation (cf. Bauman, 1998) one might think we get more uniform since there is a greater interaction between cultures. We loose the variety in cultural expressions and language. Maybe when people get together, new ideas and inventions flourish. I guess it is difficult to get uniform in Botswana since people have different skin-colour that forever will tell the difference between the White and the Black Africans. According to the informants uniformity is not the case in Botswana, but relations are described in terms of different values. This would mean that Botswana has not come to the stage of uniformity that Bauman describes. Africa is far from being effected by uniformity, which could be seen as a verification that the continent is not as globalised as the Western society. On the other hand, maybe we Westerners are not as uniform as I hear
continuously? Where uniformity rules, people start looking for differences, and when the differences are too big, people start looking for uniformity.

A major reason for the increase in crime is the breakdown of traditional values. Because people are living in towns, they are not living a traditional life anymore. The traditional values are being lost in the confusion that comes with globalisation. Another problem is the loss of skilled people to overseas. The country is also experiencing an unemployment rate of 20-40 per cent, but it is nothing that affects the White Batswana. If the education in Botswana were of a higher standard, it could produce a higher skilled workforce and keep the money in the country. It could also provide an alternative for the White Batswana to put their children in Botswana schools. Who knows, maybe even attract students from neighbouring countries.

In this way, if White Batswana and Black Batswana all went to the same schools, maybe the conflicting differences between the two could overcome the conflict imbedded in the cultural values, and make the stigma less dominant.
I suggest the reversed racism that I had been told about, is due to the influx of White expatriates. This backfires on the White Batswana sometimes, but no one of the informants really had any complaints about being treated poorly. Perhaps, reverse racism affects expatriates only.

According to some informants, the future for the Whites in Africa, is very uncertain. Discrimination against the White Africans is growing. This discrimination does not appear in Botswana today the way it does in South Africa, but if, and some informants say when, that day comes, will the people of Botswana have the authority to take a stand and make a statement? How easy will it be to be a White African in Africa in the future?
Appendix 1. The Informants

Jean, born 1958 in Francistown and living there today
Working within administration
Single with one child
Interviewed January 11th 2001 at Marang Hotel in Francistown

Adam, born 1977 in Mochudi now living in Gaborone
Working in family business (foundations for buildings)
Single no children
Interviewed January 15th 2001 at President Hotel in Gaborone

Thomas, born 1954 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, living in Gaborone
Has his own business (auto motor industry)
Married to a white Motswana and they have two children
Interviewed January 30th 2001 in his office in Gaborone

Emma, born 1964 in Molepolole, living in Gaborone
Secretary
Married and has two children with
Nathan, born 1961 in Lobatse
Own business (maintenance)
Interviewed January 6th 2001 at their home in Gaborone

Martin, born 1975 in Francistown and still living there
Runs a food take-away
Engaged to get married with a Coloured Motswana
Interviewed January 10th 2001 at Marang Hotel in Francistown

Stephen, born 1975 in Kempton Park, South Africa, now living in Gaborone
Accountant
Single no children
Interviewed January 16th 2001 at the Bull & Bush Restaurant in Gaborone
Brian, born 1966 in Francistown, living in Gaborone
Drilling business
Single no children
Interviewed January 2nd 2001 in my flat in Gaborone

Georgina, born 1952 in Francistown, living in Gaborone
Accountant manager
Married to a white Rhodesian and they have two children
Interviewed January 31st 2001 in her office in Gaborone

Elizabeth, born 1970 in Francistown, still living in Francistown
Accountant
Married to an east Indian and they have one child
Interviewed January 10th 2001 at Thamapa Hotel in Francistown

Anthony, born 1970 in Gaborone and still living there
Working within the health sector
Single no children
Interviewed January 4th 2001 at his home in Gaborone
## Appendix 2. Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;25,000BC</td>
<td>KhoeSan hunter-gatherers occupy Botswana</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC/AD</td>
<td>Some KhoeSan begin to herd sheep and cattle</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;500</td>
<td>Bantu peoples move into Botswana, displacing the KhoeSan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1500</td>
<td>BaTswana migrate westward into Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1750</td>
<td>BaTswana states develop in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820s</td>
<td>Mzilikazi leads his AmaNdebele north-westwards, attacking the BaTswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Robert Moffat put up a permanent mission station at Kuruman, south of Botswana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Boer trekkers leave the Cape heading north to escape British rule. One year later some trekkers drive the AmaNdebele into Botswana, from where they go and settle in Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840s</td>
<td>David Livingstone is the first Christian missionary to enter Botswana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850s</td>
<td>Schele I unsuccessfully appeals to the British Government for alliance/ protection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Gold discovered near Francistown and Africa’s first gold rush ensues</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>British government declares Botswana the ‘British Protectorate of Bechuanaland and the Kalahari’</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>The three chiefs, Khama, Bathoen and Sebele visit England to stop the transfer of the Protectorate to Cecil Rhodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Seretse Khama, Prince Regent of Bangwato is born</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Seretse Khama, Prince Regent of Bangwato, marries the Englishwoman Ruth Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Khama family returns from exile</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>The Botswana Democratic Party is formed with Seretse Khama as it’s leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Full independence from Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Diamonds discovered at Orapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>President Seretse Khama dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Dr Ketumile Masire President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Mr Festus Mogae elected President</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 3. Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BaTswana</strong></td>
<td>refers to two or more persons who are citizens of Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bechuanaland</strong></td>
<td>Botswana’s name prior to independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expatriate</strong></td>
<td>person who lives in another country but the one she is a citizen of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kgotla</strong></td>
<td>a) a court for setting disputes within the group according to customary law</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) a meeting for the discussion of group matters of any importance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kgosi</strong></td>
<td>the highest executive, judicial and legislative authority in the tribe/village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pl. diKgosi)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MoTswana</strong></td>
<td>refers to a single person who is a citizen of Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O mang</strong></td>
<td>BaTswana identity card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ScTswana</strong></td>
<td>language spoken by BaTswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Varsity</strong></td>
<td>name for University in South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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