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Living transnational: citizenship, identity and home among South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana since 1957

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PhD in African Studies
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own and has been generated by me as a result of my own original research. Some parts have been submitted for publication.

Signed:

Date:
Abstract

This thesis analyses how South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana have established transnational connections between their country of origin and their country of migration since 1957. The thesis develops across two main and overlapping strands: transnationalism and citizenship. Considering transnationalism, it argues that the migrants that have crossed the border from South Africa to Botswana (economic immigrants, refugees and freedom fighters) have established multi-layered transnational connections that stretch from their personal identity to the economic and political fields. These connections are contextualised within the broader labour migration movement in southern Africa and the anti-apartheid struggle. Furthermore, these links have allowed migrants to create a sense of community in solidarity with the struggle against white minority rule and to create spaces to set their survival strategies in order for them to decide, among a range of opportunities, what was most convenient to them. In this way, Botswana’s role as a transit corridor for refugees assumed different social meanings: a route to the northern territories of the continent, a temporary solution, a permanent settlement, a passage to return to South Africa for trained saboteurs.

Considering citizenship, the thesis shows that South African migrants have conceptualised citizenship taking into account their transnational links but also Botswana’s processes of nation-building and citizenship construction. Migrants’ understanding of citizenship not always reflects Botswana’s official discourse. Because of this, migrants’ process of integration intertwined with their ways to cope with perceptions of discrimination and exclusion that have emerged in Botswana as a result of the nation-building process that privileges the eight Tswana tribes over minorities and naturalised citizens.

This thesis is based on original research which drew on a number of methods including archival research and oral histories. It is also interdisciplinary in focus, drawing mostly on literature from sociology, history and migration studies, but also anthropology, geography and international relations. It thus contributes to debates on transnationalism, on citizenship in Botswana and on the country’s role in the South African liberation struggle.
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The long and difficult journey of the writing up has become a journey of personal growth and awareness. Whenever I read migrants’ narratives, I often find myself thinking about my own experience. In understanding them, I understood myself a little more.
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List of Abbreviations

AB: Africa Bureau
AMWU: African Mineworkers Union
ANC: African National Congress
BCP: Basutoland Congress Party
BCM: Black Consciousness Movement
BCMA: Black Consciousness Movement of Azania
BCR: Botswana Council for Refugees
BDP: Botswana Democratic Party
BIP: Botswana Independence Party
BNARS: Botswana National Archives and Record Services
BNF: Botswana National Front
BP: Bechuanaland Protectorate
BPP: Botswana Peoples Party
BSAC: British South African Company
BTUC: Bechuanaland Trade Union Congress
CP: Commissioner of Police
CS: Chief Secretary
DC: District Commissioner
DHC: District High Commissioner
FCO: Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FLS: Frontline States
Frelimo: Mozambique Liberation Front
GNP: Gross National Product
HC: High Commissioner
HCT: High Commission Territories
IRCOZ: International Refugee Council of Zambia
LWF: Lutheran World Federation
MK: Umkhonto we Sizwe
Mpla: People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NEUM: Non-European Unity Movement
NRC: Native Recruiting Corporation
NUM: National Union of Mineworkers
OAU: Organisation of African Unity
OP: Office of the President
PAC: Pan African Congress
PS: Permanent Secretary
RC: Resident Commissioner
Renamo: Mozambican National Resistance
SACP: South African Communist Party
SADC: Southern African Development Community
SADCC: Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference
SADF: South African Defence Force
SAHA: South Africa History Archive
SAP SB: South African Police Special Branch
SASO: South African Student Association
SAUF: South African United Front
SOYA: Society of Young Africa
UN: United Nations
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Unita: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
WNLA: Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
YWCA: Young Women Christian Association
ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People’s Union
Figure 1 Map of southern Africa. Source: [http://maps-africa.blogspot.co.uk/2012_05_01_archive.html](http://maps-africa.blogspot.co.uk/2012_05_01_archive.html) Downloaded on 25 April 201
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Contextualising the thesis

Politically I feel Motswana\textsuperscript{1} because I have responsibility as a citizen of Botswana, as well as the politics I support. My children are Batswana, not South African. Unlike me, my husband, although born in South Africa, identifies more as a Motswana than me, because he is Tswana. It is a two-level situation, as I feel Motswana when it comes to politics, but when it comes to culture, I feel South African and Zulu.\textsuperscript{2}

This quote encapsulates important and complex features of a migrant’s transnational life: the establishment of multiple and overlapping identities, ethnic feelings and citizenship duties. This quote tells us that migrants can develop multiple identities and attachments towards their country of origin and their country of residence. These have different layers: one is political and it manifests itself through the conceptualisation of citizenship as political duties and rights in the country of migration. A second layer is cultural, and it manifests itself as a personal, heartfelt attachment towards the country of origin. The third layer is ethnic and it manifests itself through the recognition of one’s own ethnic belonging and its importance. These layers are distinct but constantly overlapping and show the deep complexities inherent to the construction of identities within a transnational dimension. The purpose of this thesis is to unfold these complexities by exploring the migration experience of South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana since 1957.

This study of South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana takes 1957 as the starting date, although references to earlier times will be made, particularly in chapter 3, as it focuses on migration movements in southern African in a historical perspective. I chose this date as it represents the year of the first group of South African refugees crossing the border with Bechuanaland, the Bafurutse. The analysis

\textsuperscript{1} The term Motswana refers to a citizen of Botswana but also to an individual of Tswana ethnicity. The population of the country is called Batswana and the language is Setswana.

\textsuperscript{2} Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 1\textsuperscript{st} December 2010
is contextualised within two broad and overlapping historical frames: the labour migration process that has characterised the southern African region for centuries and the anti-apartheid struggle. Both frames show the dense political, economic and social interactions that have existed between South Africa and Botswana. These interactions saw the movement of thousands of people between the two countries, engaging in a set of transnational connections that spanned the border and crossed different spheres of people’s lives.

The thesis argues that the case of former South African migrants in Botswana is a unique example of transnational migration that has stretched across centuries, involving different categories of migrants and assuming distinctive features. In addition, it argues that the ways South African former migrants have constructed their ideas of identity, citizenship and sense of belonging have been deeply influenced by their transnational life and the context of Botswana’s society with regard to attitudes of inclusion/exclusion of foreigners. In this sense the thesis’ contribution to relevant literature is threefold.

First, this research contributes to the broader debate on transnationalism by providing an analysis of historical transnational cross-border connections that have endured across decades and generations. Secondly, it contributes to debates on citizenship in Botswana by focusing on naturalised citizens. It analyses the perception of not quite belonging and discrimination that former immigrants and refugees feel. This feeling is connected to the ethnic character of Botswana citizenship, embedded in the process of Tswanification that followed the construction of Botswana’s nation-state after independence; and to the legal dimension of citizenship and the rhetoric of equal access to rights and resources for all. Finally, the thesis contributes to the existing literature on the liberation struggle in South Africa, focusing on the political and, especially, on the social meaning of Botswana’s role as a transit corridor for refugees and freedom fighters. The thesis shows how ‘transit’ has become a space where migrants have shaped their survival strategies and made choices for their future intentions. The remainder of this section explores these contributions further in depth.
Transnationalism

Within a transnational dimension, migrants maintain ‘strong, enduring ties to their homelands even as they are incorporated into countries of resettlements’ (Levitt, DeWind, Vertovec, 2003: 565). Therefore scholars of migration have explored transnationalism following different strands, such as identity formation, economic, political, religious and sociocultural practices (Levitt, Glick Schiller, 2004: 1004). This thesis has identified three main streams through which South Africans have developed their transnational connections: identity formation, economic and political practices. These are discussed mostly in chapter 7. According to Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003: 567), ‘transnational migrants are embedded in multi-layered social fields and… their lives must be studied within the context of these multiple strata’.

Furthermore, the individual transnational connections developed by former South African immigrants and refugees will be discussed within the frame of labour migration movements in southern Africa and the anti-apartheid struggle. These connections have been particularly influenced by the temporal dimension through which they have stretched. Van Dijk, Foeken and Van Til (2001: 10) argued that mobility has both a spatial and a temporal dimension. This is particularly true for South African migrants in Botswana, where the extension and intensity of the transnational connections are strongly characterised by their temporal dimension, namely the apartheid years. Former immigrants and refugees have been able to establish transnational cross-border links since the apartheid period. Their extension was however limited by apartheid legislation and restrictions in movement for non-white people, which affected refugees in particular as it meant that they were not able to return to their home country until 1994. After the demise of apartheid the intensity of the connections increased due to the liberal politics of post-1994 South Africa. Since then, in fact, former immigrants and refugees have been able to travel intensively and extend their transnational activities.

Labour migration has been a key feature for the development of South Africa (Posel, Casale, 2003: 460), and it has heavily influenced the economic and socio-political development of Botswana and other migrant-sending countries. For more than a century large numbers of men (and after a while also women) have migrated from Botswana and other countries to South Africa to work in the mines or
plantations for a limited period of time (around two years), leaving their families behind (Van Dijk, Foeken, Van Til, 2001: 13). After the end of their contracts, migrants were forced to return to their home countries until they could be recruited again. A type of labour migration movement also occurred from South Africa to Botswana, particularly during the apartheid era, when a number of people who could not find employment in their own country, or were opposed to the racist policies, decided to move across the border. They then established transnational links that developed in intensity and extension after the end of apartheid. Transnationalism therefore will be used as a lens to highlight and interpret these connections and migration movements: the bottom-up approach that this thesis takes analyses the phenomenon of labour migration as a historical, political and economic process which is ultimately constructed by people, with their experiences and struggles. Through the lens of transnationalism, decades of migrations will be discussed by presenting the views of the people who lived them.

The apartheid regime heavily influenced the political connections that former immigrants and refugees established with South Africa. Despite not all being active opponents of the system, they were all sympathisers of the liberation movements. The sense of solidarity was manifest mostly through the sense of community that they set, which involved helping incoming refugees to find accommodation or to move north. Political connections have increased since 1994: former immigrants and refugees have become entitled to vote there by virtue of the fact that they were born in South Africa. In addition, they can apply for a permanent residence. These measures implemented by post-apartheid South Africa have entrenched and enforced the transnational links of its former nationals living abroad.

Transnationalism is particularly visible in the way former immigrants and refugees have constructed their identity in a hybrid way (Bhabha, 2004), resulting in the formation of multiple identities that reflect the diverse features of their attachment to both Botswana and South Africa. The construction of multiple identities has had different implications, particularly on the ideas of home and belonging. Transnationalism, in the personal sphere of immigrants and refugees’ understanding of their subjectivity, implies the construction of an idea of home in multiple locations. Former migrants have attributed different meanings to the idea of
home, which reflect the diverse degrees of attachment to one country or the other. For some, South Africa reflects more this idea of home, while for others Botswana encapsulates this sentiment.

Citizenship

The sense of belonging that South African former immigrants and refugees have established in Botswana contrasts with the way the Botswana state conceives citizenship in both its legal and national dimensions. At the time of independence in 1966, the Botswana government implemented a non-racial politics that has shaped the country’s society in open contrast with the racist and segregationist policies of its minority-rulled neighbours. As a result, the role of ethnicity has been downplayed in order to create a homogenous Botswana nation-state, where everyone would be a Motswana citizen regardless of ethnic belonging. In practice, however, this politics entrenched the dominance of the Tswana tribes over minority groups, assimilating them into a broader idea of ‘Tswanadam’ (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002: 18). The resulting discriminatory attitude towards non-Tswana citizens has been visible mostly in certain sections of the Constitution and claims of autochthony and belonging (Nyamnjoh, 2006), as chapters 2 and 6 demonstrate.

Considering this frame, this thesis contributes to current debates about citizenship in Botswana with its focus on naturalised citizens. Literature on citizenship in Botswana is quite rich. Since the mid-1990s Deborah Durham has focused her work on the Herero community in Mahalapye, exploring diverse dynamics of the community’s life and its interactions with the state and with Tswana-ethnic citizens. Recently, the debate on citizenship has focused on minority rights, foreigners and xenophobia. Concerning minority rights, studies from Richard Werbner (2002, 2004), Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo (2002, 2008) and Jacqueline Solway (2002, 2004) for instance focused on different aspects of the discrimination towards non-Tswana, such as sections 77, 78 and 79 of the Botswana Constitution, which stimulated minority groups’ battle for recognition. Francis Nyamnjoh (2004, 2006, 2007) wrote extensively on the issue of minority rights, as well as on the rise of xenophobia against foreigners, Zimbabweans in particular, talking about the existence of a hierarchy among citizens and among foreigners.
My research fits into this debate as it provides a historical and sociological analysis of citizenship in Botswana and the relationship between Tswana ethnic citizens and naturalised foreigners. The analysis dates back to the apartheid years and it looks at the idea of citizenship as it is officially constructed by the Botswana government in contrast with the way it is perceived and understood in the everyday practices by both former immigrants and refugees.

**The South African liberation struggle**

In addition, the thesis also contributes to the debates about the South African liberation struggle in two overlapping ways. First, by discussing the role of the country as a transit corridor and borderland area, it highlights how Botswana managed to balance the international duty of protecting refugees in its territory and guarantee the security of its population, at least until the South African raid in Gaborone in 1985. Secondly, migrants made a strategic use of Botswana’s transit role and its borders. Strategies of survival were implemented, which included the use of the country as a passage towards other territories in Africa or overseas; its use as a temporary settlement, in view of alternative solutions; its use as a space to settle and establish transnational connections with South Africa; and its use as a route for trained saboteurs on their way back to South Africa. Botswana as transit has thus become a place where migrants could create social spaces where they could produce and develop different strategies.

It is in this light that the thesis offers a political and a social meaning of the use of transit and border, which are explored from a state’s perspective as well as through the practices of immigrants and refugees involved. The methodology used to collect the data has helped in this way: the archival material provided the state’s vision of security and refugee policies, as well as refugees’ testimonies. Oral interviews provided the first-hand experience of former immigrants and refugees and their survival strategies.

The main contribution of this research to this field, thus, lies in the highlighting of the social dimension of the transit role of Botswana in the anti-apartheid struggle, with an approach that combines life histories and state policies. This approach differs from other studies of South African refugees in Botswana.
Other scholars discussed the question of refugees in Botswana particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. Richard Dale (1978, 1987, 1993, 1995), for instance, wrote extensively on the topic in both decades as well as in the 1970s. In particular, his 1995 monograph inserts the situation of refugees in the country within the political and economic positions of Botswana in southern Africa since independence. Also Roger Southall (1984) and James Polhemus (1985) analysed the arrival of refugees in Botswana from South Africa and from other neighbouring countries. Both authors discussed the question of refugees in Botswana by considering the impact they had on the country’s politics and society and the consequences for the country’s relations with South Africa.

In 1990 Jenny Zetterqvist contributed to the question of refugees in Botswana within a legal framework. In her paper she discussed how national refugee legislation in Botswana is inserted within the framework of the international protection of refugees. In contrast, Patrick Matlou (1992), a former South African refugee, wrote his PhD thesis analysing refugee policies in Botswana from a political perspective, reaching the conclusion that the country never had the aim of integrating refugees. On the contrary, the government’s policies were drafted and implemented with the purpose of guaranteeing security for Botswana. Being a refugee himself, his approach is strongly subjective and, while highlighting the contradictions of Botswana’s approach to refugees, he tends to overlook the realities of the country’s problems in containing South African aggressiveness and the ensuing need to guarantee its own security.

More recently, a special issue of the journal Social Dynamics in 2008 focused on the role of Botswana in the liberation struggle. Here Neil Parsons provided a detailed account on the refugee pipeline in the 1960s, namely the ‘escape route’ organised in Botswana and used by South African refugees to reach Zambia and other African countries. Part Mgadla took the issue from where Parsons left it. He discussed the question of refugees by considering the role of Botswana in the liberation struggle and its efforts to balance its policy of granting asylum to exiles with the need to protect its borders and population from risks of retaliation from its white minority-ruled neighbours. Lastly, Brian Mokopakgosi offered a detailed analysis of a specific aspect of the role played by Botswana in the South African
liberation struggle. He focused on the commitment of students of the University of Botswana organising demonstrations in support of freedom fighters and against the apartheid regime.

The research questions that guided the research project are the following:

- How has transnationalism developed among South African former immigrants and refugees, in the context of regional migration movements and the anti-apartheid struggle?
- How have citizenship and identity been understood by South African former immigrants and refugees in the transnational context and in relation to nationhood in Botswana?

The remaining sections of the chapter address the methodological approach to the research and different issues and constraints that I have faced throughout the process of data collection and writing up.

Figure 2: Map of Botswana, source: [http://www.geographicguide.com/africa-maps/botswana.htm](http://www.geographicguide.com/africa-maps/botswana.htm) Downloaded on 25th April 2013
1.2: Terminology

One of the main challenges faced in the writing of the thesis was the need to distinguish between concepts and definitions that are contested and have blurred boundaries, such as the notions of refugee and immigrant. This section analyses these differences first from a top-down approach, referring to the international conventions and institutional definitions, and then ‘from the bottom’, highlighting how these categories are lived and experienced by individuals. This will show how these ‘bureaucratic identities’ often do not reflect the way people see and define themselves. These categories are by no means clear-cut; they are actually blurred and fluid, and are often conventionally used by individuals as survival strategies. People may define themselves as either immigrants or refugees according to what is more convenient for them at that particular time and these definitions may not coincide with the bureaucratic label ascribed to them by humanitarian organisations and host governments (see Bakewell, 2007; Zetter, 1991, 2007).

Refugees and immigrants are both categories of migrants, but have been conventionally distinguished (even in academic studies) into forced migration and voluntary migration. The dichotomy voluntary/involuntary, thus, represents an attempt to distinguish between the two categories, along with the dichotomy economic/political. For instance, Akokpari (1998: 213) argued that ‘while migration is to a large extent voluntary, fuelled mainly by economic imperatives, refugeeism is always necessitated by security concerns which lie beyond the control of the refugees’. This distinction works only in part. The dichotomies presented were considered problematic already in the late 1980s for their overlapping characters (Zolberg et al., 1989: 30-32). A number of researchers, including Castles and Miller (2009: 34), argued more recently that economically motivated migration and politically motivated migration have similar underpinning conditions that induce the flight (impoverishment, conflicts, human rights abuse).

Distinguishing between refugees and economic migrants in the specific case of South African migrants in Botswana is also difficult. This is partly due to the apartheid regime, whose nature affected its political opponents as much as people

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3 By bureaucratic identities I mean how the state or humanitarian agencies construct identities, which then become institutional labels, such as ‘refugee’ and ‘immigrant’.
who were not politically active. Discrimination towards non-white people was total, in the sense that it was present in every aspect of the society, and an individual did not need to be an anti-apartheid activist to be suffering from racist policies. Reasons to leave for immigrants and refugees were therefore similar and were often both political and economic for both categories. Hayden (2006: 479), in her studies on Salvadoran refugees, discussed how economic and political reasons are intertwined, ‘inextricably linked historically, causally and in the means of coping with the present.’ Economic reasons often merged with political ones, as in the case of many people interviewed for this research. Mr. E.R. for instance, was fired from the school where he was working in South Africa because he was considered too politicised, and he moved to Botswana with his travel document to take up a teaching post.4

Many migratory movements have included both immigrants and refugees, leading the UNHCR to talk about ‘mixed flows’ (Castles, Miller, 2009: 34). Because of this, even the idea of voluntariness needs to be questioned, since it depends on the extent to which a flight can be considered voluntary or not. Zolberg et al. (1989: 31) explained how the involuntary/voluntary dimension requires a degree of need: ‘the more immediate and intense the life-threatening violence is, the more clearly a person is a refugee rather than a migrant’. The authors do not refer to these categories as dichotomous but as located within a continuum (Ibidem). Furthermore, while refugees face political constraints, they often have the choice of where and when to move; in comparison, economic migrants may face structural constraints resulting from a lack of livelihood opportunities in the home country (Betts, 2009: 4).

Botswana legislation does not draw a clear distinction between the two categories of people. Ditshwanelo, a Botswana organisation committed to the protection of human rights in the country, has highlighted this lack of clarity. In 1996 the organisation reported that the 1967 Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act defines a refugee as an immigrant who has been granted the status of political refugee by the Minister; an immigrant, on the other hand, is considered any person who is not an actual citizen (Ditshwanelo, http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw). Moreover, the Refugee Act refers to the Immigration Act, which allows detention in prison for asylum-seekers while their applications are processed. The Refugee Act

4 Interview with Mr. E.R., former immigrant, Gaborone, 5 December 2010
establishes a limit for detention of up to 28 days, while the Immigration Act considers the period of time necessary to complete all arrangements as a limit.

Defining ‘refugee’

Refugee itself is ‘an essentially contested concept’ (Connolly, quoted in Haddad, 2008: 26). A refugee has been defined by Article 1 of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees as someone who,

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

The original Convention’s definition was temporally bounded to ‘events occurring before 1 January 1951’ and geographically limited to Europe. The 1967 Protocol to the Convention abolished the first part of the definition, making its scope universal (Betts, 2009: 6), and therefore applicable to refugee situations outside Europe. This definition has however been criticised. Some scholars underscored the incongruity between the individual focus of the definition and the existence of large numbers of refugees; establishing a well-founded fear of persecution on a case-by-case basis would be impracticable (Goodwin-Gill, McAdam, 2007: 133; Dauvergne, 2013: 14). Long (2013: 13) highlighted how issues around the notion of persecution and how to ascertain an individual’s well-founded fear have been under scrutiny. Many countries, among them many European states, adopt a restrictive interpretation of the word ‘persecution’ that focuses on the agents that undertake the persecution rather than on the facts related to the persecution (Colville, 1995). According to this restrictive interpretation, persecution is intended as carried out by a government or a state-like authority. However, persecution carried out by non-state agents is not recognised and refugee status is usually refused (Ibidem).

Shacknove had criticised the definition of the Convention in the 1980s. He argued that the bond between the state and its citizens could be severed in diverse ways, and persecution is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for this; persecution is a manifestation of a broader phenomenon, namely the absence of the state’s protection of citizens’ needs (Shacknove, 1985: 276-277). In addition, he
emphasised the difference with the broader definition of refugee provided by the 1969 Organisation of African Union (OAU) (Shacknove, 1985: 276). The OAU’s definition is considered to provide a broader definition of refugee that would meet the specificities of the African situation. It defines refugee as an individual escaping from ‘external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order’ (Sharpe, 2012: 102). The three events - external aggression, occupation and foreign domination - addressed the situation of people fleeing colonialism and apartheid (Sharpe, 2012: 112-113). Because of the elapse of time, these three events now have lost some of their relevance (Sharpe, 2012: 113). Okoth-Obbo (2001: 116) has suggested renewing the OAU definition in order to upgrade it to reflect the actual situation of refugee movements in Africa.

In contrast, Botswana’s definition of refugee, as provided by the 1967 Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act, is narrower than the OAU’s, since it refers to political refugees only:

Subject to this Schedule, “political refugee” means a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

This specification implies that asylum-seekers will be granted the status of refugees only for political reasons and not for social and economic motivations (Zetterqvist, 1990: 50). Botswana’s conveniently narrow definition of refugee reflects Chimni’s statement that legal definitions of refugee are ‘designed to serve State policy’ (Chimni, 2009: 16). As Macharia-Mokobi and Pfumorodze (2013) explained, Botswana’s Refugee Act was enacted before the country acceded to the UN and OAU Conventions and, thus, it should have endorsed the two Conventions in order for them to become part of its national legislation. In addition, Botswana should amend its Act in order for it to adhere to the OAU Convention. In this way, many Zimbabweans who entered Botswana during the country’s political and economic crisis would have qualified for the status of refugees on the grounds of events.

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3 For a critique of the idea of broader definition of refugee conceptualised by the OAU see Sharpe (2012)
‘seriously disturbing public order’ (Macharia-Mokobi, Pfumorodze, 2013: 167). Instead, many ended up in Botswana as undocumented immigrants with little legal protection (Ibidem).

The political aspect of the granting of refugee status in Botswana was particularly evident with the case of the Soweto refugees. This case shows how certain individuals are recognised as refugees in certain times and certain places (Haddad, 2008: 26). Violent riots erupted in schools in South African townships in 1976, forcing thousands of schoolchildren into exile to avoid being arrested. Those who arrived in Botswana decided to either settle or to move on to further their education or for military training. According to their choice of staying or moving, the Botswana government granted them a different status. The Refugee Advisory Committee (which is the state organ responsible for interviewing asylum seekers) recommended that those who wished to stay were granted political asylum, whereas the rest of the group, ‘as is the usual procedure’, were granted 3 months renewable visitor permits.6 This case highlights the recognition of the politically motivated movement of the Soweto youth, who were therefore eligible to be recognised as refugees if they decided to settle in Botswana. Those who planned to move were allowed to stay but without being granted the legal status.

Besides refugee and immigrant, there are other related terms that are worth being analysed, since they will be mentioned throughout the thesis. One is the question of refugee warriors (Zolberg et al., 1989).7 They are defined as ‘organised elements of the exile communities, typically intermingled with a refugee population and based in a country of asylum, who are engaged in a wide range of armed campaigns against their country of origin’ (Loescher et al., 2007: 496). As Zolberg et al. (1989: 276) explained, the OAU Convention in Article III prohibits ‘subversive activities’ and in the preface the African states distinguish ‘between refugees seeking a peaceful and normal life and those – non-refugees by implication – who flee “for the sole purpose of fomenting subversion outside”’. The existence of refugee warriors also poses a

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6 BNA OP 27/17: Minutes of the Gaborone Refugee Advisory Committee, 3rd June 1977
7 This term, however, has been subject to critique. Adelman (1998) argues that the phrase ‘refugee warrior’ is a misnomer because by international law and OAU law a refugee cannot resort to violence. If a refugee turns to violence he or she no longer qualifies for refugee status.
dilemma for external assistance, as they erode the distinction between humanitarian and political activity (Zolberg et al., 1989: 277). However, the notion of refugee warriors has been criticised. Some criticisms for instance highlight how the term has been overstretched (Leenders, 2009). Practitioners and academics have given an exaggerated attention to identify refugee-warrior communities when in reality refugee warriors are not so common (Leenders, 2009: 354).

Southern African refugees fleeing white minority ruled-countries did represent an example of refugee warriors. Southall (1984: 158-159) highlighted the blurred line that separates refugees from freedom fighters, stating that the former ‘have historically provided a fertile source of recruits for the various liberation armies dedicated to the overthrow of white supremacist rule’. As noted above, Soweto refugees provided a wide pool the ANC armed wing could draw on for its militia. Considering these issues, the thesis will refer to refugee warriors as freedom fighters, namely those refugees who were recruited by the ANC and the PAC in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to receive military training. I use the term freedom fighter because it is the way they identified themselves, in contrast with the use of the notion ‘terrorists’ adopted by the South African government as well as the colonial administration in Bechuanaland. Only with independence did the official discourse in Botswana start using the expression ‘freedom fighters’ (Parsons, 2008: 28).

Another important distinction is between the use of ‘undocumented’ and ‘illegal’ to define immigrants who enter a country without documents. This thesis defines them as ‘undocumented’ migrants since, as Danso and McDonald (2001: 128) explained, the use of the term ‘illegal’ has been widely criticised for its criminalising implications, whereas ‘undocumented’ and ‘irregular’ are preferred by the UN and the International Organisation for Migration.

The difficulties in understanding the differences and nuances implied in the distinction between refugees and immigrants and in the provision of a definition of refugee are due to the fact that these are institutional labels. They are in fact conventionally used by states and bureaucracies to define, manage and control migrants (Hammar, McGregor, Landau, 2010: 266). This top-down approach contrasts with individuals’ perceptions: the bureaucratic identities that are ascribed to
people from governments and international organisations often differ from the way they are conceptualised in everyday practices by refugees and migrants themselves. Because of their experiences, some people see themselves as refugees even though they are not officially recognised as such. One interviewee, Mr. L.N., saw himself a refugee because he could not safely return to South Africa, despite the fact that he moved to Botswana as an immigrant to take up a job.8

His experience shows the fluidity of individuals’ identities and of the meaning of these categories. The fact that these categories are not fixed allows migrants to move from one to the other and assume the identity that is more convenient to them in terms of survival strategy. As Monsutti (2008: 65) explains in the case of Afghan refugees, ‘refugees and other types of migrants share a number of social features, and individuals may belong to several categories at a time or successively’. This is because refugees can be considered as people who use their social and cultural resources to adapt to the world system (Ibidem). As the following chapters in this thesis show, South African immigrants and refugees in Botswana have used a number of livelihood strategies, in particular the production of multiple and fluid identities that allowed them to negotiate their spaces within a transnational dimension and within the bureaucratic and legislative frames represented by the different legal definitions of refugee and immigrant.

Throughout the thesis I have tried to comply with the fact that these categories are extremely fluid. Therefore, I have adopted the expression ‘South African migrants’ to refer to both those motivated by political reasons and economic interests. In addition, I have tried to reflect the intentions and the identity of my interviewees. In this respect I have defined ‘refugees’ as those who had been officially recognised by the Botswana government and those who identified themselves as such because they could not return home without risk of being arrested. The others are defined as immigrants, because they moved from South Africa to Botswana to take up employment (or for personal reasons, as in the case of some women migrants, who moved to Botswana to follow their husbands who were Batswana citizens) and could return home even before the end of apartheid.

8 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
1.3: Methodology

An important challenge that I faced during the analysis of my data and in developing the thesis was providing an account of the transnational life of South African migrants in Botswana since the apartheid era that would take into account a top-down vision, represented by colonial and governmental discourses, but mostly a bottom-up approach that would consider and highlight the everyday practice and life experiences of migrants.

The previous section of the chapter has already showed the difficulties in understanding terms like refugee and immigrant, as they are fluid categories. Other contested terms have been used throughout the thesis, such as citizenship and identity, which have an ‘official’ definition that often clashes with an individual’s understanding. Throughout the whole thesis I have tried to frame and articulate concepts and ideas following the official, governmental discourse but counterbalanced with migrants’ experiences and how they understand and construct these concepts.

The methodology that I have used provides both approaches. My study is based mostly on archival research and supplemented by oral interviews in the form of life narratives. This has proved to be the most appropriate methodology for this topic in order to research historical migration movements and contested issues such as citizenship and identity, because it provides both top-down and bottom-up approaches. I opted for these methods because I wanted to provide a historical perspective but also offer the first-hand testimony of migrants on their experience in apartheid South Africa as well as on integrating in Botswana. In addition, the decision to make a preliminary trip to Botswana, besides helping reconfigure the research (as detailed later in the section), also allowed me to have an idea of the documents available in the archives.

There is no specific methodology in the field of Refugee Studies, since the topic is rooted in different disciplines, such as law, anthropology, sociology, international relations, geography and so on (Schmidt, 2007: 84). Each discipline relies on different sets of methods: ‘the question we ask should determine the methods chosen to answer it’ (Schmidt, 2007: 84-85). As Voutira and Doná (2007: 166) suggested, Refugee Studies is ‘multidisciplinary as a field and interdisciplinary
in its approach’, although with an overwhelming prevalence of qualitative research (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014: 14). My research spans different fields as well, although mostly sociology and history, and the choice of the methods, archives and life-history interviews, reflects its interdisciplinary character. In addition, I also draw on relevant literature from the fields of geography, anthropology and international relations.

Archival research

I conducted archival research at different institutions, in Britain, South Africa and Botswana between 2009 and 2011. My research in British archives stretched between 2009 and early 2010 and concentrated on collections held at the Borthwick Institute for Historical Research at the University of York, at the Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, University of Oxford, and the National Archives in London. In York I consulted the private documents, letters and personal correspondence of Mr. Ronald Watts with his family and South African refugees from 1959 to 1965.9 In Oxford I consulted documents related to the works of the London-based organisation Africa Bureau and some correspondence of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, covering the period from the mid-1950 until the late 1960s.

In London I worked on documents from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), covering the period from the late 1960s until the late 1970s.10

In southern Africa I worked in archives in Johannesburg and in Gaborone for the whole period of my fieldwork, in 2010 and 2011. In Johannesburg I consulted different collections of the South Africa History Archive (SAHA) and the Historical Papers, both held at that time at the University of the Witwatersrand. The period covered in these two archives stretches from the early 1980s until the early 1990s. In Gaborone I consulted the Botswana National Archives and Record Services (BNARS). These archives constitute the bulk of my archival research, with documents from the colonial period until the mid-1980s. They included governmental policies towards refugees, official correspondence, statistics related to...

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9 A more detailed account on Ronald Watts and his role in helping South African refugees through the organisation of the ‘escape route’ will be provided in chapter 4.
10 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office was established in 1968 by merging the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office.
the number of refugees in the country, interviews with refugees and reports from international and local organisations committed to refugees’ relief.

The closure period in Botswana’s archives is 20 years, but, despite this, the most recent record I could consult in 2011 was dated 1985. Because of this, I was not able to retrieve the government’s official correspondence and records concerning the arrival of South Africans in the country between 1985 and 1994.

Statistical data have been collected from Botswana’s archives. As Allan (1991: 185) argued, ‘just because the data collection is defined as qualitative does not mean that you should eschew all quantitative elements in your analyses’. Bryman (2008: 297-299) considered secondary analysis quite advantageous in terms of the cost and time that the researcher could save, the high quality of the data collected, opportunities for cross-cultural analysis and for new interpretations. The quantitative contribution to this thesis consisted of the secondary analysis of these statistical data regarding refugees in the country. Some data was collected by the UNHCR or other organisations involved in refugee relief, like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Amnesty International, and they show statistics of refugees arriving and leaving Botswana across the years and refugees living in Dukwe camp. The collections concerning these organisations are held at the Botswana National Archives and at the Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies in Oxford. This information collected through secondary analysis provided figures about the number of migrants who have arrived in Botswana across the decades and those who left for other destinations. These statistics are usually broken down into subgroups to show migrants’ nationality and their political affiliation. This data has been used mostly in chapters 4 and 5 in order to give an idea of the refugee movements in the country and their political affiliation.

Many of the records that I have consulted date back to the colonial period and present the colonial authorities’ impressions of the society they were administering. As Bastian (2006: 269) argued:

\[\text{the relationships between colonial societies and records reveal many of the worst and best manifestations of records themselves; their tyranny as well as}\]

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11 Dukwe, as detailed later in the thesis, is the only refugee settlement camp in Botswana and was established around 1977 to host mainly Zimbabwean refugees; after 1980 it was open to refugees from other countries, including South Africa.
their power, their textual bias as well as their textual evidence, their appropriation as well as their authenticity, all of which speaks as much to the authority as to the malleability of written information.

Analysing archival documents that have been created during colonial time presents a number of issues that are related to the fact that they tend to represent the voice of the elite to the detriment of the voice of the people (see Bastian, 2006). As Duncan (1999: 121) clearly pointed out, ‘to work critically in the archives is…not only to study in the archive, but to acknowledge that the archive itself was part and parcel of the machinery used to crush resistance to colonialism’. The archives I have consulted contained mostly records representing the ‘official’ and hegemonic discourses, namely correspondence and policies from the colonial authorities and the Botswana governments. By giving space to the dominant voice, the records themselves, then, ‘as agents of the elite’, contributed to the misreading of colonial history (Bastian, 2006: 274). Some records, however, include letters and memoirs of migrants, representing testimonies of the life and plight of refugees from their point of view. Often top-down and bottom-up approaches did not coincide, as the reality represented in the official discourse was not perceived by migrants and refugees in the same way. The testimonies can clash, as was the case with the story of a refugee, whose account (and the account told to me by his son during an interview) is different from the government’s report.

Mr. Gordon Xhallie\textsuperscript{12} and his son\textsuperscript{13} argued that the former was kidnapped in the Protectorate territory and then taken to South Africa, while colonial authorities stated that he was arrested in South Africa because he had voluntarily crossed the border.\textsuperscript{14} The fact that Mr. H. Xhallie’s and his father’s accounts coincide might be due to the fact that Mr. Gordon Xhallie explained his version of the facts to his family. This issue undermines the credibility of the document. Credibility is considered by Scott (1990: 6-9) as one out of four criteria to determine the quality of social research (the other three being authenticity, representativeness and meaning). Concerning the truth of a document, it ‘may give a knowingly false outline of events that have been witnessed or an untrue assessment of a situation’ (McCulloch, 2004:

\textsuperscript{12} BNA OP 2/8: Letter from Gordon Xhallie to President Masire, 18 October 1982
\textsuperscript{13} Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23\textsuperscript{rd} June 2011
\textsuperscript{14} BNA OP 27/2: Telex from the High Commissioner in Gaborone to the Embassy in Pretoria, 7\textsuperscript{th} July 1965
In this case it is not possible to attest the true version of the story, whether Mr. Gordon Xhallie was kidnapped in Botswana’s territory or if he was arrested because he had crossed the border. I thus acknowledge both versions in order to show the difficulties in analysing archival documents and attest their validity.

Another issue that I have encountered in studying archival material is connected to the meaning of the document. This entails the fact that the researcher, when reading a document, should give attention to the context in which the document was produced (McCulloch, 2004: 38). In fact, historians should try to understand the document as its contemporaries should have understood it (Marwick, 1981: 145-146). In many documents compiled by colonial authorities in the Bechuanaland Protectorate it is quite common to come across personal comments addressed from an authority (often a police member) to refugees. In one case, an officer of the Special Branch was discussing the relation between the South African refugee Jonas Matlou with Nelson Mandela, who at that time was passing through Bechuanaland, saying that ‘Mandela is dangerous and any intercourse Matlou has with him should be watched most carefully’. In another document, the personal opinion is even more explicit: the police officer who interviewed Walter Sisulu defined him as ‘a thoroughly nasty piece of work, who, if allowed to remain in the Protectorate for any length of time, would undoubtedly indoctrinate the Batswana youth towards A.N.C. and possibly Communist thinking’.

According to what McCulloch and Marwick suggested, therefore, these assertions should be read and understood within the context of the time. In the early 1960s the world was ideologically divided by the Cold War. Because the ANC was closely allied with the South African Communist Party and was supported by the Soviet Union, the colonial authorities in the Protectorate (as well as in other colonies) were wary of the arrival of politicised refugees in the territory. In addition, there were allegations that certain members of the Bechuanaland Police passed information about refugees to their counterparts in South Africa (see Dingake, 1987), which would explain the negative feelings towards potentially dangerous refugees. These personal comments expressed by colonial officers therefore should be read and

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15 BNA OP 33/21: Jonas Dinque Matlou, 24 July 1962
16 BNA OP 33/21: Note on an interview with Walter Max Sisulu at Lobatsi, 24th October 1962
understood in the context of the political climate that permeated international relations of the time and, consequently, the dealings with political refugees.

Being aware of the colonial bias and that archives can be the ‘hegemonic instrument of the state’ (Zeitlyn, 2012: 462, citing Foucault), I have tried to counterbalance the dominant view represented in the official discourse with those records that reported refugees’ memoirs and letters and with the narratives and testimonies that I have collected through interviews with former immigrants and refugees.

The interview process

When I started my PhD I intended to research South African refugees only, as I thought I would be able to find a number of them still living in Botswana after the end of apartheid. I conducted a preliminary fieldwork of two months from April to June 2010 in order to start the archival research in the National Archives in Gaborone, and to set a network of potential informants to interview and gatekeepers who could help me find others.

When I arrived in Botswana and started getting contacts and talking to potential informants, I realised that the number of former refugees still living in the country was not as high as I expected and that it was quite difficult to find them. In addition, the people I had started interviewing were not refugees: they did not apply for it and they did not see themselves as such. They were immigrants. Unlike the majority of refugees, they tended to settle in Botswana indefinitely and did not return to South Africa after 1994. I then decided to slightly shift my topic and incorporate immigrants and refugees alike: this would allow me to broaden my pool of potential informants and to draw on the differences and similarities from two diverse types of migrants. An important consequence of this distinction was methodological, since it raised terminology issues and therefore the need to provide the clearest possible distinction between immigrant and refugee that would respect the identity of the interviewees. After the first, preliminary trip, I went to Botswana two more times, from the end of October to mid-December 2010, and from the end of April to mid-August 2011 (this last trip included two weeks in South Africa). Overall, the data collection in southern Africa lasted six months.
Most of the interviews that I have conducted were structured in the form of life histories. Life history interviews ‘emphasise the experiences and requirements of the individual – how the person copes with the society, rather than how society copes with the stream of individuals…A life history is the account of a life, completed or ongoing’ (Mandelbaum, 1982: 146). In addition, life histories give a voice to the marginalised sections of the society, such as migrants, and they are a way to represent the society ‘from below’ (Miles, Crush, 1993). Thus, the use of life histories in my research was useful to counterbalance the power of the official discourse represented in the archival documents and to put at the centre of my argument the narratives of former refugees and migrants. As Voutira and Doná (2007: 166) explained, the bottom-up approach sees refugees as agents and actors, thus, it is conceptualised in terms of a refugee-centric rather than a state-centric perspective.

Besides providing a dimension ‘from the bottom’ of the migration experience, these narratives offer different perspectives on the experience of displacement and migration. As Eastmond (2007: 254) explained, there is a tendency to present ‘the refugee experience’ as undifferentiated and a uniform condition, as if all migrants felt and experienced migration in the same way. Narratives therefore contribute to widen these perspectives by presenting different views on the diverse ways migrants have constructed transnational links between the country of migration and the country of origin.

However, the use of life history in social research presents some challenges. One is the fact that the narrative is filtered by the way the researcher interprets it through their ‘personal experiences and cultural assumptions’ (Eastmond, 2007: 249). My being a young Italian woman who had never lived in Africa before certainly placed some constraints on the way I had to understand and interpret the interviews. The fact however that I am also a foreigner in the country I live, Scotland, gives me a degree of understanding of the idea of ‘migrant experience’. Clearly my experience as a migrant in Scotland is very different from the one of my respondents, but reading the transcribed narratives has given me the chance to reflect

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17 I also conducted interviews with two Batswana women who worked for the Botswana Council for Refugees in the 1970s and 1980s. These interviews therefore were not structured as life history but they focused on the situation of refugees in Botswana.
on my own way to relate to my home country and the country where I reside, how I have reshaped my identity in light of this experience and the kinds of transnational links that I have been establishing since I migrated. It has become a process of mutual understanding and self-reflection: reading and reflecting on the narratives made me reconsider my own situation as a migrant with my own transnational connections, which worked as inspiration for when I had to write the thesis.\textsuperscript{18}

Another issue that narratives present is the extent to which they are reliable as historical documents (Miles, Crush, 1993: 90). Oral narratives are not unproblematic, and citing Crapanzano, Miles and Crush (1993: 91) argue that when we analyse life histories, we are analysing a text, not a social reality, and the text is a product of a complex collaboration. The text, basically, is the result of the interactions between the researcher and the narrator (Ibidem). The use of historical records functioned as a countercheck in this way, as in certain cases I could compare what the interviewees told me with the information in the archives. This happened in the example presented above about the alleged kidnapping of Mr. Gordon Xhallie. His son’s story was confirmed by his father’s account, but it contrasted with the official government’s report. In other circumstances I noted some confusion with facts and dates, especially when refugees’ children tried to remember their parents’ experiences. Counterchecking the dates was possible for refugees, as information regarding them is recorded in the archives (through police interrogations and statistics).

The main site of my research was Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. South African refugees and immigrants were mostly urban, so when they arrived in Botswana they settled in the main urban sites, especially Gaborone. Many travelled around the country before settling in the capital. Considering the interviewing process, questions were prepared in advance and focused on the life of immigrants and refugees before and after moving to Botswana. A number of participants have been interviewed twice in order to clarify certain points mentioned in the previous meeting and to discuss other aspects in detail. The second interview occurred a few months after the first one because my fieldwork was divided over three trips. In Mahalapye some people were interviewed several times. Overall, 24 people have been interviewed: 5 were former refugees, 16 were former immigrants and 3 were

\textsuperscript{18} See Ghorashi (2008) about the use of narratives to research migrants who have a very similar experience of refugeehood and exile as the researcher herself.
Batswana citizens (Michael Dingake, the prominent ANC member, and two women who had worked for the Botswana Council for Refugees). Considering the profile of the interviewees, I have tried to diversify the choice of respondents in order to have a wider and more heterogeneous sample. Out of the 24 people that have been interviewed, 8 were women and 16 were men. Furthermore, one (a former immigrant) had Indian origin, one (former refugee) was white; the other 22 were black including Tswana (from South Africa and Botswana), Pedi, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Sotho.

The participants were contacted with the support provided to me by the University of Botswana, in particular the Department of Sociology and the Department of History, to which I was affiliated. I managed to contact some of the respondents through a snowballing process. Jacobsen and Landau (2003: 196) warned about the risk of snowballing, as it may produce a biased sample, as respondents are drawn from a particular segment of the community and thus they can be similar in certain ways. Schmidt (2007: 86) answered Jacobsen and Landau (2003: 196) by arguing that snowballing can be appropriate in certain studies. In my research I deemed it an appropriate method, considering the constraints in finding participants due to the small number of former immigrants and refugees left in Botswana. Above all, I deemed it appropriate because South Africans formed a community in Botswana, active particularly during the apartheid years, so most of those living in the country have known each other for quite some time.

This thesis is mostly archival-based research supplemented by oral histories; the amount of data that I have collected throughout my research in different archives compensates for the small number of in-depth, long interviews. Refugees’ testimonies were present in the records as well, which allowed me to grasp a sense of the refugees’ hopes, fears and intentions of the time when they arrived in Botswana, particularly through their interrogation reports. The number of my respondents depends on a number of reasons. First, many refugees went back to South Africa after 1994. Because of the fact that they could not go back before, since they feared being arrested, they were longing for the end of the regime in order to be able to return. This will be seen in chapter 7, particularly with John’s narrative of his and his father’s experiences. Secondly, many arrived in the 1960s already as adults, so by the
time I started my fieldwork in 2010 some of them had unfortunately passed away.

Third, Botswana was mostly a transit place. Refugees in particular aimed to move to other countries in Africa such as Zambia or Tanzania, or overseas. The figures provided by the Botswana government (as reported in chapter 5), never showed high numbers of South Africans in the country, besides the months immediately after the Soweto riots in 1976. The South African population therefore has never been particularly high, especially compared to other refugee populations, such as Zimbabweans, who reached a peak of 25,300 in 1978 (Southall, 1984: 156). Fourth, some former refugees refused to be interviewed, which also explains the discrepancy between the number of refugees and immigrants interviewed.

Issues related to the relative sensitivity of the topic of research arose when I was organising the interviews. The relevant discrepancy between the number of refugees and immigrants interviewed is in fact due to what I perceived as a sort of mistrust towards foreigners (and white people in particular) that former refugees still feel. The legacy of centuries of racial strife has strongly affected contemporary relations between South African blacks and whites. As Seekings (2008: 5) argues, South Africans still tend to see their society in racialised terms. In addition, being in exile has numerous implications, such as the stigma carried with the label of refugee, the pervasive sense of insecurity and uncertainty concerning their personal plight, and the situation in the home country. In light of this, thus, some former refugees that I contacted refused to be interviewed, even though I had an intermediary introducing me and explaining my background and research, ensuring them regarding confidentiality and anonymity.

Research in Mahalapye

Specific mention should be given to the research conducted in Mahalapye, a village halfway between the two main cities of the country (Gaborone and Francistown). I decided to research Mahalapye because a significant number of South Africans, in particularly Xhosa, have been living there since the village was founded in the late nineteenth century. As a result of the settlement of the Xhosa community, the job opportunities linked to nearby farms and the construction of the railway, many South Africans arrived in the village throughout the twentieth century. I was able, therefore,
to interview a wide range of people: former immigrants, former refugees, as well as Batswana with South African parents and grandparents who have been living in the village for up to three generations. Overall I interviewed 11 people (some of them more than once), including an informal conversation that I had with another Xhosa man.

An important issue related to my research in Mahalapye was the fact that I was not able to quantify the number of Xhosa (and South Africans in general) living in the village. As a consequence of the non-racial policy of the country the ethnicity of Botswana’s population is not considered when censuses are carried out. When I consulted a census in the archives in order to have an idea of how many Xhosa and, in general, non-Tswana people lived in Mahalapye, I was not able to find any useful data because ‘ethnicity’ was not included. In fact, all citizens of Botswana are Batswana regardless of their ethnic belonging. I therefore had no methods of estimating how many non-Tswana people resided in the village at any time and to which ethnic group they belonged.

Overall, I spent around ten days in Mahalapye. The research in the village provided a relevant contribution to this thesis. It offered the chance for a deeper insight into the way South Africans settled in Botswana and established a community within a Tswana village. In this sense this work provided fundamental support to my argument concerning transnational connections and citizenship construction.

1.4: Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into eight chapters:

Chapter 1 constitutes the introduction of the thesis. The first section contextualises the whole thesis by explaining the argument, the main themes and outlining the research questions. The second and the third sections focus on the methodological aspects: I first discuss the terminology, mostly exploring the notions and nuances of the terms immigrant and refugee. Afterwards I analyse the methodology that I have used to collect my data, archival research and oral interviews, and the challenges and constraints that I have encountered.
Chapter 2 is the literature review chapter, which contextualises the thesis in the existing literature on transnationalism and in the debates around the concept of citizenship. Transnationalism and citizenship are therefore the main strands of the chapter as well as of the whole thesis. The chapter highlights and discusses the literature related to these two strands with the purpose of showing how my research on the case of South African former migrants contributes to it. The sections are organised in a way that presents, first, the scholarly debates on the topic and, secondly, how the case of South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana fits within these debates.

Chapter 3 is the historical chapter and provides an analysis of the migration process in southern Africa. This chapter aims at explaining labour migration, mostly towards South Africa, and more broadly, the diverse migration processes that have historically characterised the region and the consequent transnational ties that have developed. This overview is important in order to frame the migration of South Africans to Botswana in a historical perspective to show that it is not an exceptional case but it is part of a broader process of regional mobility. The aim of the chapter is to demonstrate the sense of continuity of the different movements of people, including economic migrants, political refugees and freedom fighters. The second part of the chapter enforces the argument by exploring the various links between South Africa and Botswana (geographical, ethnic, economic and political) to highlight the historical transnational connections between the two countries, and how these connections are at the basis of the South African migration to Botswana.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the role of Botswana as borderland and a transit place for refugees. During the anti-apartheid struggle in fact, Botswana was mostly used as a transit corridor for refugees and freedom fighters. The colonial authorities and the ANC had organised an official ‘escape route’ through the country to facilitate the movement of the people. This chapter argues that this role as transit and border place was not only of political and historical value, but that it gave space to refugees to think about their survival strategies. Transit has ended up assuming different meanings according to the choices of refugees. The timeframe covered is the last decade of the colonial era, from 1957 (that marks the first wave of South African refugees) until 1966, the date of Botswana’s independence.
Chapter 5 continues the analysis started in the previous chapter, mostly covering the decades from Botswana’s independence until the demise of apartheid in 1994. The chapter presents different aspects of the refugee situation in Botswana, which will be discussed from different angles. One is the top-down approach, in order to show Botswana’s security dilemma between securing protection of refugees and at the same time safeguarding its borders and the population from intimidation and threats from its neighbouring countries. The other is the bottom-up approach that shows how risks and insecurities were perceived by refugees, and how they reacted to them by forming a strong web of solidarity towards the anti-apartheid struggle that united refugees and immigrants alike.

Chapter 6 discusses the dynamics linked to the ideas of citizenship and belonging. In this chapter the contrast between the top-down and the bottom-up approaches will be apparent. It shows how the Botswana state has constructed ideas of citizenship based on a non-racial policy that would exclude ethnic claims while considering all citizens equally as Batswana. In practice this politics has proved to have an ethnic dimension, which becomes evident in the way citizenship is understood by individuals on a daily basis. In particular, the chapter highlights the perceptions of discrimination and of not quite belonging that South Africans, now naturalised citizens of Botswana, have, by virtue of the fact of not belonging to one of the main Tswana tribes. The concept of autochthony will also be explored. The chapter ends with an overview of the village of Mahalapye and the development of the dynamics between the different ethnic groups living in the village.

Chapter 7 explores in detail the development of transnational connections between the country of origin and the country of migration among South African migrants. After discussing these connections at the economic and political level, the focus of the chapter shifts to identity, sense of home and kinship. The chapter argues that former migrants have developed multiple identities that reflect their lives ‘in between’, and multiple attachments towards South Africa and Botswana, enforced by the strong kin ties that migrants have in both countries. Moreover, it presents John’s narrative, the son of a refugee, which articulates the strands discussed throughout the chapter.
Chapter 8 is the conclusion, which presents and discusses the final remarks and findings of the research. The aim of this is to highlight the connection between the different layers of the discussion on transnationalism and citizenship and to pull the strands together.
Chapter 2: Transnationalism and citizenship in southern Africa

This chapter provides an analysis of the concepts of transnationalism and citizenship, dealing with three levels of analysis. First, they will be discussed in more general terms within the academic debate; secondly, they will be contextualised within the southern African region. Finally, they will be discussed with regard to the settlement in Botswana of former immigrants and refugees who left apartheid South Africa.

Transnationalism is defined by Bauböck (2003: 701) as the complex of ‘human activities and social institutions that extend across national borders’; thus, it is a useful framework to analyse the way immigrants engage in economic, social and political activities at the same time with the country of origin and the country of settlement. Through a discussion on transnationalism and related ideas of identity and integration, the chapter will show how South African former migrants in Botswana represent an example of transnationalism. Former immigrants and refugees have established connections between the country of origin and the country of migration for decades, which are particularly evident in the way they have shaped their identities and sense of belonging.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the question of citizenship. In particular, it will review Aihwa Ong’s (1999) concept of ‘flexible citizenship’ with the purpose of showing the alternative ways immigrants and refugees negotiate citizenship in a transnational perspective. Moreover, citizenship is investigated through a discussion of immigration and refugee legislation in southern Africa and its historical and political construction in the context of Botswana society.

The chapter has two main purposes: firstly, it introduces the theoretical framework and the body of the literature. Secondly, the overview on southern Africa provides the basis to contextualise the historical interactions amongst the countries of the region, but also the specific dynamics around the nation-building process in Botswana and the country’s approach to immigrants and refugees.
2.1: Defining transnationalism and its contextualisation in southern Africa

Transnationalism is defined by Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994: 7) ‘as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement’. These processes are defined as transnational in order to emphasise that immigrants ‘build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders’ (Ibidem). On the same line Guarnizo (1997: 287) first defined transnationalism as ‘the web of cultural, social, economic and political relationships, practices, and identities built by migrants across national borders’. He then refined it by stating that transnationalism ‘is understood as a series of economic, sociocultural, and political practical and discursive relations that transcend the territorially bounded jurisdiction of the nation-state’ (Guarnizo, 1997: 288). The common characteristics of these definitions outline how transnationalism covers multiple aspects of immigrants’ life: social, economic, cultural and personal. Moreover, Guarnizo’s second definition highlights how these multi-layered ties have repercussions and implications for the understanding of identity, citizenship and nationality as rooted in a given territory.

Transnationalism was first used by scholars (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller, Szanton Blanc, 1994; Guarnizo, 1997; Levitt, 2001a) who studied immigration from the Caribbean islands to the United States and the growing connections of these migrants with their countries of origin. Similar patterns of behaviour have been found in other migrant experiences in other areas: sending remittances to home countries is a usual practice for Caribbean immigrants in the US as well as for immigrants in other parts of the world (Glick Schiller et al., 1992: 6). Riccio (2001: 584), for instance, talking about the transnational experience of Senegalese immigrants in Italy, argued that for them transnational migration means engaging in economic transactions (including trade) across international boundaries, and over considerable distance, spending much of their time away from their place of origin, but returning there at fairly frequent intervals with the overall goal of creating an economic, social and spiritual life for themselves and their families in Senegal.

In more recent literature, transnationalism has been connected with globalisation, since a feature of the latter is the ‘rapid increase of cross-border flows of all sorts’,
including people (Castles, Miller, 2009: 51). Globalisation had important effects on the transformation of societies with consequences to people’s mobility. It introduced new development in technology, transportation and communication systems, which resulted in cheaper airfares to facilitate travelling, but also the promotion of the image of the West as the land of work opportunities and prosperity that attracted migrants (Castles, Miller, 2009: 56).

A major point of criticism against transnationalism focused on the fact that connections between migrants and their home countries existed in past migration movements as well. In response, Vertovec (2001: 574) stated that connections between the country of origin and the country of immigration have always existed, but in the past, migration studies used to focus mostly on integration and adaptation problems. In addition, another difference with migrant movements in the past lies in the development in communication and transportation technology that have facilitated and increased the maintenance of bonds with the home country (Gielis, 2009: 271). Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999: 219) argued that what makes the phenomenon original and therefore a topic worth being investigated ‘are the high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that require cross-border travel and contacts on a sustained basis’.

Therefore the intensity of the exchanges and the technological advances that facilitate them, within the context of a globalised economy, are the characteristics that draw the main differences between new and old forms of migration. As the debate continued, a consensus grew about the fact that transnationalism represents a new analytic tool, but not a new phenomenon. Portes (2003: 875) for instance argued that cases of transnational migration had occurred in the past as well, but what was lacking at the time ‘was a cogent theoretical perspective to illuminate their similarities’. That is, transnationalism provides the lens to reconceptualise experiences in historical literature in order to highlight common features to be compared with more contemporary events (Portes, DeWind, 2007: 10). This perspective embracing ‘old’ forms of transnational migration is particularly relevant to this research as it provides the key to read and understand the case of South African immigrants and refugees in Botswana. The thesis explores the historical construction of transnational connections in southern Africa and how these ties have
shaped the societies and relations of the countries in the region, in particular South Africa and Botswana.

The concept of transnationalism has generated further criticism. Waldinger and Fitzgerald (in Levitt, Jaworski, 2007: 131) argued that the scope and importance of transnationalism were only concentrating on certain migrants, e.g. Caribbean migrants to the United States. Furthermore, they contested Smith and Guarnizo’s distinction between ‘transnationalism from above’ (which concerns corporations and states) and ‘transnationalism from below’ (which concerns international migrants), as they argued that ‘describing the actions of states as transnational, however, deprives the concept of analytical leverage’ (Waldinger, Fitzgerald, 2004: 1180).19 Some critiques concentrate on the concept itself and its ambiguities: Kivisto (2001: 550) highlighted how competing definitions of the term ‘transnationalism’ result in failing to specify its temporal and spatial parameters. He also criticised the fact that transnational scholars have mostly failed to locate transnationalism in relation to other concepts, in particular assimilation. He proposed an alternative that considers the former as a variant of the latter, since migrants are engaged in a process that involves not only maintaining ties with the home country, but also acculturating and adapting in the host society (Kivisto, 2001: 571).

Another interesting critique regards the extent to which migrants, more than states, are responsible for regulating the interests and connections between the country of migration and the host state. Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004: 1185) highlight the fact that states are mostly responsible for this and tensions among countries provide ‘the motivation to tighten up on those whose loyalties extend abroad’. States are responsible for citizenship rules, and these create conditions for participating in different contexts, either host or home. This last point in particular has interesting implications in the case of South African former migrants in Botswana.

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19 Guarnizo distinguishes between transnational activities started and conducted by institutional actors such as states and multinational corporations and grassroots activities initiated by immigrants and their counterparts in the home countries (Portes, Guarnizo, Landolt, 1999: 221).
Transnational experiences in southern Africa and the case of South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana

Migration patterns in the southern African region have undergone important changes in the past two decades and since the end of apartheid there have been ‘new opportunities for internal and cross-border mobility and new incentives for moving’. During the apartheid years, migration consisted mostly of unskilled labourers from neighbouring countries employed in the mines or in the manufacturing sector in South Africa, whose movements were strictly regulated by pass laws. Undocumented immigration was common too, and in the 1980s the government erected electrified fences on the border with Mozambique to prevent ANC guerrillas and Mozambican refugees escaping the civil war from entering the country (Crush, 2001: 110).

South Africa and, to a lesser extent, Botswana, have become the targets of transnational migrants, attracted by relative wealth and job opportunities. It is however important to question, as Crush and McDonald suggest, the extent to which these transnational movements in the region are new, considering the long history of cross-border migration in southern Africa. Centuries of labour movement ‘that has been dependent on the expansion of industrial and agricultural capital’ have in fact characterised the region since the 1800s (Crush, McDonald, 2000: 12). Nonetheless, the two authors endorse the use of a transnational approach to discuss contemporary migration patterns in southern Africa because ‘transnationalism that engages in both the local and the global, the psychological and the structural, the personal and the institutional, can contribute enormously to our understanding of the forces that drive and shape cross-border migration’ (Crush, McDonald, 2000: 13).

Other scholars adopted the transnational lens in order to explore contemporary migration movements in southern Africa. For instance, Lubkemann (2000: 62) discussed the evolution and changes of Mozambican migrants’ life strategies, especially in relation to the increase of transnational polygyny, compared to the trends of the past decades; Peberdy and Rogerson (2000: 37) show how migrant entrepreneurs are connected to or are part of networks of transnational trade and family relations.

To better understand the specificities of the case discussed in this thesis it is important to draw a distinction between the apartheid period (from the first migration
waves in the late 1950s until 1994) and the post-apartheid years (from 1994 onwards), as already mentioned in the introduction. South African immigrants and refugees started arriving in Botswana since the late 1950s, although cases of movements of migrant workers had occurred decades earlier. South Africans arrived in Botswana as a result of discrimination and apartheid policies in their home country that forced many people (political opponents and others) to look for better employment and education opportunities abroad.

Migration opens windows to a range of opportunities and possibilities that migrants can use to construct and shape their identities and sense of place. It requires a degree of adaptability and resiliency, and this was very true for apartheid migrants, who often had to move through different places before being able to settle. A former immigrant interviewed for this research told her experience:

I am a very adaptable person because I grew up adjusting to many societies, and I grew up in a township. My parents decided to send me to Swaziland when I was 16 to complete my high school. After that it was my own decision, but I could not see myself going to a South African university. So I went to university in Lesotho. At that time I realised I could not go to South Africa and live there anymore. My original plan was going back to Swaziland and get the citizenship there, but then I met my husband in Lesotho, who also was a student there but from Botswana. So that’s the reason why I ended up here. I arrived in Botswana in 1970.

Because of the nature of the apartheid system, it was very difficult for many migrants (refugees in particular) to maintain contacts and ties with their country of origin, unless they changed citizenship, which would allow them to return to South Africa as Batswana citizens. This, then, is a case of transnationalism set in particular circumstances, which, along with the lack of technological innovation, initially did not present ‘the high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that require cross-border travel and contacts on a sustained basis’ that characterise other transnational migrations (Portes, Guarnizo,

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20 Some South Africans for instance had moved to Bechuanaland at the beginning of the 1900 to work for the railway construction or in farms.
21 Interview with Mrs. N.S., former immigrant, Gaborone, 3rd December 2010
22 This, however, was possible for immigrants only. Refugees, being at risk of arrest in South Africa for their political activism or for leaving the country without documents, did not risk venturing back to their home country until the fall of apartheid.
Transnational connections had been already established, but their intensity was limited by apartheid legislations and constraints.

The post-apartheid years brought a change for South Africans living in Botswana, most of them by now citizens of the host country. Innovations in the field of communication have virtually blurred the boundaries between the two countries, allowing former immigrants and refugees to effectively establish cross-border transnational links (Portes, Guarnizo, Landolt, 1999: 224) and to ‘construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society’ (Glick Schiller et al., 1995: 48). Furthermore, first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 opened the country to its former citizens living abroad, allowing them to vote and to take active part in its new political life. The transnational exchanges between the two countries have increased since the demise of apartheid, allowing for the intensity of connections to grow compared to the past.

Transnational ties have always existed, and the establishment of democracy in South Africa in 1994 has contributed to make them more apparent. Furthermore, as explored in more detail in the following chapters, transnational cross-border ties have been particularly evident in migrants’ personal sphere, namely how they have constructed a hybrid identity, whereby immigrants ‘take on a multiplicity of identities that are a combination of home and host’ (Crush, McDonald, 2000: 9-10).

2.2: Unfolding transnationalism: implications for identity and integration

Transnationalism entails a sort of dual life for migrants, who engage in activities that concern both their country of origin and their country of migration. This duality has important implications for the way migrants conceptualise their identity in the sense of a fluid construct subject to change; it is ‘a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’” (Hall, 1990: 225). Cornelissen and Horstmeier (2002: 61) argued that identities are not fixed, but dynamic and fluid, and respond to changes in the social environment. Furthermore

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a
mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall, 1990: 225).

Identities are thus a product of society. Also, they are not determined, but subject to historical processes; identities get increasingly fragmented, subject to historicisation and constant transformation (Hall, 1996: 4). The constructivist approach to identity has become widespread, as it has challenged the essentialist idea that identity is given (Calhoun, 1994: 13). In fact, essentialism failed to see and recognise the changes that occur in a person’s life in a particular social and political context (Bereketæab, 2004: 225).

The approach to migration through the lens of transnationalism has opened a window onto on-going processes of construction of identities that span national borders. Transnationalism deeply affects individual and collective identities and creates new ones (Heisler, 2001: 225). Rouse (1995: 354) explained that many scholars have endorsed the assumption that migrants developed ‘multi-local and transnational affiliations’. The next chapters of the thesis will explore how South African former migrants have developed multiple identities that reflect the diverse features of their experience in living in-between places.

Many scholars have proposed conceptualisations of identity that keep in account people’s mobility and how this has affected individuals’ sense of self and ideas of place. Akhil Gupta (1992: 63) for instance argued that late capitalism and postcoloniality ‘have resulted in the repartitioning and reinscription of space’, which had a deep impact on the imagining of national homelands and for the construction of nationalism. Furthermore, he stated that nationalist discourses of authenticity need to be reformulated, keeping in mind new conceptualisations of the spatial grids through which identity is mapped. In fact, processes of migration and displacement ‘are, increasingly, sundering the fixed association between identity, culture and space’ (Gupta, 1992: 76). What Gupta suggests, therefore, is the need to reformulate and redefine previous conceptualisations of identity in a fixed space in the light of transnational processes of migration.

Similarly, Liisa Malkki (1992) explains how identity, nations and their relation with people have been conceptualised in territorialised and ‘naturalised’
terms, and therefore uprootedness and displacement have been considered as pathological. Taking as example two groups of Hutu refugees from Burundi who lived in a refugee camp and in a township in Tanzania, she outlines alternative forms of the relation between nation and people, not necessarily territorialised. Hutu refugees living in the camp considered themselves as ‘a nation in exile’, and they valued and enforced their status as refugees by refusing to become naturalised in a place where they did not belong (Malkki, 1992: 35). In contrast, town refugees saw themselves as ‘broad persons’ and their lives and identities were situated in the context of their lives in the township (Malkki, 1992: 36). Her study highlights the problems of conceptualising nation and identity in territorialised terms, when refugees (and immigrants as well) conceive these ideas as having more fluid and loose boundaries.

Malkki’s work has been strongly criticised by scholars like Kibreab (1999) who take a more ‘sedentarist’ approach to the question of refugees, place and identity. For instance, Kibreab (1999: 399) contested Malkki’s point that town refugees hid their identity because of a sense of deterritorialised identity or loss of their links with Burundi. Kibreab instead argued that hiding their identity was a ‘strategy of invisibility’, devised as a necessity against forms of harassment from Tanzanian authorities. This point would not indicate a deterritorialised identity but, on the contrary, a way to maintain their Burundian national identity (Kibreab, 1999: 396). In turn, Jansen and Löfving (2009: 5) contested Kibreab’s arguments, particularly for presuming that denying the essential link between territory and identity implies the negation of any link at all.

This thesis takes an approach that does not view identities as rooted and territorialised, but as constructed and negotiated in multiple locations. The development of multiple identities is enforced by the transnational connections that former migrants engage with and that highlight migrants’ feelings of attachment towards the country of origin and the country of migration. In addition, this research illustrates the fact that the link between migrants’ identity with a place can have a ‘naturalised’ dimension, which is visible through kin relations and the burial of family members. These points will be returned to in chapter 7.
Transnationalism and integration

It is important to analyse the implications that transnationalism has with regard to the integration of migrants in the host society, particularly in light of their engagement in cross-border activities and allegiances. Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes (2006: 287), discussing the integration of migrants from different countries living in the Netherlands, define migrants’ integration as ‘the incorporation of new elements (immigrants) into an existing social system’. Integration is considered a multi-dimensional concept, although many scholars tend to separate socio-economic aspects of integration from social and cultural aspects (such as interethnic relations, shared norms and cultural adjustment).

The debate on transnationalism and integration mostly revolved around the question whether developing and maintaining ties with the home country would impede integration into the host society (Vertovec, 2001: 575). Nagel and Staeheli (2008), by discussing the case of British Arab activists in the UK, their integration and their relation to their home countries, analysed how scholars have been recently studying the simultaneity of transnationalism and integration in the way immigrants participate in multiple political communities. Immigrants’ lives have shown that they ‘cannot be understood in terms of transnationalism or integration, but rather, in terms of multiple combinations of transnational and ‘assimilative’ practices’ (Nagel, Staeheli, 2008: 419).

Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes (2006) explained why transnationalism and integration are not at odds. The dichotomy can however be influenced by class, as for those immigrants in underprivileged conditions maintaining identification with the country of origin may hinder the process of integration. Their work showed that transnationalism does not constitute an impediment to integration; however they highlighted that those groups perceived to be culturally different revealed a high level of identification with the country of origin accompanied by poor integration in both the economic and social fields (Snel, Engbersen, Leerkes, 2006: 304). Interesting results on the question of integration of transnational migrants came from Mazzucato’s research on Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands. She argued that migrants contribute highly to Dutch society, even though they maintain strong ties with Ghana. Dutch government policies, however, create the greatest impediment to
their integration, hampering as well their possibilities to invest in their country of origin (Mazzucato, 2008: 213).

The aforementioned studies demonstrate different links between integration processes and the existence of transnational connections. This thesis also distinguishes between economic and social aspects of migrants’ adaptation in the host country. By economic integration I mean the degree to which migrants have access to sustainable livelihoods in Botswana; by social integration I mean the extent to which migrants feel accepted by Batswana citizens and integrated into the society. With the term ‘acceptance’ I refer to two aspects: the first one is the extent to which immigrants and refugees perceive that they have been victims of discriminatory attitudes by the local population. The second aspect is to what degree immigrants and refugees, once they have achieved Botswana citizenship, have been considered citizens on equal terms to Batswana ‘by birth’ (that is, Batswana people born in the country from Tswana-ethnic parents). While in the first case ‘acceptance’ stresses the refugees and immigrants’ perceptions, in the second case it stresses Batswana citizens’ attitudes towards foreigners who acquire citizenship. Particularly in chapters 6 and 7, I will show the generally high level of integration of South African former immigrants and refugees into Botswana. Integration being an individual process, there are obvious differences in the ways and degrees to which former migrants have integrated, with some people for instance now feeling assimilated to Botswana society. The maintenance of transnational connections has not hindered their integration process; on the contrary, the thesis demonstrates how these ties have strengthened migrants’ attachment to and identification with Botswana.

2.3: Understanding citizenship and its implications for refugees and immigrants

This section analyses the concept of citizenship and its implications for refugees and immigrants. Citizenship will be explored from different angles; as a theoretical concept, in comparison with the notion of refugee, and as an instrument. The ideas discussed in this section will return in the chapters that follow.
Citizenship in a concise definition can be described as the legal relationship between the individual and the state (Sassen, 2002: 278). However this concept presents a multitude of nuances that reveal its dynamic character. Charles Tilly (1995: 8) defined it as ‘a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations…’. Similarly, Soguk (1999: 9-10) argued that, due to the fact that the citizen occupies a bounded territorial community, he or she is the subject of political life. The state derives its powers from the citizens it represents, on which it deploys law and force. The community of citizens, namely the nation, thus empowers the state; the latter represents and protects them within a sovereign bounded territory. Citizenship therefore is considered a contract (Tilly, 1995: 8) between people who live in a determined territory and the state that rules that determined territory; a contract that binds both citizens and state with mutual rights and duties.

Citizenship entails the dichotomy of exclusion and inclusion. As a depository of rights and obligations that links people to a state, citizenship creates outsiders and strangers. Brubaker (1992) explained that states define a set of people as their citizens and members, and foreigners as non-citizens and aliens. He also underlined how citizenship is not simply a question of residence:

> It is an enduring personal status that is not generated by passing or extended residence alone and does not lapse with temporary or prolonged absence. In this respect the modern state is not simply a territorial organization but a membership organization, an association of citizens (Brubaker, 1992: 21).

States and citizens need to create an ‘other’ to construct their identity. The other in this case is represented by foreigners, who are often excluded from enjoying certain rights reserved to citizens. Because of its capacity to include certain categories of people and exclude others, Brubaker (1992: 23) considers citizenship a ‘powerful instrument for social closure’. In this respect he explored the idea of territorial closure, which occurs when the right to unconditional residence within a state’s borders is differentiated between citizens and non-citizens. The former are allowed to reside, as well as participate in internal interactions, like voting or serving in the army. Non-citizens may or may not be allowed to continuously reside in a country (documented immigrants may still be subjected to expulsion or deportation) and cannot take part into the above-mentioned interactions (Brubaker, 1992: 23-24). The
principle of territorial closure is very important for the modern nation-state, since it allows it to bar the entry or residence of non-citizens. It is useful for the purpose of regulating the cross-border traffic of immigrants. States, in fact, are strongly interested in the possibility of regulating and monitoring migration fluxes for their ability to ‘compel, induce, discourage, or forbid the entry or exit of particular categories of persons’ (Brubaker, 1992: 25).

In response, immigrants, but also refugees, have formulated their issues and struggles ‘through the language of rights and obligations, and hence of citizenship’ (Isin, Turner, 2002: 1). The question of immigrants posing a challenge to the concept of citizenship as a membership that guarantees freedoms and rights is tied to the dichotomy between liberal versus national citizenship. The claim of citizenship rights from immigrants and refugees reflects the tensions between ‘universalistic liberalism and particularistic nationalism, the first pushing towards equal rights and liberties for all of its members, the second toward excluding from these privileges all non-members’ (Joppke, 2005: 43). These tensions are reproduced in the concept of citizenship, which on the one hand guarantees access to liberal freedoms, but on the other, ‘was dependent upon national, particularistic membership that matched state boundaries’ (Long, 2013: 16).

This contradiction in the implications of citizenship is evident in the status of immigrants and, in particular, of refugees. Hannah Arendt (1967: 296-297) described citizenship as ‘the right to have rights’, which has come up in the spotlight ‘only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation’ (Ibidem). Basically, then, the events that generated waves of refugees from the end of WW1 made the world aware of the importance of belonging. This was the time when old, multinational empires (the Austro-Hungarian, the Tsarist and the Ottoman empires) collapsed, giving way to the formation of a number of nation-states in place of them. Widespread violence and conflict often followed this process, generating waves of refugees (Haddad, 2008: 100-101). In addition, the Minority Treaties, signed in the aftermath of WW1, failed to work. They were discriminatory, as only the new states were bound to comply with these obligations, causing an intensification of the resentment towards
minorities, as their presence ‘forestalled achievement of full sovereignty’ (Zolberg, Suhrke, Aguayo, 1989: 13).

Arendt defined refugees as homeless because they had been deprived of their homeland, stateless because they had left their state, and rightless because they had been deprived of their human rights; they were therefore ‘the scum of the earth’ (Arendt, 1967: 267). Moreover, the discourse on refugees leads to a discussion of the state’s right to protect its citizens. The condition of refugeehood instead is based on the ‘absence of state protection which constitute the full and complete negation of society’ (Shacknove, 1985: 277). Soguk (1999: 9-10) explained how the refugee is represented in certain discourses as the antithesis of the citizen, referring to the conventional problematisation of the question of refugees:

These studies…define the refugee as one who lacks the citizen’s unproblematic grounding within a territorial space and, so, lacks the effective representation and protection of a state. While the citizen remains rooted in the territorial space, the refugee is seen as uprooted, dislocated, displaced, forced out, or self-displaced from the community of citizens. This is the refugee’s identity – his ascribed identity. The refugee is one lacking affinity with the national community.

The relation between citizenship and refugees has further implications when it comes to finding a solution to their plight. Kibreab (2003) relates refugees’ willingness to return home to their situation in the country of asylum: if they enjoy rights of the likes of those granted to citizens they are more willing to remain in the host country. On the contrary, if they are not granted these rights, as happens in many developing countries where ‘the basis of the entitlements to rights is nationality, not residence’, they would prefer returning to their country of origin in order to enjoy citizenship rights (Kibreab, 2003: 47). Long (2013), however, contests the idea that repatriation of refugees must be conceived exclusively as a physical act of exiles going back to the country of origin. Repatriation can also be political and entails ‘the re-entering into a relationship between citizens, nation and state’ (Long, 2013: 230). There can be a repatriation without physical return, with refugees regaining citizenship from their country of origin but physically remaining in the country of resettlement (Ibidem). The case of the Bafuluri refugees discussed in chapter 4 will provide an example of refugees who turned into transnational migrants.
Considering the situation of apartheid refugees from South Africa, their repatriation followed the demise of the racist regime and its replacement with democratic institutions in 1994. In their case repatriation was therefore the physical act of returning to South Africa and achieving citizenship. Most refugees living in Botswana returned to their home country, but some remained where they had resettled. The proximity of the two countries and the establishment of transnational links turned former refugees into cross-border commuters, living in Botswana as Batswana citizens, but maintaining continuous ties with South Africa, reinforced by numerous trips across the borders to visit relatives. Thus, they have re-entered into a relationship between citizenship and state; in addition, the transnational connections have allowed them to re-establish relations with the country of origin. They have become what Long (2013: 213) defines as ‘transnational mobile citizens’, where ‘home’ exists ‘in and between both locations’.

Transnational migration, which sees migrants conducting lives across borders and maintaining allegiances and trade ties that span the borders of the country where they have settled, also questions the concepts of citizenship and nation-state. According to Joppke and Morawska (2003: 1), because of this trend and new emphasis on immigrants’ trans-border ties, some scholarship saw contemporary immigration as ‘undermining some traditional principles of nation-state, such as the congruence of political and cultural boundaries of citizenship’. An interesting perspective on the idea of citizenship and its relation with the nation-state comes from Ong and her study of ‘flexible citizenship’ in the context of migration of Chinese nationals. Ong (1999: 112) maintained that the concept of citizenship in itself has been transformed in its meaning and form with globalisation and the flows of skilled and unskilled immigrants. Globalisation made ‘economic calculation a major element in diasporan subjects’ choice of citizenship, as well as in the ways nation-states redefine immigration laws’. Within this context Ong introduced the idea of flexible citizenship as a strategy developed by individuals as well as governments in order to accumulate capital and power. It is specifically defined as

the cultural logic of capitalist accumulation, travel and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions. In their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility,
mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes. These logics of practices are produced within particular structures of meaning about family, gender, nationality, class mobility, and social power (Ong, 1999: 6).

Governments respond to the challenges of globalisation and transnationality within a logic of flexibility that explains why the concepts of nation, nation-state and boundaries have not become insignificant. Ong (1999: 112) argued that states continuously adjust to the influx of migrants and to the ways of engaging with globalisation in order to minimise the costs and increase the benefits. For example, states redefine immigration laws to attract skilled migrants that can bear capital and to restrict the entrance of unskilled labourers.

Ong explored flexible practices associated with transnational capitalism, by looking at Chinese subjects who benefited from globalisation, flexibility and mobility. Despite the characterisation that Ong gives to the idea of ‘flexible citizenship’ by inserting it in the Asian context and among the strong new economies and the specific consequent dynamics, it is possible to apply aspects of this model to the case of South African immigrants and refugees in Botswana. Immigrants and refugees left South Africa to move to Botswana not on a ‘quest to accumulate capital and social prestige’ (Ong, 1999: 6). Even the economic reasons that pushed immigrants to cross the border must be understood within the political context of apartheid South Africa. Immigrants had left South Africa to find a job or pursue education because the political situation and the laws in their country had made their life at home difficult. Refugees on the other hand had escaped South Africa to avoid arrest for their political involvement and moved to another country in order to be able to either carry out their activities from abroad (as it was the case of Mr. L.N. and Mr. G.H), or to start over a new life (as it was the case of Mr. G.X., who moved to Mahalapye and started his own business). Transnational business is still run by former immigrants and refugees who have cross-border interests and travel often to South Africa.

The concept of ‘flexible’ citizenship is present, although it is not reflected in the image of the ‘multiple-passport holder’, for the simple reason that, during the apartheid years, black South Africans were rarely issued with passports and Botswana did not (and still does not) recognise dual citizenship. But citizenship is
still ‘flexible’ for the political meaning that it assumed for immigrants and refugees. An interesting example in this sense is represented by this quote from Mrs. D.N.:

E.S.: You arrived in Botswana in 1964 and got the citizenship in 1967. Why did you change your citizenship?
Mrs. D.N.: Because I didn’t have citizenship in South Africa.
E.S.: But you had a passport?
Mrs. D.N.: Yeah. When I got a passport it was to go to a conference in Nairobi in 1962, and I was supposed to submit it back. But I didn’t, and I was able to use it again. But this didn’t make me a citizen.23

In addition, citizenship became instrumental for those South Africans who could not return home before the end of apartheid, but needed documents to travel and feel a sense of belonging. Mr. L.N., pointed this out clearly:

Mr. L.N.: I applied for citizenship here in 1981. If I wanted to travel I needed a passport which would work. I needed a Botswana passport because my South African passport was already giving me problems through the borders beyond Botswana.
E.S.: After you applied did you still want to go back to South Africa?
Mr. L.N.: Yes of course, definitely. Yeah probably in the ‘80s.24

Achieving Botswana citizenship had the same meaning for South African immigrants and refugees as holding multiple passports had for the Chinese diaspora. They are both safeguarding mechanisms. On the one hand Hong Kong migrants sought a flexible position in the global economy by accumulating papers from countries other than those where they were investing in. They managed properties in countries like China and Great Britain, but held citizenship in countries like Canada and Australia, but also Samoa and the Philippines (Ong, 1999: 123-124). On the other hand, South African immigrants and refugees, who were not recognised as citizens by their home country, sought a flexible position of another kind. They obtained citizenship in Botswana where they had resettled in order to be able to return to South Africa (where their family lived), to travel abroad and, most importantly, in order to feel a sense of belonging in a country that would recognise them as citizens.

23 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
24 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011. Mr. L.N. did not have a South African passport, but a travel document, which allowed him to travel only to the countries neighbouring South Africa. This is the reason he could not use it to travel beyond Botswana.
2.4: Citizenship and the nation-building process in Botswana

This thesis discusses citizenship in Botswana from two perspectives. In this chapter (this section and the following one) it is analysed through the ‘official’ discourse and state policies towards immigrants and refugees; in chapter 6 the experiences of former migrants will provide an understanding of citizenship from a bottom-up perspective. This section in particular focuses on the idea of citizenship as different from other concepts, such as nationality and ethnicity. Due to their overlapping meanings, it is easy to conflate them (Oommen, 1997). Their analysis and their distinction are important to understand Botswana’s nation-building process and how the idea of citizenship is understood through the ‘official’ perspective as well as from a bottom-up approach. Both in this section and in chapter 6 it will be possible to see how Botswana’s conceptualisation of citizenship often reflects the interests of the dominant elite (in this case, the Tswana majority).

The concept of state refers to a territorially defined unit where the collectivity of citizens live. Nation however is a more elusive term, whose definition and understanding has evolved across time. Some common traits can be identified among the various definitions, which can be summed up in Habermas’ succinct explanation which views the nation as having ‘the connotations of a political community shaped by common descent, at the minimum by a common language, culture and history’ (Habermas, 1998: 399). Gellner (1983) reconnected the origin of nation-states to the industrialisation of societies, and Anderson (2006) argues that the nation was born out of the Enlightenment and as a product of the interactions between capitalism and print. Historically we have seen nation-states being established in Europe in the 1800s as a result of nationalist revolutions, as happened in Germany and Italy. In other cases, nation-states were the result of the dissolution of empires (the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires after WW1).

In Africa, the state was the result of the collapse of colonial empires after WW2. As Berman (2013: 360) explained, ‘nation-building tried both to create a discourse of legitimacy for the state and a doctrine of popular sovereignty and citizenship’. In post-independence Botswana, the government created discourses of legitimacy by elevating the culture of the dominant group, the Tswana, to a position of dominance as the national culture of the country. On this regard, Kymlicka (2001:
explained how the nation-states are the product of nation-building policies adopted by the state in order to ‘strengthen a sense of nationhood’. However, as we will see with Botswana’s nation-building process, institutions of inclusion such as citizenship are tied to ‘ethnic and national forms of exclusion’ (Wimmer, 2002: 5). A dominant ethnic group, then, holds the ‘ownership’ of the state and ‘excludes’ non-national and non-ethnic others (Joppke, 2005: 44).

In both this section and in chapter 6 we will be able to see how citizenship is understood in the official discourse as inclusive and equal, regardless of people’s ethnicity. In practice, however, this understanding that emphasises the elite rhetoric ‘we are all Batswana’ (Durham, 2003) contrasts with the way former migrants have conceptualised citizenship based on their lived experience as naturalised citizens. In other words, both chapters focus the analysis on the tension between the legal conceptualisation of citizenship as upheld by the state, emphasising the equality of all citizens, and minorities and former migrants’ claims of recognition of their identity, culturally distinct from the Tswana majority but integrated within the boundaries of their Botswana’s citizenry.

The concept of citizenship is distinct from nationality. According to Levitt and de la Dehesa (2003: 594) ‘nationality refers to the formal legal status of state membership. Citizenship delineates the character of a member’s rights and duties within the national polity’. In addition, Sassen (2002: 279) talks about a ‘bond of allegiance of the individual to the sovereign’ in her definition of nationality. Faist (2000: 202), on the other hand, defines citizenship as ‘an expression of full and formal membership. Citizenship forms a continuing series of reciprocal transactions, between a citizen and a state’.

The way nationality and citizenship interact with migrants’ transnational lives has assumed an interesting aspect. Faist suggests that transnational activities can imply that membership is multi-layered. This is a form of transnational citizenship that does not deny the existence or relevance of borders and nation-states, but does recognise the possibility of membership in two countries (Faist, 2000: 209). Faist (Ibidem) identified different degrees of dual membership:

Dual state membership refers to the fact of being a citizen in two states; less fully-fledged forms could mean being a citizen in one state and a settled
immigrant with a sort of denizenship\textsuperscript{25} status in another. At a minimum, it tolerates immigrants’ close ties with the country of emigration.

The case of Botswana mostly reflects the third typology. The country does not allow dual citizenship (at the age of 21, citizens with dual citizenship are required to make a choice, or they lose the Botswana one). South African former migrants are now naturalised citizens of Botswana and have renounced their South African membership. Despite this, they have established strong ties with their country of origin which, as will be seen in chapter 7, also have a political dimension.

The concepts of nationality and citizenship interplay on different levels in the case of South African former migrants in Botswana. The construction of transnational ties allowed migrants to overcome the character of citizenship as the unique repository of certain political rights. South African migrants, despite being now Botswana citizens, are entitled to vote in both countries. In addition, transnationalism has influenced the national bond. South African former migrants in Botswana have developed a dual attachment, which is not expressed through owing dual citizenship, but through the growth and development of multiple identities that reflect the various aspects of their attachment to the country of origin and to the country of migration. Transnationalism has therefore affected notions of citizenship and nationality by making their boundaries looser and their meaning overlap on multiple levels.

For this reason, citizenship and nationality are often used synonymously. As Long (2013: 13) noted, the merging of the two notions can be an act from a dominant elite which would determine the inclusion or exclusion of a particular group. Nation-building in Botswana revolved around the non-racial policy implemented in the aftermath of independence that aimed to construct a national idea of Botswana not based on ethnic groups. The aim of this nation-building process was ‘to create a unified and unitary nation-state out of the diversified Bechuanaland Protectorate’ (Saugestad, 2001: 28). This nation-building process ended up merging and conflating the concepts of state, nation and ethnicity through the assimilation of minority groups into the broader idea of Tswanadom to create one nation, the Tswana nation. Werbner (2002) called this process the ‘one-nation consensus’.

\textsuperscript{25} Denizenship denotes the status of a migrant’s permanent residency in the country of migration (Faist, 2000: 203)
The ethnic dimension of citizenship in Botswana

The idea of citizenship in Botswana has been politically and ethnically manipulated. It has been used, in the past as well as in a more contemporary period, as an instrument by the Tswana elite to design policies that dictated who could claim rights of membership in pre and post-independence Botswana. This sub-section shows how the concept of citizenship itself has evolved from pre-colonial to colonial Botswana, with reference to the membership of the morafe, that is, the ‘tribe’. Afterwards, it analyses citizenship in the post-independence period, with regard to two categories of the population, women and ethnic minority groups. This analysis explores how citizenship law in Botswana and the perpetuation of precolonial practices have negatively affected these more vulnerable categories in terms of rights and claims of belonging. This analysis is important because it explains how the ethnic dimension of Botswana citizenship has generated discrimination against non-Tswana, including minorities and naturalised citizens.

Kymlicka and Norman (2000: 14, quoting McGarry, O’Leary, 1993), explained how assimilation policies are used to eliminate ethnic differences within a state. This can be done in a more or less coercive way. Following the less coercive way, the state grants individual rights to all citizens, but refuses to recognise minority languages and cultures, stressing the fact that public institutions and the social life of the country have to reflect the dominant culture. Since independence Botswana has followed this less coercive policy of assimilation, whereby assimilation assumed the meaning of ‘a muted acceptance of being located in a very inferior stratum in the hierarchical order of the Tswana morafe’ (Gulbrandsen, 2012: 213).

Tswana is the main ethnic group in the country, divided into eight ‘tribes’: Bangwato, Batawana, Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla, Bamalete, Barolong and Batlokwa (Schapera, 1955: 2). However the overall population consists of a significant number of non-Tswana groups as well, such as the Kalanga (Shona-speaking), who live in the north-east region, or the Khoisan, living in Ghanzi and Kgalagadi districts (Parsons, 1985: 27). There is also a white minority, including a small community of Afrikaans-speaking people living in the Ghanzi area since

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26 The numerical majority of Tswana-ethnic citizens has been contested by some, like Mpho (1989), and Parsons (2006), who argued that non-Tswana, if taken together, might constitute a numerical majority.
before the late nineteenth century (Russell, Russell, 1979). On the whole, there are around 55 indigenous groups who speak 26 languages (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002: 17). Botswana is a ‘tribal’ society, where ‘tribal’ has a political meaning, referring to

A centralised chieftaincy, and hence the members of other ethnic groups who pledge their allegiance to a particular Tswana chief are members of that tribe. Individuals or groups may change their tribe by transferring their allegiance to a different chief. Thus, birth and ethnic homogeneity are not necessary components of this definition of tribe (Wiseman, 1978: 487)

Pre-colonial Tswana societies tended to absorb foreigners and conquered populations, allowing them (although with distinctions, since some of them were considered inferior to Batswana) to become members of their society but, at the same time, to retain their own culture (Gewald, 2002: 214). When a foreigner wanted to join a ‘tribe’, he/she had to report to the chief and ask to join. That is because membership of a ‘tribe’ did not depend on birth but by allegiance to a chief, as is stated in the definition of the term ‘tribe’. The chief enquired about his/her reasons for joining the new ‘tribe’ and then contacted his/her former chief to make sure there were no outstanding matters, such as unpaid debts. If the foreigner’s application was accepted there would be a year-long probation. Thereafter he/she was regarded as a full member, although on an inferior level to the other members (Schapera, 1955: 118-119). A ‘tribe’ is thus not a closed group where membership is fixed by birth, but ‘an association into which people may be born, absorbed by conquest, or enter of their own accord, and from which, again they may depart voluntarily or be expelled’ (Schapera, 1953: 35).

In the case of conquered people, a distinction was traced according to the status of the subjects: if they were Tswana belonging to a ‘reputable lineage’, they would have enjoyed full citizenship rights after some time. But if they belonged to ethnic groups deemed ‘inferior’, like Kgalagadi or Sarwa, they would have been serfs or forced to pay tribute (Schapera, 1955: 120-121). Non-Tswana groups were embodied and imagined occupying a subordinate position (Parson, 1984: 37). The fluid and loose character of membership to a ‘tribe’ in precolonial and colonial Botswana did not provide a barrier against discrimination towards non-Tswana. Despite being able to retain their own culture, as Gewald stated, foreigners, when they were considered ‘inferior’ to Tswana, did not enjoy the rights of other members.
When the British arrived in 1885 and established the Protectorate over the territory ‘the highly centralised hierarchical Tswana chiefdoms’ (Peters, 1984: 33) lost part of their autonomy, but the chiefs and ruling elite maintained their privileges. There were common interests between the chiefs and the colonial authorities: the local Tswana elite still had extensive control over the people and the land, which provided the British ‘with a structure-in-place that it could build on and, if necessary, attempt to co-opt’ (Peters, 1984: 32-33). Consequently, the authorities did not want to get involved in the chiefdoms’ internal affairs, resulting in the elite increasing their power over their subjects (Bennett, 2002: 7). The authorities also tended to refuse any request of secession in order to maintain the status quo, and any attempts of minority groups to resist the Tswana elite were crushed with the support of the colonial administration (Bennett, 2002: 8). Therefore, the discriminatory attitude towards non-Tswana groups that has been perpetuated in post-independence Botswana finds its roots in the access to rights of membership of a ‘tribe’ and in the support to the Tswana elite provided by the colonial authorities.

Botswana achieved independence in 1966 when it became a liberal and non-racial democracy. According to Margo and Martin Russell (1979: 135), a number of factors contributed to this decision:

The liberal British influence on decision makers; the necessity to be seen to be opposed to South Africa economically; and the preponderance of Tswana in the composition of the population which ensured that for most people the policy would be without impact.

The non-racial policy at the basis of the country’s nation-building process focused on three main areas: political, economic and cultural. Both on the political and economic sides, tribal interests were minimised or put under state control. On a cultural level, assimilation and homogeneity were favoured, in order to create one nation, the Tswana nation. In order to carry out this politics of assimilation, only Tswana and English were recognised as national and official languages respectively. Before independence, other languages were taught at school, but afterwards they were banned from the main arenas of public life, such as education, judiciary and media (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002: 17).
A consequence of this policy was the creation of the notion of ‘minority groups’ in Botswana. Minority represents a political/legal status (Solway, Nyati-Ramahobo, 2004: 605). Non-Tswana groups are thus considered ‘minorities’ insofar as the Tswana have managed to successfully impose their dominance. The result of this was the creation and perpetuation of the image of Botswana as a mono-ethnic country (Dorman, Hammett, Nugent, 2007: 9). This has been done under the assumption that ethnicity in the nation-building process contrasted with the plan of a unified national development (Saugestad, 2001: 28). As Saugestad (2001: 71-72) explained, at the time of independence Botswana was a sovereign state in the sense of being a territorially and politically defined unit, but it was not a clearly defined community with a sense of common nationhood. The leadership therefore had to create a national unity under a unifying force; the Tswana chiefdoms became these symbols of national unity.

In this nation-building process ethnicity was left out since it was seen as a conflicting principle. Raising the issue of ethnic identity in Botswana still leads to accusations of fomenting ‘tribalism’ (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008: 3). Ethnicity describes and categorises people on the basis of so-called objective aspects such as language, biological traits, religion or mode of production (Saugestad, 2001: 55-56). The Botswana government chose to put aside ethnic particularities to emphasise national homogeneity (Saugestad, 2001: 72). It annihilated ethnic diversity in order to create a mono-ethnic nation-state, based on Tswana identity. This allegedly non-ethnic policy is in fact an ethnic one, as, in the name of a united Botswana nation, it perpetuates the dominance of one ethnic group, the Tswana, over the others, which are excluded from the public sphere of the society. The most apparent result of this process is the name of the country itself, Botswana, which represents the dominant ethnic group (Young, 2007: 249). Every Botswana’s citizen is a Motswana, but only for some of them does civic citizenship coincide with their ethnic citizenship (Nyamnjoh, 2007a: 315).

The question of citizenship and minority rights has been widely discussed. According to Kymlicka and Norman (2000: 2) many societies include citizens of ‘ethnocultural minorities’, namely citizens of a state who belong to a different ethnic or cultural group in relation to the majority of the national population. The two
authors highlighted the debate around the question of legitimacy for a state to issue particular rights to respond to claims from minority groups. Those who criticise minority rights envisage the risk of a ‘politicisation of ethnicity’, with the rise and increase of mistrust and antagonism between ethnic groups (Kymlicka, Norman, 2000: 3-10). Those who favoured minority rights, on the other hand, have replied to the critiques by stating that multiculturalism is not inherently unjust. Policies that do not consider the differences among the ethnicities composing one nation are actually perpetuating and enforcing the interests and identities of the majority group, therefore creating barriers, exclusion and stigmatisation. Adopting minority rights can offer a remedy to disadvantages and inequalities (Kymlicka, Norman, 2000: 3-4).

This debate reflects the different positions over minority rights in Botswana: at one side are some Tswana-ethnic citizens who have formed Pitso ya Batswana (Clarion Call for Batswana), an association established to uphold Tswana culture, which views minorities’ claims of recognition as unpatriotic (Molomo, 2008: 165). On the other side are minority groups who ask for recognition of those cultural and political rights that are granted to Tswana tribes only (such as the right to be represented in the House of Chiefs).

Ethnicisation of citizenship and discrimination against minority groups have been legitimised by the provisions of Sections 77, 78 and 79 of the 1966 Constitution. These sections mentioned the eight Botswana ‘tribes’ only, relegating other ‘tribes’ to minority status (Nyamnjoh, 2004: 43). As a result, discrimination along ethnic lines occurred: discrimination included inequalities of access to land, privileges in the use of Setswana to the detriment of minority languages, and unequal representation in the House of Chiefs, whose task is advising the Government on culture and tradition (Nyamnjoh, 2004: 43).27 In 2000 President Mogae set up a commission in order to investigate the matter (the Balopi Commission). The first draft of the white paper caused resistance and criticism from the Tswana majority. The white paper originally meant to remove the \textit{ex-officio} status of the members of the House and subject them to designation. Furthermore, territoriality rather than

\footnote{27 According to the Constitution, the paramount chiefs of the eight Tswana tribes are member \textit{ex-officio} of the House of Chiefs. Their role is hereditary and lifelong after their installation. The other seven members have the status of sub-chiefs and are subject to election (Solway, 2002: 719).}
birthright was chosen to be the basis for representation in the House (Nyamnjoh, 2004: 44).

Because of the opposition of the main Tswana ‘tribes’, the white paper was revised, with the reintroduction of the ex-officio members as permanent, and their numbers were raised from eight to twelve, in order to add four chiefs representing the districts of Chobe, Ghanzi, the North-East and Kgalagadi alongside the Tswana ones. Most of the minority groups, however, rejected the revised white paper, accusing President Mogae of bowing to pressures coming from the Tswana chiefs and thus ignoring the findings of the Balopi Commission (Nyamnjoh, 2004: 44-45). The four members of the House who would have been elected represent ethnically mixed areas, with the consequence that there was ‘no way in which these members of this chamber in the Parliament could signify the existence of any particular ethnic group’ (Gulbrandsen, 2012: 218).

The gender dimension

Not only ethnic minorities, but women too have been discriminated against as a result of the manipulation of the concept of citizenship. Gaidzanwa (1993) argues that the pattern of the male-headed monogamous family, with its gender biases, pervades the southern African idea of citizenship. The case of Unity Dow exemplifies this by showing how women were victims of discriminatory citizenship laws and, more broadly, of a persistent patriarchal attitude. By citing Malokomme (1987), Gaidzanwa (1993: 45) explains that the 1982 Citizenship Act of Botswana was enacted in response to the concern that Botswana citizenship was too easily obtained. Prior to the Act, citizenship in the country was based on jus soli, as all children born in the country were entitled to it, regardless of their parents’ origin.

In 1984 an amendment to the Act abolished jus soli. According to the amendment, children born in a marriage between a Motswana man and a foreign woman, and children of unmarried Batswana women would be citizens of Botswana. However, children born from a Motswana woman married to a foreign man would not be citizens (Dow, 2001: 325). This amendment forced Batswana women who did

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28 Originally in italics.
not want to be in a relationship with Batswana men to live outside marriage or to emigrate. As Gaidzanwa (1993: 45) explained, emigration had important consequences, since services such as educational opportunities, scholarships and jobs were available only to citizens, excluding non-citizens even if they paid taxes in Botswana and contributed to the economy of the country.

As a result of this difference in treatment, a group of professional women, most of whom were personally affected by the law, established Emang Basadi (Stand up women) in order to fight the law. Among them was Unity Dow, a lawyer married to an American citizen, who in 1990 decided to bring the government to court to have the law changed. In 1991 the High Court ruled in her favour, and when the government lodged an appeal, the Appeals Court upheld the judgment (Geisler, 1995: 564). For four years however, the government failed to correct the Citizenship Act accordingly. Public discussion continued, particularly at kgotla level. A speaker at a kgotla meeting in the village of Mochudi observed that the changes to the Act would affect other discriminatory laws, having an impact on the culture of Botswana. Few women had the chance to speak at this meeting and most speakers expressed their resistance to any amendments to the Citizenship Act. Eventually in August 1995 the Parliament passed an amending bill (Good, 1996: 44).

This gender dimension is a very important point to highlight when discussing citizenship in Botswana: even though the law has changed, gender still defines how individuals identify themselves, and how they are identified by others. In practical terms, therefore, the parents’ nationality still determines someone’s identity, particularly when he or she relates to others. This discussion on gender becomes particularly relevant in the analysis of citizenship and identity construction in chapters 6 and 7.

Citizenship in Botswana is ethnicised and gendered, since it has been used by the (male) elite of the country to perpetuate discriminatory practices of the precolonial and colonial period against the most vulnerable categories of its population, namely women and ethnic minorities. When it was challenged by members of these categories, who attempted to vindicate their rights in front of the Constitution, the elite barricaded itself behind the rhetoric of tradition and Tswana customs to be
defended against ‘foreign’ threats. Furthermore, the policy of assimilation reflects what Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994: 36) meant when they discussed the hegemonic character of nation-states, which legitimises the power of the dominant class in terms of shared culture and history. Nation-building is then defined as

the hegemonic process, structures, and daily practices by which subordinated classes within a state consent to their domination. The dominant class within a nation-state forges legitimacy by claiming to represent a unity among sectors of the population that may be culturally diverse and are always hierarchically stratified.

The hegemonic character is valid also for the concept of ethnicity, which, by establishing hierarchy and diversity contributes to the building of the nation-state. The dominant elite of the nation-state then tried to subordinate populations economically and politically with daily practices that constitute identity and differentiation. Subordinate populations can however use their differentiation to challenge the domination within the nation-state (Basch, Glick Schiller, Szanton Blanc, 1994: 39). This aspect of the nation-state is relevant as it helps understand the idea of Tswanification as the basis of the construction of a Botswana nation in the aftermath of independence in 1966. The politics of Tswanification consisted of assimilating minority groups living in Botswana within the majority of the dominant Tswana ethnic group in the name of a united, non-racial nation-state. This policy of assimilation of non-Tswana ethnic people ended up annihilating the cultural and political role of minorities in the country.

2.5: Citizenship and immigrant and refugee laws in southern Africa

This section focuses on refugee and immigrant legislation in South Africa (with reference to regional trends) in order to give a sense of spatial and temporal continuity among regional policies and attitudes towards migrants. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, there is a difference between the way citizenship is officially considered and regulated by the law of a state and the way it is perceived and shaped on a daily basis by the population. Later in the thesis I will discuss how citizenship is
constructed and negotiated on grassroots level, highlighting in this way the differences between policy-making on a state level and the daily dynamics of identity construction, a sense of belonging and the dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion. This section is important because it ties citizenship to migration movements in the region and to the concept of nationality in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

Southern Africa has a long history of migration, with the majority of workers migrating to South African mines and farms. The establishment of democratic institutions in 1994 allowed South Africa to get more integrated into the region, by joining the Southern African Development Community (SADC),\(^ \text{29} \) which brought an increase of documented migrant movements (Crush, Williams, Peberdy, 2005: 1). The migration of skilled people into South Africa has interested African countries in particular: in 2000 legal entries from other African territories were around 17,562; in 2008 the figure rose to 46,787 (Crush, Williams, 2010: 17). Increased scrutiny and restrictions on migrants’ rights in the post-apartheid era resulted in a rise in the number of undocumented immigrants (Bakewell, de Haas, 2007: 109).

Undocumented migration finds its causes in the economic and political situation of the countries of origin in the region. These countries, such as Mozambique, are considerably poorer than South Africa; the latter, after the demise of apartheid, offered migrants more job opportunities and political and civil rights (Croucher, 1998: 644). In addition, the fact that some parts of the borders between South Africa and its neighbours are porous and alleged cases of corrupt immigration officials have facilitated the entrance of undocumented immigrants in the country (Maharaj, Rajkumar, 1997: 258).

Considering refugee policies in the region, Rutinwa (2002: 52) grouped them together according to their historical development: the first group, during colonial times, included policies dealing with refugees’ plight within the context of the broader immigration legislation. Moreover, the laws of this period were mainly concerned with the entry and residence of refugees, leaving out other aspects regarding refugee protection. The second group of policies dates back to the 1970s

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\(^ {29} \) SADC is an organisation of the southern African states aiming at achieving economic cooperation and integration in the region. It was founded in 1980 under the name of SADCC (Southern African Development Coordination Conference). It later changed its name. South Africa and Namibia joined after the demise of apartheid.
and 1980s, when the first refugee acts were enacted in the region (Tanzania and Botswana were the first ones, in 1966 and 1968 respectively), focusing mostly on aspects concerning the control of refugees and, again, excluding the aspects concerning their protection (Rutinwa, 2002: 54). Finally, the third group dates back to the early 1980s and regards changes in previous legislation and new acts, in South Africa (1998) and Namibia (1999): these laws are more comprehensive and liberal than those enacted in the previous years, but their application is more restrictive (Rutinwa, 2002: 56-57).

South African refugee legislation is among the most progressive in the world for guaranteeing protection but also for offering extensive freedom of work and movement. Despite this progressiveness, refugees in daily life do not enjoy protection to the extent described in the 1998 Act (Landau, Amit, 2014: 6). Landau (2008: 36-38) explained that refugees and asylum seekers often have limited access to the health system and are charged additional and illegal fees; despite their right to work in the country, many refugees face increasing difficulties because discrimination against foreigners in the job market has included them. The discrepancies between the openness of the legislation and the numerous constraints in practice are the result of the country’s effort to control access to its territory, generating ‘dysfunctional by-products that threaten to undermine the rights, health, security and prosperity of all the region’s residents’ (Landau, 2008: 42).

It is interesting also to analyse the impact that immigration and refugee policies have on the population of southern African countries. In their study Jonathan Crush and Wade Pendleton (2004: 9) found out that southern African people, particularly from South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, are not in favour of an ‘open border’ policy that would allow freedom of movement in the SADC region, whereas Zimbabweans are the most supportive. Intolerance and xenophobic attitudes have increased in the region in the past decades: the peak was reached with a horrific episode in 2008 in Alexandra Township, when 60 people (mostly foreigners, but also South Africans who had married foreigners or had refused to participate to the bloodshed) were killed and many raped or wounded (Landau, 2011: 1). Chapter 6 will explore how xenophobia has developed in Botswana as well.
Xenophobia in South Africa is linked to post-apartheid conceptualisation of citizenship. Klaaren (2011: 138) defined xenophobia as ‘the dark side of South African citizenship’. Citizenship in South Africa has always been a highly contested concept because of apartheid and post-apartheid laws determining who could be a citizen and who could not. Apartheid legislation in particular was a ‘powerful allocator of identities’ (Singh, 1997). For instance, the Bantustan policy implemented in the 1950s denied South African citizenship to hundreds of thousands of black people and forced them to move to their ‘homelands’ and then return to South Africa to work as ‘foreigners’ (Neocosmos, 2006: 30). The policy of separate development created a question of belonging, as it made African people ‘alien’ in their own country and citizens of their ‘homelands’. They therefore lost their right to belong to the South African state: ‘because Africans and whites by definition belonged to different nations, Africans were defined out of the nation and out of the political rights’ (MacDonald, 2006: 13).

In the post-apartheid era attention around citizenship rights has shifted toward immigrants and refugees. The 1996 Constitution refers to inclusion, democracy and human rights for all citizens, put together by a divided but shared history that singles out ‘true South Africans’ (Peberdy, 2001: 27). The new South Africa’s construction of identity is therefore based on the concept of inclusive citizenship for all, regardless of differences and, consequently, the idea of who has the right to belong and who has not (Peberdy, 2001: 28). Neocosmos (2006: 16) also explains how citizenship is reduced to indigeneity, and is thus dependent on birth: indigeneity, he claims, ‘implies an exclusive conception of nationality and citizenship, meaning that those conceived (in whatever way) to be outside territorial boundaries are excluded from rights and entitlements’. Again, although in a different form, the South African state draws a distinction between those who can claim citizenship, and those who cannot; those who belong and those who do not.

Citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa tended to leave foreigners outside, who were often labelled with the derogative term of Makwerekwere (Nyamnjoh, 2006: 40). Few of them, who were exploited during the apartheid era, have been

30 The term indicates a black person coming from a country assumed to be economically less advanced than South Africa or Botswana. During apartheid the term had a strong racial connotation,
granted citizenship in democratic South Africa; the xenophobic tendencies that have been spreading since 1994 ‘are clearly an outcome of a narrowly nation-state-based citizenship’ (Nyamnjoh, 2006: 40). In addition, Landau (2010: 222) highlighted the contradictions between political discourse and legislation: while most South African politicians are publicly committed to regional integration and tolerance, legal mechanisms in practice curb the movement of low and moderately skilled migrants. According to Landau (Ibidem), ‘it is almost impossible for non-nationals with temporary contracts, without contracts, or with refugee/asylum status to regularize their stay or claim the status of inalienable, inviolable insiders’. Consequently, throughout the country foreigners are regularly arrested and detained (Landau, 2010: 223).

This section depicted the refugee and immigration policies, and their relation to citizenship, currently framing South African legislation, with the aim of providing a background picture within which to discuss and analyse Botswana’s refugee and immigration policies in the following chapters. This section also identified regional patterns, which provide a sense of continuity with Botswana’s trends, such as the rise of xenophobia in the country.

**Conclusion**

This chapter focused its analysis on transnationalism and citizenship. The discussion developed on three levels: first, the analysis had a broad perspective, with a general overview of academic literature around the definition of these concepts. Secondly, the concepts have been applied and discussed in the context of southern Africa, with the aim of highlighting how they have been perceived and how they have evolved. Finally, the analysis moved to the specific case that is the focus of this thesis, in order to see to what extent apartheid immigrants and refugees in Botswana reflect the patterns of transnationalism and to investigate the historical and political dynamics revolving around the concept of citizenship in Botswana.

as it was used to identify people believed to be the ‘darkest of the dark-skinned, and to be less enlightened’ (Nyamnjoh, 2007b: 81).
Transnationalism has proved to be a useful tool in analysing the interactions and cross-border links of former South African immigrants and refugees living in Botswana. This framework contributes to understanding and explaining some of the main themes discussed in the thesis, namely identity and citizenship. South African former immigrants and refugees have reconstructed their lives in-between places, which involves negotiating the way they conceive their identity and sense of ‘home’ between Botswana and South Africa. Furthermore, the idea of ‘flexible citizenship’ reflects how the dynamics of identity construction take into account migrants’ survival strategies. Citizenship is therefore conceived instrumentally, in a way that has allowed former immigrants and refugees to become members of Botswana society when they were denied this right in their home country. It is also conceived transnationally, as former migrants have created connections that span the border and that entail the construction of multiple identities and attachments to multiple places.

The main purpose of this chapter was to offer an initial analysis of transnationalism and citizenship, as these concepts will be developed more in-depth in the remaining chapters of the thesis. In particular, the following chapter will focus on migration movements in southern Africa and the establishment of transnational connections in a historical perspective.
Chapter 3: Mobility and transnational ties in southern Africa in a historical perspective

This chapter offers a historical perspective on migration movements in southern Africa, with the intention of showing how the experience of South African immigrants and refugees crossing borders to Botswana can be positioned within a transnational framework. Transnational connections in the region have always existed through the political, social and economic ties that immigrants and refugees have established between their homeland and their country of resettlement.

This chapter identifies three types of movements in the region and in the relations between Botswana and South Africa. The first concerns labour movement, with a particular focus on migrants who moved to South Africa to work in the mines. The second regards freedom fighters of national liberation movements en route through Botswana towards training camps in other countries; others used Botswana as a base to infiltrate back into their home country. The third concerns refugees and immigrants who settled in Botswana in search of better work and education opportunities, or because the police were pursuing them for their political activities. And it is within these streams that this research is positioned, as it analyses immigrants and refugees from South Africa to Botswana. Thus the latter was sending migrants as well as receiving them; migrants left Botswana directed to South Africa, and to the mines in particular, and Botswana received refugees and immigrants in search of safety and employment.

The first part of the chapter focuses mostly on labour movements, as refugees, immigrants and freedom fighters were sporadic cases before the apartheid was implemented in 1948. Attention will then move to the other two categories in the subsection on the apartheid era, as these are the decades that saw refugees and guerrilla fighters crossing paths with labour migrants. The chapter will discuss these three movements with the purpose of exploring and explaining the web of social, political and economic connections among the countries of the region. The second part of the chapter will narrow down the geographical perspective in order to concentrate on the relations between Botswana and South Africa.
This chapter is important because it offers a historical account of some theoretical aspects discussed in the previous chapter, such as the establishment of multiple strands of connections (social, economic and political) between the countries in southern Africa and between Botswana and South Africa, and the creation of refugee flows as a result of the collapse of empires (in Africa in the 1960s).

3.1: Labour migration in southern Africa

The first section of the chapter aims to explore labour movement in southern Africa, with an overview of how it developed to become one of the major forces shaping the socio-economic structures of the countries in the region. This overview is also helpful to highlight the continuous interchanges that have existed among the peoples of southern Africa. In addition, this chapter contributes to the argument of the thesis because it explores the origin of Botswana’s roles as a host country for refugees and as a transit passage for different categories of migrants, as further analysed in chapters 4 and 5.

The history of the countries in southern Africa is a history of connections, interactions and overlapping interests. Transnational exchanges have been occurring in the region for centuries, through the movements of migrant labourers, guerrilla fighters, political refugees and economic immigrants. One aspect in which these ties are particularly evident concerns the economic sphere and the labour movements that it involved. The majority of labour migrants left their territories to work in South Africa, but there have been cases of migrants leaving South Africa to work in Botswana. One of the people who has been interviewed for this research is a member of one of the first Xhosa families who moved to the village of Mahalapye at the beginning of the 1900. Talking about his relatives, he stated:

They came through this border, eastern Mahalapye border. They were looking for green pastures. There was a white man here, who was a farmer. So now he employed my parents, the Ntshinganes from South Africa as his farmers, that’s why they started their life here. They came to know the uncle to Seretse, Tshekedi Khama. So now this old man is the one who my uncle was working
with, though his parents were working with the whites. My uncle helped Tshekedi on how to drive and other things.31

Labour migration thus also involved South African people crossing the border of neighbouring countries and working there, where they would eventually settle. The case of the Ntshingane family is of particular interest because they were among the first families to settle in what is now Mahalapye; they met and befriended the Bamangwato royal family, from whom they received the land where they settled.32

South Africa has always been the strongest of the southern African countries from an economic and political perspective; the opening of diamond and gold mines in the Kimberley area (Orange Free State) and the Witwatersrand respectively in the second part of the nineteenth century attracted European capital and labour force from as far north as Tanzania. As Wentzel and Tlabela (2006: 72) explained, though, labour migration existed before the opening of the mines; in the 1840s Basotho migrants worked in farms in the Orange Free State, and in the 1850s and 1860s Mozambicans were employed in Natal and Western Cape. The discovery of gold and diamonds increased labour migration, which developed into a system of large-scale recruitment of cheap labour across the region (Ibidem). According to scholars of Marxist ideology, this migrant labour system was established for the profit of the mining sector, and the segregationist policies that organised South African society were specifically developed to nurture the mining industry and capitalist agriculture (Worden, 2012: 3). Because of this, Samir Amin (1972: 519) defined the whole region as ‘Africa of the labour reserves’.

As Worden (2012: 4) explained, the Marxist perspective was challenged by other views that emphasised the role of the individual and community experiences. Crush (1984) for instance criticised the Marxist perspective for focusing on the role of labour reserves in the economic mechanism and ‘on the effects of the existence of labour reserves and not on how and why the migrant labour system actually came about’ (Crush, 1984: 121). Moreover, Beinart (2001: 32) argued that labour was not cheap initially, as the employers had to meet the cost of recruitment and the acquisition of skills. On this point Harries (1994: 51-52) highlighted how Mozambican labourers working at the diamond mines in Kimberley were paid high

31 Interview with Mr. Ntshingane, grandchild of former immigrants, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
32 Interview with Mr. Ntshingane, grandchild of former immigrants, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011
wages that they secured through processes of negotiation and contention with their employers. According to Beinart (2001: 32), therefore, ‘the origin of mass migrancy need to be sought as much in the dynamics of African societies as in the demands of the gold mines’.

Considering the socio-economic structure of African societies in pre-apartheid South Africa it is possible to understand migration patterns as well as the transnational connections that migrants maintained with their families back home. As seen in the previous chapter, transnationalism provides the framework to understand the connections that migrants establish between their country of origin and the country where they have settled. Scholars have started referring to transnationalism since the 1990s to discuss contemporary migrant movements. However, ties between the home country and the country of migration have always existed and transnational connections in fact are also evident in the ties maintained by labour migrants in southern Africa from the 1800s. These connections can be seen in the remittances that workers used to send to their country of origin and in the pattern of oscillating migration that developed according to South African legislation.

Labour migration in southern Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was organised according to an oscillatory system. This became a characteristic feature of southern African labour movement, and it was carefully regulated by the system of influx control that prevented non-whites from settling permanently in urban areas (Wilson, 2011). The mines recruited Africans from the whole region, employed them for a limited period of time (as established in the contracts) and then sent them home (Wilson, 2001: 104). According to the law, foreign workers were allowed to stay in South Africa for no longer than two years (Adepoju, 2006: 33).

It is also interesting to note the special status granted to Africans from the Protectorate territories, namely Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland. Klotz (2013: 140-141) explained that foreign African men employed in the mines did not have to carry passports; in addition, those coming from the Protectorates did not have the legal obligation (as other foreigners did) to return home if they did not renew their contracts. They could therefore move to urban industrial jobs like Africans from South Africa, even though in 1952 the white government extended the pass system to foreigners. Furthermore, Africans from the High Commission Territories (HCT)
could also gain residence rights. It was not until 1963 that this legislation was tightened, establishing new border posts with the Protectorates and imposing travel documents on migrant labourers from the HCT (Klotz, 2013: 147). Therefore in the 1940s and 1950s Batswana citizens like Fish Keitseng and Michael Dingake who were living in South Africa could take up different jobs without being repatriated by local authorities. Keitseng changed many jobs while he lived in South Africa in the 1940s and early 1950s: he first worked in the mines, afterwards he found employment in construction, then in a poultry business and in a furniture shop (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 24-26). Dingake never worked in the mines; he initially moved to South Africa for education. When he was no longer able to pay his school fees in the early 1950s, he took up different jobs in the building sector (Dingake, 1987: 28).

The uncertainties represented by legislation in the segregation and apartheid years compelled migrant workers to find alternative means of income in addition to their wages, which highlights the strategic role of transnational links for migrants. Agricultural production carried out by the migrants’ relatives in their homeland served to make up for the meagre remittances that workers sent home, as well as to provide a sort of insurance for the labourer in case of unemployment or after retirement. The role of remittances in particular would become imperative with time: in the 1980s, the level of remittances in Lesotho, for instance, reached 50% of the country’s GNP (Wentzel, Tlabela, 2006: 77). Thus remittances for all migrant labourers became a fundamental part of their survival strategies; the wide majority of migrants sent a substantial portion of their salary back home, which were used mostly for consumption purposes, but also to safeguard migrants against unemployment (Lu, Treiman, 2011: 1124).

Another characteristic of labour migration is the way gender relations have shaped the labour force. Women had a subordinate role that compelled them to carry the burden of domestic and agricultural labour (Bozzoli, 1983: 155). When the mines opened and the migrants began to arrive, women were excluded because the job was considered ‘natural’ for men, although women were not spared from the harshness of farm works. This was not only due to the choices of mine managers, who considered men best suited for this kind of job, but also to the gender division of labour: ‘it was
the weight of the African domestic domain that helped determine that the particular form taken by gender-division should be that of territorial separation and migrant labour’ (Bozzoli, 1983: 157-158). Women therefore became employed as migrant labourers at a later stage compared to men, delaying their proletarianisation and entrenching their role within the domestic and rural spheres (Bozzoli, 1983: 162).

Female migration from Botswana to South Africa started before the 1920s, but it accelerated in the 1930s due to disasters that hit Botswana; drought, economic depression, outbreaks of syphilis and bilharzias and high rates of cattle diseases (Cockerton, 1997: 44-47). More women therefore migrated to work. As Cockerton (1997: 47) recorded in her oral interviews, they moved to South Africa because their families were starving and they felt responsible for feeding them. This shows how the pattern of migration changed across the years; not only the youth and the men migrated to work, but also women, particularly those who were single, young and childless (Cockerton, 1997: 48), who felt compelled to travel in order to support their relatives. This movement anticipated by a few decades the flow of women refugees and immigrants from South Africa to Botswana. Some were qualified, skilled women who moved to Botswana and worked as teachers (like the majority of those that have been interviewed for this research). Others were politically active and were running away from the police, as many did in the aftermath of the Soweto riots.33 Women often took an active part in the liberation struggles of their home countries, sometimes becoming guerrilla fighters themselves (cf. for instance Tanya Lyons, 2004, for an account of female freedom fighters in Zimbabwe; Harry West, 2000, on women’s participation in Mozambique’s liberation struggle; Cherryl Walker, 1991, on women resistance in South Africa).

The system of labour migration entrenched the central role of South Africa in the regional economy, increasing its dominance over its neighbouring territories. This circular migration was enforced and perpetuated by strict legislation that regulated people’s movement. Botswana was part of this circle, sending migrants to work in South Africa, but also receiving them, as in the case of the Ntshingane family. In addition, labour migration marks the beginning of transnational

33 BNA OP 27/32: Application for political asylum: Lindy Angiline Zikalala, 15th March 1977. This is just an example of a student refugee. Other women who left South Africa were older, some were married while others were single.
connections between Botswana and South Africa, connections that would strengthen over time and that would see the increasing flow of different types of migrants in both directions.

The mines and the rise of labour migration in the segregation years

Mining was the trigger of large-scale movements in the southern African region. It soon became the core of South African economic development and the labour force of black migrant workers constituted the foundations of this system. Migrant labour included South African workers who moved from rural to urban areas and to the mines as well as foreign workers recruited by organizations such as WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) and brought to work in the mines (Wilson, 2011). South African mines could count on a large pool of countries from which to draw on migrant labourers; the three Protectorates of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, Mozambique and Malawi were among the main sources. (Neocosmos, 2006: 41).

An important feature of mining work was the use of compounds, a consequence of the fact that workers were not allowed to settle permanently in the place of work. Labourers used to live in single-sex compounds ‘which minimizes costs while maximizing social control’ (Massey, 1983: 436). Congregating workers in these enclosures allowed the authorities to exercise strict control over them; in case of trouble the compounds could be easily sealed and policed. Furthermore it allowed a tougher control over absenteeism and to isolate those workers considered as troublemakers (Massey, 1983: 437).

As Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu (2010: 244-245) explained, the compound was a male-only, highly regimented space, located near mine shafts, so that workers could be mobilised at short notice. The control of the authorities on the workers also extended to the private sphere; visits from spouses were controlled and regulated and recreational activities such as sport and religious associations were promoted by the mining companies because they were considered non subversive. Attempts to form unions, instead, were violently crushed, as it happened with the African Mineworkers Union (AMWU) after the 1946 strike (Bezuidenhout, Buhlungu, 2010: 245). This
system of compound remained substantially unchanged for eighty years and entrenched the system of oscillating migration (Wilson, 2011: 5-6).

The Botswana’s citizen and ANC member Motsamai Mpho worked in the mines as a welfare assistant. He remembered the miners’ life in the compound:

A compound accommodated 600 or more men. No women were allowed into the compound... Conditions in the compound were terrible. A compound is actually only a big four-corner wall divided into large blocks of rooms with book-shelf like cement beds which had no mattresses. Men slept on those shelves stacked on top of each other. A man would go down into the mine on a day-long shift only to come into the compound to sleep on hard cement. The food was just as bad as the sleeping conditions (Mpho, 1996: 23-24)

The discovery of diamonds and gold increased the tensions between the British, who had occupied the Cape Colony and Natal, and the Boers, who had established the Republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. According to Clark and Worger (2004: 15) these tensions over the control of gold erupted into a war between the two from 1899 until 1902. The second Anglo-Boer war ended with the victory of the British and the annexation of the two Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State, which led to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910:

The growing economic interdependence of white capital and coerced black labour was crystallized in this political unity: the political unity from the coastal ports to the mining heartland augmented state power to continue to control the forms of economic interdependence (Legassick, 1977: 180).

These are the years that saw the enactment of laws that further restricted the movements of non-white people. Among them were the 1911 Labour Regulation Act that criminalised strikes and contract-breakings, and the 1913 Native Land Act, which unevenly redistributed the land, assigning 13% of the total area of the Union to the African population. Segregation also meant physical division through the construction of townships where black people lived, separated and excluded from the white settlements. Belinda Bozzoli (2004: 21) defined townships as:

A series of combined and overlapping economic, physical, social, political and ideological systems worked together ‘from above’ as it were, to make these into separate, racial ghettos, defined physically, morally, legally and politically. Each had its own internal sub-systems, of spatial organisation and control as well as clear relationships to the city and country around it.

34 The first Anglo-Boer war was fought twenty years earlier in Transvaal.
Other restrictive laws were enacted in the following decades; all of them, including the restrictions on permanent urbanisation, separation of landownership, the co-optation of traditional institutions (such as the role of chiefs) in order to provide social services and means of control, constituted the policy of segregation (Legassick, 1977: 180-182). Among them is the 1923 Natives (Urban Area) Act, the first major intervention in regulating African urban settlement that aimed to establish segregated areas for Africans to live and a preliminary form of influx control. The Act provided the basis on which further legislation would be built upon (Maylam, 1990: 66). The policy of segregation had a clear impact on labour migrants: ‘along with other mechanisms of labour coercion, segregation created and perpetuated the system of migrant labour which has characterised South Africa’s road to industrialization’ (Legassick, 1977: 182).

The history of migrant labour in southern Africa is not only a history of government legislation that organised and regulated the fluxes of the people. It is also and above all the history of migrants themselves and their plight. The journeys to the mines and fields presented many difficulties, as migrants had to walk to the place of work before an effective transport system was implemented. The Basotho working in the diamond mines in Kimberley at the end of the 1800s and early 1900s had to face two main threats in their perilous journeys. Firstly were robbers, mostly white, who robbed migrants of their savings; secondly were Boer farmers who often assaulted travelling migrants and forced them to work in their farms. The risks decreased substantially with more effective police controls and the extension of the railway line to the Rand area (Maloka, 2004: 95).

Although not as dangerous, and occurring many decades later, the journeys that South African refugees had to face was not without risks or pain. Mrs. K.M, a former refugee interviewed for this research, arrived in Botswana in 1969 without documents when she was 9. She travelled by train from Spring, near Johannesburg, to Mafeking with a gentleman instructed by her father to accompany her to Botswana, where her father already resided. They waited for the night in Mafeking, then they crossed the border by bicycle to the village of Pitsani, where they boarded
the train to Gaborone.\textsuperscript{35} During the interview she recalled the journey and the different feelings she had:

Initially I was very excited. When I left home they didn’t tell me obviously where I was going. The just said, because I lived with my maternal grandparents and aunt, they just told me: “You’re going to your father’s home, to your father’s mother and everybody else.” So I was very excited. Well, eventually during the journey I realised that we were going into Botswana; I was told by this gentleman who I was travelling with that we were going into Botswana. But still I was excited because I was going to see my father for the first time. [...] But I didn’t realise that it meant I could not go back home, and I was very, very unhappy about the fact that I could not go back home. You can imagine, you are a child, leave a place and suddenly you’re told you can’t go back there.\textsuperscript{36}

A difference that can be highlighted from the experience of labour migrants and refugees is in the conceptualisation of home and how they related to it. Labour migrants had to face a dangerous journey to work in South Africa for about a year, and then they would return home. As Maloka (2004: 90) noticed referring to Basotho workers, migrants distinguished between ‘home’ and ‘work’, and the idea of ‘home’ and ‘nation’ excluded South Africa (considered as ‘the place of whites’), and saw Lesotho as ‘the place that provided them with security and sanctuary’ (\textit{Ibidem}). Refugees on the other hand could not go back home, and therefore the same idea of ‘home’ had to be negotiated and shaped in a condition of exile in the country of settlement. ‘Home’ ended up assuming different meanings, as both the place of settlement in exile and the place of origin, linked to the presence of family ties. This point will be returned to later in the thesis.

\textbf{The apartheid era}

In 1948 the National Party won the election in South Africa and Malan became President. The same year segregation was institutionalised as apartheid and new legislation would regulate and further restrict the life and freedom of the African population. In 1952 the Natives Law Amendment Act was implemented to prevent Africans from permanently settling in the urban areas. At the same time cases of persecution for violating the pass law increased from about 280,200 in 1951 to

\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2010
\textsuperscript{36} Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011
631,300 in 1970 (Maylam, 1990: 69). The Native Law Amendment Act granted the freedom to stay in the urban areas only to Africans who had been born there, who had worked for the same employers for the previous ten years or who had lived in town for fifteen years (Beinart, 2001: 158). In this way, the law reinforced the influx control connecting it to controls over employment and residence.

The risk of getting arrested for not fully abiding to these regulations was also a reason for many people to leave South Africa, as was the case for a student in 1960 who could not have his reference book signed during summer holidays:

When the time came for my reference book to be signed by the Principal the schools were on holiday and I was unable to contact the Principal. In order to remain in Johannesburg I took employment with a friend of my cousins and so he was able to sign my reference book to say I was employed by him. I then went to the Native Affairs Department to have my reference book endorsed by them. I had much difficulty in having my book endorsed by them and they referred me from one office to another to, in the end, I did not know what was happening. In the end they stamped my book that I had to leave the urban area of Johannesburg within 72 hours otherwise I would be arrested.

The reference book was the apartheid tool to regulate and control African migration in urban areas. In Afrikaans it was called Bewysboek or Bewysburo, while African people referred to it as the Dompas, the stupid pass (Breckenridge, 2005: 83). As Brekenridge (2005: 85) explained, the book contained ‘the personal history and movements of every African worker’. In addition, it contained official permissions to enter an urban area and to look for employment, and it included a record of medical history, names and addresses of the employers and receipts for tax payment (Ibidem). This system was set to perpetuate migrant labour and to control the movement of Africans who, with the appropriate stamps in their reference book, could work in the cities without being permanent residents (Cox, Hemson, Todes, 2004: 7). Not having the book in order meant being forced to leave urban areas and risk being arrested, as was the case for this student. He left South Africa for Basutoland first, but, feeling unsafe, he moved to Bechuanaland after two months. He planned to move to Ghana

37 Savage (1986) provided a detailed study on the figures related to the pass laws. Between 1916 and 1984 over 17 million people have been prosecuted for violating the pass laws. The peak was reached in 1968, with annual prosecutions of almost 700,000. Afterwards, the decline was almost constant, with a further rise in 1982 (Savage, 1986: 185-186).

38 BNA OP 33/1: Statement of African male Spencer Joel Thloloe, in answer to his Immigration Declaration, 13th August 1960
to further his studies or settle in Bechuanaland to either work or study. The enforcement of the apartheid laws became a determinant cause in people’s life choices. Losing a job or failing at school meant not being allowed to enter the city and white areas, putting heavy constraints on people’s everyday lives.

However, the implementation of apartheid and its policies did not put an end to migrant labour in South Africa. Mine owners were definitely still in need of migrant workers, and in fact since the 1930s the pool from which to draw on labourers had expanded by including countries as far north as Tanzania. At the same time, even the manufacturing sector was rising and started looking at migrant workers as the cheap force to employ (Beinart, 2001: 156-157). In 1960 South African mines relied on foreign migrant labour for about half of its total recruits; in these years however the South African government tried to reduce the influx of foreign labourers in order to replace them with local South African manpower (Crush, Jeeves, Yudelman, 1991: 73). In the 1970s the migratory system began to change. The number of foreign miners particularly diminished from the second half of the decade, as South Africa increased the recruitment of manpower from the homelands. Lesotho remained an important migrant-sending country, and by the 1980s it had become the dominant exporter of labour to South Africa (Neocosmos, 2006: 40-41).

Apartheid laws and the increasing restrictions to freedoms for non-white people generated protests and a rise of militancy among black people's movements and opposition parties such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Protests and demonstrations often degenerated into violent clashes with the police. An emblematic example occurred in 1960 with the Sharpeville massacre that saw the police opening fire against a crowd of demonstrators, killing 69 people. In the aftermath of the slaughter, the main organisations opposing apartheid were banned (the SACP had already been banned in the 1950s) and its members forced to exile or to operate underground. As a consequence of the state of emergency declared after the massacre, road checks were set up near the border with Bechuanaland in order to increase controls on people entering the Protectorate. Bechuanaland officials counted a few road checks, in the surroundings of Gaborone and villages nearby such as
Lobatse, Zeerust and Ramotswa. South African police stationed at these check points had the list of ‘security suspects’ who they wanted to arrest and detain under the emergency regulations.

Migrant workers also became more militant with the organisation of strikes. In the 1940s trade unions such as the African Mineworkers Union (AMWU) organised strikes under the guide of J.B. Marks, a member of the ANC and the Communist Party who was educated in Moscow (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 22). Among the members of the trade union was the Motswana citizen Fish Keitseng, who used to attend meetings addressed by Marks and participate in strikes and stay-at-home calls (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 22-23). His life and contribution to the liberation struggle will be further discussed in chapter 5. For now it is important to highlight the fact that even at the early stage of the anti-apartheid struggle migrant workers (including Batswana citizens) actively participated through strikes.

The radicalisation of South African politics influenced African foreigners living there, whose politicisation ended up having a strong impact on party formation and political life in their home countries. The South African liberation struggle intertwined with local politics in different neighbouring countries. This is particularly evident with the HCT; they hosted thousands of ANC and PAC refugees and guerrilla fighters since 1960 ‘by virtue of the long-standing ties between Africans in these three countries and South Africa’ (Lissoni, 2010: 58). In particular, Basutoland had the highest economic dependence on South Africa among the three HCT. Almost half of its population migrated to the neighbouring country. Furthermore, the elite (the sons of chiefs and of educated Basotho) went to study in South African institutions such as Fort Hare University (Lissoni, 2010: 58-59). Therefore many Basotho during the 1940s and the 1950s got involved with South African politics, especially by joining the ANC and its Youth League. Among them was Ntsu Mokhehle, who founded the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) in 1952. However, over the years, the BCP established closer ties with the PAC because they shared the

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39 BNA OP 33/5: Telegram from Resident Commissioner in Mafeking to High Commissioner in Pretoria, 1st June 1960.
40 BNA OP 33/5: Telegram from Resident Commissioner in Mafeking to High Commissioner in Pretoria, 10th June 1960.
41 Even Seretse Khama, the heir of the Bamangwato chieftainship and first President of Botswana, studied at Fort Hare University.
same pan-Africanist ideology and because one of the PAC leaders, Potlako Leballo, had Sotho origin (Lissoni, 2010: 60).

Similarly, the birth of the Bechuanaland People’s Party was the result of the involvement of its founders with South African politics. In 1962 colonial authorities in Bechuanaland highlighted the fact that organised groups were regulating the movement of refugees in Francistown at that time. One of the groups was linked to the South African United Front (SAUF) offices in London and Tanganyika and the ANC and PAC in South Africa and Basutoland. Another group was organised by Kenneth Koma (a Motswana politician who later would found the left-wing Botswana National Front) in Czechoslovakia working through the BCP. Refugees were waiting to be airlifted elsewhere, and because of that they contacted Philip Matante (one of the leaders of the Bechuanaland People’s Party) who helped organise the airlifts outside the Protectorate.42 From these examples the impact that the South African liberation struggle had in shaping its neighbours’ political landscape is evident. One of the main consequences of decades of labour migration was the migrants’ encounter with South African opposition organisations and their radicalisation. Migrants returned to their home countries with new political experience and nationalist ideas that would be used to assert their political rights before the colonial administrations.

Militancy of migrant workers particularly increased in the 1970s. Their militancy manifested not only through demands to improve wages and work conditions but also through support for the liberation struggle (Crush, 1989: 6). In 1976, for instance, mine workers from Transkei were reported to have expressed solidarity towards Soweto students (Massey, 1983: 442). Moreover, Massey (1983: 440-442) outlined that in 1975 a commission of enquiry into ‘riots’ in the mines asked for a reduction of the employment of foreign labour, as it was becoming too risky. The commission in fact feared that political agitators outside the mines were involved in the disturbances (although no evidence was found to support this thesis) and therefore recommended reducing the number of foreign workers, particularly from Mozambique, as it was feared that guerrilla fighters would infiltrate the

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42 BNA OP 33/6: Telegram from High Commissioner in Cape Town to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London, 26th February 1962.
workforce. As a replacement for Mozambican workers, South Africa turned to South Rhodesia in 1975, but discovered in 1977 that the mines had been used by ZAPU as a conduit for freedom fighters, who would desert the mines shortly after arriving in South Africa and would safely reach Botswana and Zambia for military training. Basotho were also involved in the struggle in South Africa; in the 1980s miners from Lesotho started being elected in high positions within the ANC and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). As NUM became a powerful union, miners also became a powerful base of support for the ANC (Neocosmos, 2006: 44).

As the liberation struggle in South Africa overlapped with those in South Rhodesia and Portuguese colonies, the whole region witnessed the movements of thousands of economic immigrants, political refugees and guerrilla fighters spanning across the borders. In the previous chapter we have seen how the collapse of empires after WW1 generated flows of refugees (see Haddad, 2008); similarly, the collapse of colonial empires in Africa, and in particular in southern Africa in the second half of the twentieth century, generated other flows of refugees, but also freedom fighters and economic immigrants.

In this scenario, Botswana was the crossroads of all these movements. Among those who left, some were more politically active and Botswana was the first step towards military training camps in Tanzania and other territories. Others were looking for a place to settle and work, and Botswana could potentially be that place. Therefore, their journeys often involved moving from one country to another until they would find a place to settle. This is the case, for instance, of one South African asylum seeker; during the 1950s he was very active with the ANC and therefore he was well known by the South African Special Branch. Because of that, in 1960, after the banning of the ANC, he left for Basutoland, but he could not find a job there so he moved to Bechuanaland:

My reasons for coming to Bechuanaland are to obtain a job and for political asylum, and if I find I am unable to find both here I would “feel” my way to going north and eventually to reach Ghana as a stepping-stone. When I left

43 Mozambique obtained independence from Portugal in 1975. The government that followed was led by the Marxist liberation movement Frelimo (the Mozambique Liberation Front). The left-wing tendency of the new government was therefore a major concern for South Africa.

44 Zimbabwe African People’s Union is one of the liberation movements in Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle, founded by Joshua Nkomo.
Maseru I purchased a rail ticket to Lusaka to avoid being stranded if I were unable to find a job or asylum in Bechuanaland.\(^{45}\)

This example is of particular interest because it shows the survival strategies that immigrants and refugees had to take into consideration, strategies that involved moving from a country to another, if necessary, in order to find employment. Here mobility and migration are perceived as survival mechanisms; asylum seekers and immigrants had to think of different options after leaving their home country. This was also evident in the aftermath of the Soweto riots in 1976, when hundreds of youngsters poured into Botswana. Between the end of 1976 and the first months of 1977 many South African (but also Rhodesian) refugees were flown out of Botswana, mostly to Lusaka, since the country could not accommodate all the requests of placement in schools and at university.\(^{46}\)

Freedom fighters were also part of these movements. For them, Botswana was a stage towards military camps in other countries, or a transit corridor in their attempt to infiltrate back into South Africa. Their presence created numerous problems for Botswana, which feared that the presence of guerrilla fighters carrying weapons would trigger South African reactions. The question was raised in meetings between the Botswana government and the ANC leaders in exile, Duma Nokwe\(^{47}\) first and then Oliver Tambo,\(^{48}\) whereby both leaders apologised for those ANC members arrested in Botswana for carrying weapons and assured Botswana about its security. Tambo in particular, during his meeting with Sir Seretse Khama, Botswana’s first President, stated: ‘our arrangements have been made in such a way that South Africa will have no reason to blame Botswana. So, our people were to go through here unnoticed so that when they are caught and tortured they would not implicate Botswana’.\(^{49}\) This quote suggests the fact that Tambo and the ANC were effectively using Botswana as a springboard to attack South Africa and as a transit

\(^{45}\) BNA OP 33/1: Statement of African male Victor Vuyisine Vinjiwe to the Commissioner of Oath, Francistown, 2\(^{nd}\) August 1960.
\(^{46}\) BNA OP 27/47: Letter from Government Security Office to Mr. Veenbaas, UNHCR Assistant Representative in Gaborone, about South African political refugees leaving the country for Lusaka, 14\(^{th}\) December 1976. The documents however do not specify whether Zambia was the refugees’ final destination or another transit point.
\(^{47}\) BNA OP 27/48: Summary record of a meeting with representatives of the ANC (South Africa) on 11\(^{th}\) March 1976
\(^{48}\) BNA OP 27/48: Extract from record of meeting with Tambo on 8\(^{th}\) December 1978.
\(^{49}\) BNA OP 27/48: Extract from record of meeting with Tambo on 8\(^{th}\) December 1978.
corridor for trained saboteurs who were trying to infiltrate their home country. In addition, the quote seems to suggest that President Khama was aware of the movement of armed guerrilla in his country and had accepted it, as long as they were not caught by Botswana police.

Similar issues occurred with Zimbabwe and its liberation struggle during the 1970s. As the fight intensified, the number of refugees and guerrilla fighters also increased, from 5712 in 1976 to 25,300 in 1978 (Morapedi, 2012: 76). In order to face the growing number of refugees from South Rhodesia, the Botswana government established a camp in Dukwe, 140 km north-west of Francistown (where South African refugees would be relocated from 1980).50 Most of the refugees staying there were women, children, teenagers and old men.51 Other Zimbabwean refugees were accommodated in the transit centres of Francistown and Selibe-Phikwe.52 Besides refugees, also guerrilla fighters moved to Botswana. The country served as a bridge with Zimbabwe for freedom fighters en route to military training camps or on their way back to fight the white government of Salisbury. And as it happened for South Africans, even Zimbabweans caught with weapons in Botswana were arrested and deported (Morapedi, 2012: 78).

The liberation struggles in neighbouring countries generated waves of refugees and guerrilla fighters pouring into Botswana and causing further constraints on the economy and security of the country. In the decades after the implementation of apartheid Botswana found itself having to cope with national labourers migrating to South Africa to work in the mines or the manufacturing sector, economic migrants mostly from South Africa coming to Botswana in search of better job and education opportunities, political refugees coming from neighbouring countries at war looking for a safe place to settle and freedom fighters en route to military training camps. Different migrant routes, thus, have crossed each other’s paths and have contributed to shape the socio-economic life of Botswana as well as the entirety of southern Africa.

Migrant labour and the liberation struggle overlapped on different levels. Labourers kept pouring into South African mines and farms from the whole region; on the other hand, however, members of the banned organisations were sent abroad to further their studies or to become trained in the guerrilla warfare. Refugee movements became particularly evident in the second half of the 1970s; the Soweto riots that began as protests of schoolchildren against the imposition of Afrikaans as the teaching medium in schools led hundreds of youngsters into exile.\(^{53}\) Not only politicised activists, but also people who moved abroad to find employment joined the ranks of those South Africans leaving their country. In fact, the majority of those who have been interviewed for this research defined themselves as immigrants who moved to Botswana to work. Streams of migrant labourers were therefore moving in two directions, in and out of South Africa.

Therefore not only immigrants but also refugees have joined these cross-border movements, to the point that it makes it difficult to distinguish one category from the other, as the differences are blurred. To what extent is it thus possible to trace a clear line between the two categories without overlapping? Mamdani (1990: 367-368) underlined this blurring difference between cross-border migrants and refugees by stating that ‘the latter are a potential source of cheap labour and the former are potential refugees. All are equally vulnerable, since all without rights as ‘non-citizens’ under the law’.\(^ {54}\) Mamdani’s point reflects the ambiguities of these categories in the case of immigrants and refugees in Botswana, as a number of problems arose when policy makers had to distinguish whom they considered as ‘genuine refugees’ and could therefore be granted asylum. Furthermore, the flows into Botswana is constituted by overlapping categories: freedom fighters, refugees and economic immigrants. They all share the apartheid legislation as the underpinning cause for their migration, although various reasons form the basis of individuals’ choice of leaving. This further breakdown adds to the complexities

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\(^{53}\) The liberation struggles and the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique that erupted after obtaining independence also caused movements of thousands of refugees that add to the thousands of people already on the move across the region.

\(^{54}\) The issue of distinguishing between refugees and immigrants has already been debated in the introductory chapter of the thesis, and the author has decided to deal with that according to how the interviewees have defined themselves in order to respect their choice, but bearing in mind how the two categories constantly overlap.
surrounding the migration movements that have forged the relations and interconnections among southern African countries.

Mobility has revealed to be a fundamental characteristic of people of southern Africa, and the establishment of transnational ties has maintained and enforced kin relations across borders and sustained the economy of the families in the home countries. The movement of immigrants, refugees and guerrilla fighters from South Africa should thus be read as part of this broader flux of people that has characterised the society of southern Africa.

The above section analysed the economic, political and social transnational connections existing among the countries in southern Africa. The next part of this chapter will concentrate on the relations between South Africa and Botswana on four aspects, ethnic, geographic, economic and political, aiming to highlight the importance of the transnational ties that have connected the two countries.

3.2: Botswana and South Africa: ethnic and geographic ties

Geographic, ethnic, economic and political factors have historically tied Botswana and South Africa. These same factors also contribute an explanation as to why refugees and immigrants fleeing apartheid chose Botswana as a haven. Therefore it is relevant to explore these factors on two bases; firstly the historical context, and, secondly as reasons underpinning the choice of refugees and immigrants to move to Botswana. An overview of these connections will thus contextualise the transnational links that have spanned across the border of South Africa and Botswana.

From a geographical point of view, Botswana is located in the heart of the southern African region, bordering on South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia, where the Zambezi and Chobe rivers converge (Picard, 1985: 7). The location has historically been of strategic importance since the nineteenth century, when Great Britain decided to establish a Protectorate over the territory. It was the need to protect the road to the north from others that convinced London to declare Bechuanaland a British Protectorate in 1885. Across the decades, the establishment

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55 Fawcett (1949: 88) explains the difference between ‘Colony’ and ‘Protectorate’: the former is a possession acquired by settlement or conquered and it is administered by the Crown (in the specific
of the Protectorate safeguarded the stability and eventually the independence of Bechuanaland from South Africa, which aimed to annex it together with Lesotho and Swaziland. However, as Molutsi (2004: 162) argued, the declaration of the Protectorate led Bechuanaland to become South Africa’s satellite, dependent on its neighbour for infrastructure, market and labour migration. The country was supposed to be annexed to South Africa, a request that was strongly supported by white settlers since the establishment of the Union in 1910. With time and the increased tensions between the British and the Afrikaners, coupled with the resistance to the annexation by Bechuanaland’s chiefs, the colonial authorities decided to grant independence to the Protectorate in 1966 (Molutsi, 2004: 165).

The geographical location of Botswana made it an obvious choice for refugees. Mr. J.H. recalled the reasons why his father, a PAC refugee, settled in Botswana; when he was asked by the leaders of his party whether he wanted to go to Zambia or Tanzania, he opted for Botswana in order to be closer to home. A similar explanation was provided by Mrs. K.M when talking about the reasons underpinning her father’s choice to go back to Botswana after studying in West Germany. Therefore managing to maintain independence from South Africa provided apartheid refugees with a relative safe haven on the doorstep of their home country. Similarly, immigrants who could not find a job in South Africa took advantage of the opportunities offered by the economic development of Botswana, combining therefore the possibility of living and working in a non-racial country and being close to their families, thus establishing transnational ties between the two territories. These transnational ties that have been created enforced the sense of home and family for immigrants and refugees. As it will be discussed in the later chapters of the thesis, the geographical proximity of the two countries developed and strengthened a sense of home that stretched between Botswana and South Africa.

The second factor that links Botswana with South Africa is ethnicity. Tswana people make up the majority of the population of Botswana, and they are also one of

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56 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
57 Interview with Mrs. K.M, former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2010
the main ethnic groups living in South Africa. In pre-colonial times movements across the territories were common, but with the arrival of Europeans the definition of colonial borders has separated the Tswana into different states (Picard, 1987: 5). The majority of Tswana ethnic people live in South Africa; in Botswana they form the majority of the population, but the country is by no means ethnically homogenous. Small numbers of Tswana also live in the neighbouring territories of Namibia and Zimbabwe (Ibidem). Therefore ethnic similarities were also a reason for refugees to move to Botswana. An earlier example is provided by the Herero refugees who fled German violence in South West Africa in 1904 (Schapera, 1979: 18). When they arrived in the former Protectorate there were other Herero communities living in the territory (Gewald, 2002: 212). The descendants of the 1904 refugees are currently living in the village of Mahalapye.

A more recent example of cross-border ethnic affinity comes from the Bafurutse, a Tswana-ethnic group living in Marico District (North-West Province of contemporary South Africa). In his book Brief Authority (1960: 31) Reverend Charles Hooper outlined how ‘geographically and ethnically the district is of a piece with Bechuanaland; politically it now belongs to the Union.’ In 1957 clashes between the Bafurutse and South African police over the imposition of the use of reference books for women prompted a few hundred Bafurutse to cross the border with the Protectorate to seek asylum. This point will be returned to later. Furthermore, not only groups of refugees, but also individuals moved to Botswana for reasons of shared ethnic identity. Mr. E. R. talked about similarities in terms of culture and language, which would help the South Africans to integrate. In fact most immigrants and refugees that have been interviewed for this research were fluent in Setswana.

Ethnic affinities not only concern Tswana people moving to Botswana, but also other ethnic groups that have mixed and integrated with already existing

58 Tswana living in Botswana and Tswana living in South Africa speak the same language, but, as it will be explained in the following chapters, the accent changes, and people can tell whether an individual is South African or Motswana.
59 It is important to highlight the fact that there are a number of Herero-speaking communities in Botswana, with ‘separate and distinct histories. The range includes the descendants of Nama serfs in Tsabong, migrant labourers in Gabane, Herero royals in Mahalapye and war refugees through the territory’ (Gewald, 2002: 212).
60 Interview with Mr. E.R., former migrant, Gaborone, 5 December 2010
minorities living in the country. An example is constituted by the MbuKushu refugees, who left Angola and settled in the Okavango area, where pre-existing communities of MbuKushu were living (Southall, 1984: 166). Some of these were absorbed into the MbuKushu community of Shakawe. Others (some 3000) stayed in the settlement of Etsha, supported by the government of Botswana and the Botswana Christian Council (Amanze, 2006: 189-190). Etsha represented a successful example of a resettlement scheme, and in 1975 the refugees living there were granted Botswana citizenship (Potten, 1976: 113).

The importance of the ethnic factor for refugees entering Botswana is therefore twofold. Firstly, exiles felt less estranged when moving to a place with ethnic affinities to their home countries, as it implied similarities in terms of culture and language spoken. Secondly, it contributed to the integration of groups of refugees, which was successful in the case of the MbuKushu refugees from Angola and, to a lesser extent, in the case of the Bafurutse. Cultural, ethnic and language affinity, however, did not completely overcome the obstacles towards socio-economic integration in Botswana. As seen in the previous chapter (and it will be discussed in others as well), government policies and discourses of autochthony and belonging have not been conducive towards the integration of foreigners in a way that would enhance the value of their cultural differences.

3.3: Botswana and South Africa: economic ties and labour migration

The third factor that connects the two countries is economic. Being a landlocked country, Botswana has always been highly dependent on South Africa, but this dependence can be considered mutual, as Botswana and other neighbouring countries provided South Africa with export markets and sources of cheap labour. Bechuanaland found itself heavily dependent on South Africa during the colonial time especially. The opening of diamond and gold mines in South Africa in fact had critical repercussions on what at that time was called Bechuanaland. The arrival of the British and the establishment of the Protectorate in 1885 also changed the socio-
economic structure of Botswana ‘tribes’. In 1889 the colonial authorities imposed a hut tax on every adult male of the territory.

Furthermore, wide portions of land was taken for the construction of the railway line and for white settlements. As a result of these reforms, young able males were forced to seek wage employment in South Africa, as Bechuanaland had virtually no opportunities (Tzie, 1995: 27). Taxation, in particular, was a heavy burden on Batswana people. According to Hillbom (2014: 162) as a result of taxation, labour migration increased to the point that labour in the Protectorate became a scarce factor of production. In addition, the tax system widened inequalities and wealth distribution. Many who could not find jobs were compelled to sell their cattle and therefore became poorer. Eventually the majority of the cattle became the ownership of large landowners, who became richer along with the chiefs, whose responsibility for collecting the taxes enabled them to retain a percentage for themselves (Tlou, Campbell, 1984: 181-182).

The farms and, in particular, the mines, offered the job opportunities that the migrant labourers were looking for; according to Danevad (1993: 36) in the late 1930s around 20,000 Batswana had a temporary job in the mining industry. In the first half of the 1940s the figure rose to about 33,000, which included more than 3,000 women (Schapera, 1947, cited in Mogalakwe, 2006: 76). Jack Parson (1984: 113-114) explains the phenomenon of work migration:

The British colonial state imposed taxation and effectively created land shortages, and the introduction of new, manufactured household goods and food created the need for cash. These factors, combined with a lack of opportunities to earn cash in Bechuanaland (another effect of colonial policy), led large numbers of mainly adult males to seek work in South Africa. Their recruitment was facilitated by the colonial administration. […] The consequences of this transformation were, however, enormous. Agriculture suffered because of a lack of male laborers, and women bore the brunt of agricultural production and family management. The effective integration of Bechuanaland into the South African economy stripped the African society in Bechuanaland of its autonomy.

Society and economy in Bechuanaland were profoundly changed by the establishment of the migrant labour system. With many men and women away, very few had remained to attend the animals and the land: ‘…cattle were scattered with no one to look after them, fields were left to decay and covered with weeds, and huts were left unattended and tumbled down’ (Mogalakwe, 2006: 76). Furthermore, the
cultural attitude of people returning from South Africa had changed; many refused to work in the fields and had become more individualistic, often rejecting community’s obligations (Mogalakwe, 2006: 76). Remittances, however, had an important economic and social role. Stark and Lucas (1988: 478) considered remittances as ‘one component of a longer-term understanding between a migrant and his or her family’. Half of the breadwinners in Botswana at the time of independence was employed in South African mines and the remittances contributed to Botswana’s household and national income (Campbell, 2003: 83).

From an economic perspective, colonialism and migrant labour had made Bechuanaland more and more dependent on its neighbour, with Bechuana people working in the mines and fields of South Africa to enrich the latter. Because of the extension of labour migration and the reduction of work force in the Protectorate, agricultural production was negatively affected (Hillbom, 2014: 162). John Taylor (1978: 99) argues that the colonial administration and the Tribal Authorities were both responsible for the transformation of the Protectorate into a labour reserve for South African mines. Indeed miners were only recruited in the reserves with prior consent from the chief. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, (WNLA),⁶¹ was among the recruiters, and set up its recruitment facilities all over Bechuanaland, with the head office in Francistown (Taylor, 1978: 103). While WNLA recruited in the north of Botswana, another mining agency, the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) operated in the southern part.

South African mines continued to be an important source of employment for Batswana citizens (and for other neighbouring countries); Botswana’s economy after independence in 1966 was not robust enough to match the labour force and although some went to southern Rhodesia to work, the bulk of Batswana kept migrating to South Africa (Gwebu, 2006: 186-187). Through the 1970s and early 1980s, the percentage of Botswana’s population employed in South African mines remained mostly constant, fluctuating between 16.3% in 1970 and 17.6% in 1983, with a peak of 19.7% reached in 1977 (Neocosmos, 2006: 40).

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⁶¹ As detailed later, WNLA was the owner of the airstrip in Francistown from where refugee airlifts were taking place.
Many young Batswana have been employed in South Africa. Among them was Mr. Jongman, whose family history encapsulates different experiences of migrations between Botswana and South Africa across time and generations:

I was born in Botswana from South African parents, who were originally from somewhere near Bloemfontein. I don’t know when they arrived in Botswana, but I was born in 1929. I was born and bred in Mahalapye, but I worked in the mines in South Africa (from 1947 until 1969) and in Selibe-Phikwe for 17 years.62

Mr. Jongman family’s life reconnects to the history of migration movements in the region and enforces the multiple connections existing between the countries. Another example comes from the life of Fish Keitseng. His experience provided a snapshot of the lives of many young Batswana men of his time. In 1939 he left home to work in the mines, as he had reached the age at which he was required to pay the hut tax. As it has been already mentioned, he used to go to the mines for around nine months or a year, then he would return to Bechuanaland. Here he used to give part of his earnings to his parents and his uncle. Keitseng worked in the mines for some time before moving to the Rand and work in other industries (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 17-22).

The discovery of rich diamond mines in the country was a turning point for Botswana’s economy. The country’s growth in the decades after independence was significant, coupled with the development of the educational and health services. The government, in fact, formulated policies that have benefitted national development (Taylor, 2003: 215). The economic growth and the provision of social services ‘in an atmosphere of political tranquillity, respect of civil liberties, justice and transparency’, attracted immigrants from South Africa and Zimbabwe in particular (Gwebu, 2006: 195-196). A number of refugees and immigrants from South Africa, where the opportunities of working and access to high education were limited by apartheid laws and racial boundaries, decided to settle in Botswana for economic reasons. Indeed Botswana offered more incentives than apartheid South Africa, especially for qualified African people. In fact, the majority of former immigrants and refugees interviewed for this research arrived in the country having already applied and obtained a job, mostly as teachers. Mrs K.M. claimed that when

62 Interview with Mr. Jongman, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011
Botswana reached independence ‘there was need of professional people in different professions. It was easy to get a job within Botswana’.

This is particularly true for refugees and immigrants who left in the 1960s after the declaration of the state of emergency in South Africa and the ban of opposition organisations. Most of them were qualified teachers and nurses who became an asset for a country like Botswana that in the years preceding its independence presented a critical shortage of skilled people.

The economic factor triggered two streams of immigrants. Batswana continued to migrate to South African mines, following a trend that started in the nineteenth century. Colonial practices and chronic unemployment in the territory caused thousands of men and women to seek employment in the mines in the neighbouring country. Since the 1960s this stream crossed its path with South Africans reaching Botswana, attracted by the opportunities that the newly democratic country offered, and that were lacking in apartheid South Africa. Following the ignition of the liberation struggle in South Africa and in the other minority-ruled states these two streams were soon joined by two more, consisting of political refugees and guerrilla fighters.

3.4: Botswana and South Africa: political ties and the liberation struggle

Another important factor to be considered when addressing the relations between Botswana and South Africa is political, as Botswana’s dependence on South Africa was just as apparent in this domain. The administration of the Protectorate, for instance, was managed from across the border, since the capital was Mafeking, located in the South African territory. It was only moved to Gaborone after independence. South African influence over Botswana’s national politics increased during the apartheid era, with the influx of refugees and the radicalisation of the struggle. All major events in recent South African history, such as the Sharpeville massacre, the ban of opposition parties and the riots in Soweto, had repercussions on

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63 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2010
Botswana politics and society, particularly resulting in waves of refugees seeking asylum.

South African political history affected Botswana society in two ways. Firstly, South African politics contributed to the radicalisation of Batswana living and working in South Africa. Many Batswana citizens who went to the neighbouring country to work became involved in local politics. In the cases of Fish Keitseng and Motsamai Mpho for instance, their political commitment within the ANC in South Africa in the 1950s led to their deportation to their home country. However their experience in the South African struggle was beneficial to Botswana politics, as they were both founders of political parties (the Botswana National Front and the Botswana People’s Party respectively). In a third case, the situation was different; Michael Dingake was also a Motswana ANC member living in South Africa, but when he was arrested by the Rhodesian police he was mistaken for a South African and therefore ended up incarcerated in Robben Island for more than ten years. After being released, he returned to Botswana where he became involved in local politics. The lives and contribution of these three men to Botswana politics and South African liberation struggle will be discussed again in chapter 5.

Secondly, South African political events influenced the formation and ideology of political parties. The events following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 led to an inflow of refugees to Bechuanaland. According to Somolekæ (2005: 8), around 1400 people arrived in the Protectorate, and many of them belonged to the ANC and PAC. Some were Batswana nationals, like Motsamai Mpho (a member of the African National Congress). Their arrival acted as a catalyst for the nationalist movement in Bechuanaland (Ibidem). In this regard Richard Dale (1978: 10) explained how the influx of African and white refugees from South Africa ‘had a tendency to facilitate the politcalization of the Batswana’. An example was the Bechuanaland (later Botswana) People Party (BPP), founded by Mpho, Matante and Motsete: a pan-Africanist party, calling for the abolition of chieftainship and the end of colonial rule (Somolekæ, 2005: 8).

The connections between the BPP and South African refugees was a matter of concern for the colonial administration. An example is the case of PAC refugee Patrick Letlalo, who arrived in the Protectorate at the end of September 1960. On his
way to Ghana he was arrested in South Rhodesia and deported back to Bechuanaland. Here he was in touch with all BPP leaders (Mpho, Matante and Motsete) and attended a party rally. Indeed, he was also always in the company of other political refugees. Because of his association with the BPP and other exiles, the colonial administration decided not to renew his residence permit and forced him to leave.64

The radicalism of the BPP and the South African nationalist influence led the white community of the Protectorate and the colonial administration to support the moderate Bechuanaland (later Botswana) Democratic Party (BDP) led by Seretse Khama. The BDP eventually won the first elections in 1965, while the BPP, because of internal tensions, split into three different parties (Tlou, Campbell, 1984: 224-226).

The BDP has been governing Botswana from 1966 onwards, winning regular elections which are internationally recognised as free and fair. The establishment and development of an efficient and non-racial democracy during the years of minority-rulled states in the region was one of the main factors attracting South African refugees to Botswana. Mr. J.M., for instance, explained that his reason for leaving South Africa was his desire to be free because he did not feel as such in his home country.65 The democratic and non-racial institutions that have been established in Botswana since independence were thus a main reason for refugees and immigrants to settle there. Botswana’s non-racial society offered in fact ‘a welcome alternative’ to South Africa (Dale, 1995: 3). It also offered them the opportunity to still be involved with the liberation struggle in South Africa by helping other refugees and supporting anti-apartheid organisations.66

The political ties that have connected Botswana and South Africa endured through the liberation struggle. The involvement of a number of Batswana citizens in the politics of their neighbouring country had a fundamental impact on the politics and life of Botswana itself. Similarly, refugees and immigrants did not totally give up

64 BNA OP 33/6: Consolidated notes on the activities of Patrick Letlalo alias Pax Sebina, from the Divisional Special Branch Officer, Northern Division, Francistown, 25 September 1961
65 Interview with Mr. J.M, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
66 It is important to remember however, that Botswana did not allow refugees to be active in neither South African nor Botswana politics. This was a fundamental clause for being granted refugee status. This aspect will be further discussed in the following chapters.
on their anti-apartheid commitment after settling in Botswana. Thus transnational connections are visible in the political domain as much as in the economic one and they developed across two lines; on the one hand through the involvement of Batswana migrant workers (such as Fish Keitseng, Motsamai Mpho and Michael Dingake) within South African political organisations and on the other through the arrival of South African economic immigrants, political refugees and freedom fighters to Botswana.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the historical ties that have connected the countries of southern Africa among one another and in particular to South Africa, the regional economic and political power. The aim of the chapter was to demonstrate that transnational connections within the region have always existed, and that they were mostly influenced by migrant labour movements. Thousands of migrant workers in fact were engaged for decades in trips to South Africa where they temporary lived, working in the mines, farms or in the manufacturing sector before returning home, in a circular trajectory that made scholars define this type of migration as oscillatory. The extension and intensity of these labour movements had a fundamental impact on the relations among the countries in the region and have shaped their socio-political and economic structure.

Botswana was also part of these migration trajectories as both a source and a recipient of migrants and refugees. Botswana sent thousands of its citizens to work in South Africa, but it also received guerrilla fighters, refugees and immigrants leaving apartheid oppression. These movements during the apartheid era are part of the broader mobility process that has characterised the southern African region.

Moreover, transnationalism offers the lens through which to read these movements, as it highlights the connections that immigrants and refugees have established and maintained between their country of origin and their country of migration. These connections span across borders and on economic, social and political levels. South African immigrants and refugees widely demonstrate these connections through the multi-layered relations that they have established between
Botswana and South Africa. The following chapters of the thesis will concentrate the analysis on these connections, in particular in the construction of multiple identities that reflect the complexities around the feelings of belonging and sense of ‘home’ that former immigrants and refugees feel for both Botswana and South Africa. The next chapter continues the historical analysis, focusing on the way South African former immigrants, refugees and freedom fighters used Botswana as a transit path and borderland.
Chapter 4: Transit and border crossing: South African migration in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1957-1966

This chapter offers an historical analysis of the movement of South African people who entered Bechuanaland in the decade before the territory’s independence. It uses the concepts of transit and border to explore the dynamics and the strategies underpinning the arrival of migrants, refugees and freedom fighters. Bechuanaland was in fact a transit path for these different categories of people en route towards other countries. For about ten years an ‘escape route’ operated in the Protectorate, whereby incoming migrants who did not want to settle in Bechuanaland were helped by sympathisers of the liberation struggles or by other refugees to get out of the territory to reach other destinations in Africa or overseas. The ‘escape route’ also ran in reverse, bringing trained freedom fighters back to South Africa. These concepts are relevant because they help understand the role of Botswana in the liberation struggle of South Africa as a corridor for refugees and freedom fighters towards other African countries. In addition, they unveil the dynamics underpinning migration movements in southern Africa and, in particular, the different meanings that transit and borders assume in migrants’ journeys.

The analysis, supported mainly by documents of the Botswana National Archives, aims at taking forward the discussion of the concept of ‘pipeline’ (Parsons, 2008), by arguing that the ‘escape route’ had different purposes and that, besides its political meaning, it had a social dimension. In fact, the chapter demonstrates that transit and border are dynamic concepts that carried different meanings and fulfilled multiple purposes. They represented opportunities but also risks and uncertainties, as migrants’ destinies often depended on other actors’ decisions, such as the Bechuanaland government and the political organisation to which migrants belonged, but they also motivated migrants to develop their own survival strategies. As Collyer (2007: 670) argued, ‘individual migration strategies indicate how these [transit] spaces are being negotiated and reconfigured.’

The first section presents a discussion of the concept of transit and how it has been applied to the case of South Africans migrating to Botswana. The second section discusses borders and the historical and social importance of the border
between Botswana and South Africa, exploring the case of the Bafurutse refugees as an example. The last two sections provide a detailed analysis of the ‘escape route’ and the first drafts of refugee policies prepared by the colonial authorities just before Botswana’s independence in 1966.

4.1: Transit migration

South African refugees and freedom fighters used to pass through Botswana in order to reach their final destinations, in Africa (usually Tanzania) or overseas. They therefore used the country as a transit corridor. The concept of transit migration was introduced in the early 1990s (Düvell, 2006: 4). It is defined by Bredeloup (2012: 458) as conveying ‘the notion of waiting in some specific places and implies a break during the journey’. In addition Düvell (2006: 10) defined the expression ‘being in transit’ as a stage where migrants make life-changing decisions and respond to the opportunities that they find in the place where they stop for a while. Düvell’s definition, in particular, reflects the resilience that characterises migrants’ lives, and the survival strategies that they have to employ in order to face unexpected circumstances.

This thesis employs the term transit as it reflects the terminology adopted by migrants and refugees themselves to define their situation and future plans when arriving in Botswana. An example is the case of a police officer interrogating an ANC refugee:

S.A.P. S.B. visited his house in December 1962, looking for him during his absence. Because of this he ran away to Swaziland, where he claimed political asylum. Left Swaziland on 19/8/66 for B.P. in transit to U.S.A. to take up a scholarship awarded through American Council in Mbabane.67

He explicitly used the term ‘transit’ to define the refugee’s stopover in Bechuanaland in 1966 on his journey to the United States, after having left South Africa a few years earlier for Swaziland, where he was awarded a scholarship to study engineering at Rochester University.68 It was also the terminology used by the authorities in the

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67 S.A.P. S.B. stands for South African Police Special Branch
68 BNA OP 33/37: Interrogation report, 26 August 1966
1960s and 1970s to draft refugee policies aiming at letting refugees stay in the country for a short period of time; a time that they were supposed to use to arrange a permanent settlement in another country. The term transit therefore reflects the realities of the journey that a multitude of South Africans undertook to reach a safe place beyond the borders of their home country. Academics have in fact adopted it to explain the role of Botswana in relation to apartheid refugees, economic migrants and freedom fighters (cf. Southall, 1984; Polhemus, 1985; Parsons, 2008).

The concept of transit has mostly been applied to South-North migration. In particular, it concerned migrants trying to reach Europe using three main routes through countries considered the fringe of Europe. The first one is through northern African countries such as Morocco and Libya en route to southern Mediterranean countries. The second one is through Turkey towards the south-east of Europe and the third one is through Ukraine and towards the eastern border of the continent (Düvell, 2012: 415). Another important transit place is Mexico, for migrants coming from Latin America en route to the United States (de Haas, 2007: 820).

Important transit routes occur in Africa as well, since as Bakewell (2009: 19-20) reported, ‘over eighty per cent of international migrants from Africa have moved within the continent’ and Schapendonk (2010: 113) reminded us that South-South migration is the dominant form of international migration in Africa. South Africa still remains among the main destinations, in particular for economic migrants. After 1994, migrants arrived from southern Africa as well as from other regions of the continent, including highly skilled professionals and street vendors from West Africa (Adepoju, 2003: 8). South Africa, however, is also a sender of migrants and a transit country, ‘exporting skilled migrants to Europe, North America and Australia (Adepoju, 2006: 41). The economic connotation of this migration is very strong, and it generated discourses about the country being invaded by foreigners who steal jobs from nationals, increasing the already high rate of unemployment (Danso, McDonald, 2001: 124-129).

Transit migration also contributes to understand the dynamics that characterise migrants’ journeys. Transit places assume different meanings for migrants, according to the decisions they make, as with the case of a refugee who entered Bechuanaland in November 1965. He and his wife had escaped to Swaziland
in 1964 and after a while his wife managed to reach Zambia. He tried to join her but was arrested in Zeerust, near the border between South Africa and Bechuanaland. In 1965 he finally managed to get to the Protectorate. During the interview with the police officer he stated that he was undecided about his future plans, and if he liked living in Bechuanaland he would settle and ask his wife to join him there.\textsuperscript{69} Survival strategies for migrants therefore imply negotiating their future movements taking into account the circumstances they find in the transit country and the possibilities of having better opportunities if they continue their journey.

The case of this refugee reflects the expressions ‘fragmented migration’ and ‘stranded migrant’ to define migrants’ plight in long journeys and their need for protection (Collyer, 2010; Collyer, de Haas, 2012). The expression ‘fragmented’ refers to a type of migration ‘broken into a number of separate stages, involving varied motivations, legal statuses and living and employment conditions. It is often not the case that entire journeys are planned in advance but one stage may arise from the failure of a previous stage, limiting future options and draining resources’ (Collyer, 2010: 275). This definition further highlights the fact that many journeys are divided into segments and the uncertainties surrounding migrants’ lives and their precarious conditions.

In scholarly debate, the use of the term transit has been criticised (cf. Collyer, Düvell, de Haas, 2012; Collyer, de Haas, 2012; Düvell, 2006; Düvell, 2012). According to Düvell (2012: 416-417), the concept is ‘often negatively connoted and highly politicised’ as it is associated with irregular migration and human smuggling. In addition, transit is a new branding of an already existing phenomenon (see Bredeloup, 2012) and it is applied to migrants reaching Europe, in a way that reinforces the myth of the ‘invasion’ of the European continent (de Haas, 2008) and reflects a Eurocentric assumption that all migrants’ destinations are Europe (Collyer, Düvell, de Haas, 2012: 411). Bredeloup (2012) argued that transit is not a new phenomenon, as migrants in the past also used to stop in places where sometimes they settled permanently (Bredeloup, 2012: 461).

The case of South Africans moving to Botswana supports her point, as since the 1950s (when the anti-apartheid resistance became more militant) political

\textsuperscript{69} OP BNA 33/39: Interrogation report, 8 November 1965.
refugees, economic migrants and freedom fighters passed through Botswana, using the country mostly as a stopover on their journeys towards other countries, but sometimes deciding to settle permanently. A former economic immigrant, Mr. T. V., who was interviewed for this research stated that when he moved to Bechuanaland in 1963 he was not planning to settle permanently:

I still wanted to move on, but it was difficult to apply from here to go to South Africa for a passport to take you to Zimbabwe. No, no. I still remember I even wanted to go to Canada… I did think of working here for some time and going back. But as time went on, things began to happen, like Botswana gained independence in 1966.70

In 1969 he got Botswana citizenship and that was when he decided to settle permanently in Botswana. He lived and worked as a school teacher in different villages before joining the faculty of education at the university in Gaborone, where he taught until 2005. He still lives in Gaborone.71

Transit migration is a dynamic concept that entails a number of opportunities and possibilities but also problems and risks connected to the journey of a migrant. Depending on the different factors that play a role in the decision-making process, the transit place becomes a temporary or a permanent settlement and an arena to shape new identities and new lives. The section on the ‘escape route’ in this chapter explores and develops these dynamics behind the role of Botswana as a transit passage for refugees and freedom fighters.

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Through the use of archival material, interviews and a review of the current literature on Botswana’s role ‘as a host country for refugees’ (Southall, 1984), the chapter demonstrates how the role of Botswana as a transit place was the result of a range of factors: government refugee policies, migrants’ own choices based on the range of opportunities they faced, and the liberation movements’ decisions, which often decided in their headquarters in exile who, among their members, could go forward for military training, who could get a scholarship to continue their studies, and who

70 Interview with Mr. T.V., former immigrant, Gaborone, 28 July 2011
71 Interview with Mr. T.V., former immigrant, Gaborone, 28 July 2011
had to stay behind to help others going through. Using archival documents, and in particular the interrogation reports that the police undertook with incoming refugees, this chapter tells the stories of people, stories that illustrate different intentions and aims, unveiling fears, uncertainties and hopes behind each individual’s journey. The concepts of transit and border have been a way for migrants to renegotiate their spaces and their identities within the frame of the struggle against apartheid. The chapter thus reads and interprets migrants’ testimonies, brought out by the archival documentation and the author’s interviews with former refugees, using the concepts of transit and borders as keys to provide a further understanding of the dynamics underpinning migrants’ journeys. Furthermore, the narratives reinforce the image of Botswana as a transit path, as a host country for refugees and, more comprehensively, its role in the liberation of South Africa. Transit and border therefore determined and regulated the migrants’ journeys and, at the same time, defined the role of Botswana in the apartheid struggle. This chapter takes forward the debate on the ‘escape route’ by analysing its social dimension and the meanings that migrants attributed to it.

4.2: The meaning of ‘border’ and the first wave of South African refugees

The concepts of borders and boundaries are closely related to the idea of transit. Citing Strassoldo (1989), Nugent and Asiwaju (1996: 1) stated that boundaries are ambiguous because they divide and unite and they can create either barriers or junctions. To reinforce this point, Van Wolputte (2002: 13) also highlighted the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in the concepts of borders and borderlands: ‘they may appear as impediment and as opportunity, as limit and as resource, as challenge and condition for identity’. This section provides a brief historical overview of border formation in Africa, with the purpose of contextualising the use and meaning of the border between Botswana and South Africa. Moreover, the example of the Bafurutse illustrates how refugees used the border between the two countries to shape their survival strategies.
As has been discussed in the previous chapter, migration has spanned countries of the region for centuries, reinforcing the idea of borders as a means to bridge territories and populations. Africa became more deeply integrated during the colonial era and under capitalism, whereby ‘migrants created long-lasting networks cutting across colonial and later national boundaries’ (Howard, 2010: 25). Migration was also enforced by the policies implemented by colonial authorities when borders were marked out. The imposition of taxes, military service and other practice were a further incentive for people to move to another territory with more favourable conditions (Bakewell, 2009: 42). The decolonisation process and the birth of new national states resulted in a more politicised and strategic role for borders. As explained by Nugent and Asiwaju (1996: 9), newly independent African states struggled with the inherent tensions between ‘nationalism’ (which assumed that people belonged to either one nation or another) and the reality of borderlands, where different communities merged into each other. Borders then ended up separating territories and populations more than joining them, as foreign people have often been treated suspiciously and defined as ‘aliens’ (Nugent, Asiwaju, 1996: 10).

Historically, African borders have been considered as conceived in an arbitrary way by the colonial powers, and deemed ‘divisions in the midst of powerfully self-identified pre-colonial polities or language groups’ (Coplan, 2010: 1). Recently, this conception has been contested. Mbembe (2000: 264) disagreed with the idea that all African boundaries were arbitrarily drawn: some were based on natural boundaries (like rivers and mountains), others were the result of political negotiations among the imperial powers; others took into account old kingdoms’ borders. Asiwaju (1996: 255) also contested claims about the artificiality of African borders, supposedly drawn in a way that often did not take into account pre-existing socio-economic patterns. On the contrary, he argued, ‘the boundaries of national states in Africa are not substantially different from European ones’ (Ibidem). To support his point, he maintained that Africa’s partition was ‘an extension of a process by which the same powers who partitioned Africa had partitioned and were continuing to partition their own continent and peoples among themselves’ (Asiwaju, 2010: 93).

In addition, Nugent (1996: 35) contested the idea that African people had nothing to do with the drawing of their own borders and that the responsibility for
them lay on colonial powers and African elites. In contrast, taking the Ghana-Togo border as example, he argued that the boundary ‘has been reinforced on a daily basis by the people who live along it’ (Nugent, 1996: 36). This is particularly true in migration processes and in the way refugees and immigrants make use of state borders. Crossing borders becomes for them a way to renegotiate their identities but also a place for living out their everyday, which includes a social and an economic dimension.

Arbitrary or not, with the purpose of defending continental peace, African leaders decided in 1963 during a meeting of the Organisation of the African Union (OAU) to maintain colonial borders intact (Asiwaju, 2010: 100).

Considering the formation of Botswana’s borders, Katzenellenbogen (1996: 24) linked the formation of the three Protectorates of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland to two precise purposes: firstly, they had to contain the advancement of the Boers, who wanted to expand in order to enfranchise themselves from the British; second, they had to provide the best land for white settlers, forcing Africans to seek employment in farms or outside the territories. Bechuanaland served to these two purposes by limiting the Boer expansion westwards and by inducing the Tswana population to move to an area far to the west compared to where they lived before in order to allow settlers to occupy the good land (Katzenellenbogen, 1996: 25).

The border between Botswana and South Africa (but also with Zimbabwe) is a border with important meanings. It is a border that united the two countries, through the construction of the railway line which started in 1897 (Ngwenya, 1984: 73). The construction of the railway was implemented by the British South African Company (BSAC) and the Protectorate Government, built for mainly economic and political reasons, since it was seen ‘not only as a generator of revenue but also as an instrument for consolidating British political control inside the Protectorate’ (Ibidem). The railway line runs from Mafeking, in South Africa, to Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, passing through the south-east region in Botswana along the border with South Africa. The importance of the railway is also linked to the fact that some of the main towns and villages in Botswana have been built across the railway line and had a station: Lobatse, Gaborone, Mahalapye, Palapye and Francistown.
But because of the route, the railway was not safe for political refugees and freedom fighters. Hilda Bernstein recalled: ‘the Rhodesian authorities took a group of South African refugees off a train and sent them back to South Africa. A South African Indian refugee who boarded the train at Lobatsi was dragged off farther up the line and beaten up by whites’ (Bernstein, 2009: 346). She and her husband Rusty, both political exiles and members of the South African Communist Party, en route to London from Bechuanaland, could not board the train at Lobatse to go to Palapye because the South African Special Branch, tipped off about their moves, was waiting for them to get on the train and then arrest them (Bernstein, 2009: 370-371).

The border between the two countries has also worked for decades as a conduit for labour migrants, for political refugees, for other economic migrants and for freedom fighters. People have crossed the long border with or without documents, to find a job or looking for protection. But the length of the border made it difficult for Botswana’s authorities to secure the safety of its population and the refugees against the incursions and kidnappings of South African and Rhodesian armies. Because of this reason, Johns (1973: 216) defined it as ‘long and easily penetrable borders’, comprising the frontier with South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia (which, at the time the article was written, was still under South African rule). The son of a former refugee living in Mahalapye interviewed for this research remembered in fact the fear in his family, as sometimes they used to see South African police in the village.  

Similarly, a former immigrant also remembered that refugees had to hide because South African police could count on a wide web of informants and used to bribe people to obtain information about refugees.

The border between Botswana and South Africa is thus a boundary that unites and separates, and which served as a conduit, a transit for refugees and freedom fighters in particular, but also to close the country and protect the people within. It also marks the boundaries of two nation-states and signals the sense of belonging of the people living within it. Yuval-Davis (2004: 218) reminds us how 'state territorial borders are one major way in which collectivity boundaries are imagined'. But, as Nugent and Asiwaju (1996) argued, there is often an important difference between the official discourse on construction of international borders, and how these are

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72 Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23rd June 2011
73 Interview with Mr. J.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
actually perceived by those who live along them. This is particularly true for immigrants and refugees, who challenge the idea of borders as enclosure, by entering the country mostly undocumented. They become ‘those who jump the fence’, as Batswana citizens have labelled refugees. The next sections of the chapter explore all these different meanings of the Botswana-South Africa border through the analysis of the use of Botswana as a transit route for political refugees during the anti-apartheid struggle. The analysis combines a top-down approach that takes into account the ‘official’ discourse, and a bottom-up perspective, which focuses on local communities and on narrating people’s experiences (Wilson, Donnan, 1998: 4).

The Bafurutse refugees

As Nugent and Asiwajo (1996: 8) argued, the establishment of colonial boundaries ‘often segmented pre-existing political units’. This happened in the case of the Botswana-South Africa border, which divided Tswana tribes between the two countries. As discussed in the previous chapter, ethnic affinity was a reason that induced many South African refugees and immigrants to move and settle in Botswana, as was the case, for instance, for the Bafurutse refugees in 1958. Other scholars like Parsons (2008) and Southall (1984) have discussed the plight of the Bafurutse refugees. This chapter contributes to the existing literature by arguing that the experience of the Bafurutse refugees provides an example of the multiple meanings and implications of the term ‘border’. The different ways the Bafurutse used the border shows how it could be a conduit for refugees, an opportunity to move to a safer place, a corridor towards a transit situation, whereby refugees move back and forth to and from South Africa depending on where conditions are most favourable.

The first wave of South African refugees crossing the border into Botswana occurred in 1957 when a few hundred Bafurutse, resident in the area near Zeerust, entered the Protectorate led by their chief. In 1957 South African authorities imposed the use of passes for women, but the paramount chief, Abraham Moilwa II, refused to comply with the imposition, and was deposed. He was then replaced by Kgosi Gopane, who accepted the new law. The people, particularly women, set up protests and demonstrations with the support of migrant workers returning from
Johannesburg, but they were repressed by the police, and in the clashes four people died (Parsons, 2008: 17-18). In a report from the Divisional Commissioner in Lobatse to the Government Secretary in Mafeking on the 6th May 1958, the colonial administration explained that the villages involved in disturbances in South Africa were Gopane and Dinokana. The problem in the former was that the population was divided over the issue of introducing passes for women. Chief Gopane for instance was in favour of the new policy. After the initial clashes, Gopane was patrolled by the police and during these inspections violence erupted and four men were killed, causing fear among some villagers, so persuading them to leave.

In February 1958 a number of Bafurutse crossed the border with Bechuanaland: ‘the people leaving the district were no longer cautious emigrants; they were refugees, and their flight was tinged with the blindness of panic’ (Hooper, 1960: 358). According to the Bechuanaland authorities, the number of refugees was between 500 and 600 men, women and children, at odds with the figures provided by South African newspapers, which estimated there were over 2,000 refugees. A more detailed report sent by the Resident Commissioner in Mafeking to the Deputy High Commissioner in Cape Town in July 1958 stated that the Bafurutse refugees stayed in Lobatse and in the Bamalete Reserve. There were 360 refugees living in the Reserve in reasonable conditions, since they had temporarily become part of village life. Those living in Lobatse numbered 250 and their condition had worsened due to the cold weather.

Furthermore, the bulk of the refugees left Gopane without bringing anything with them, so nutrition problems were observed with consequent suffering, especially for women and children. The colonial administration, in an attempt to relieve this problem, helped refugees find employment as building contractors, domestic servants or in the mines in the Witwatersrand, in exchange for a small wage. This aspect highlights the question of refugee/immigrant identity. The two categories have blurred boundaries and people can move in and out between them.

74 BNA OP 33/4: Bakhurutse refugees from Gopane, 6 May 1958
75 BNA OP 33/4: Bakhurutse refugees from Gopane, 6 May 1958
76 The Bamalete constitute one of the eight Tswana ethnic groups living in the southern area of Botswana. Ramotswa is among the main villages of the area.
77 BNA OP 33/4: Zeerust Disturbances, 7 July 1958
78 BNA OP 33/4: Bakhurutse refugees from Gopane, 6 May 1958
(Stepputat, Nyberg Sørensen, 2014: 90). The question of refugee identity was soon a concern of the colonial administration, which in order to safeguard its pragmatic attitude of peaceful neighbourhood with South Africa, made any effort to downplay the role of the Protectorate in hosting refugees. With regard to the Bafurutse, the colonial authorities refused to publicly acknowledge the fact that the Territory was giving protection to refugees escaping apartheid policies because they wanted to maintain a neutral position towards South Africa, to avoid embarrassment and the risk of retaliation. In this case, therefore, the colonial administration made efforts to reduce the category of refugeehood to invisibility (see Polzer, 2008).

The guiding principle of the Protectorate authorities in fact was that of not embarrassing the Territory and maintaining good relations with South Africa. The colonial administration, when talking about the deposed chief of the Bafurutse, Abraham Moilwa, referred to the issue as a matter ‘of political importance for it would be highly embarrassing if Protectorate became official refuge from Union policies’. A South African newspaper, the Rand Daily Mail, reported in March 1958 that Bechuanaland had welcomed the Bafurutse people as political refugees. The Afrikaans newspaper Die Vaterland on the other hand reported strong denials from the British High Commissioner in Bechuanaland of the allegation of the Rand Daily Mail that they were welcoming political refugees. What in fact concerned the authorities in the Protectorate was presenting an image that they were providing sanctuary to politically involved refugees. The same concern arose when the World Council of Churches offered assistance to refugees: the Resident Commissioner in his report to the Deputy High Commissioner proposed to decline the offer because of the political character of the issue.

In September 1960 the Bafurutse refugees were still in the Protectorate. According to the Divisional Commissioner in Lobatse there were no evident signs of extreme malnutrition, although problems deriving from vitamin deficiencies were present. Also, regarding those in the Bamalete Reserve, there was apparently free circulation between Bechuanaland and South Africa: refugees went to work in the

79 BNA OP 33/4: Telegram from R.C. to D.H.C., 8 April 1958
80 BNA OP 33/4: Rand Daily Mail: S.A. trek to Bechuanaland, 7 March 1958
81 BNA OP 33/4: Die Vaterland, 8 March 1958
82 BNA OP 33/4: Zeerust Disturbances 7 July 1958
Union during the day and then returned to the Reserve in the Protectorate in the evenings. According to the colonial authorities, the only reason why the Bafurutse did not resettle back in the Union was the pressure from their own local leaders, since there were no other restrictions from the South African authorities. The Bafurutse therefore made a strategic use of the border as a corridor for continuous passage between Bechuanaland and South Africa. The lack of job perspectives in the Protectorate motivated refugees to return to their home country to work, joining thousands of Bechuana people migrating for the same reason. The need for safety from apartheid police induced them to return, after work, to Bechuanaland, which was considered a safe haven.

The fluidity of the way they constructed their identity and negotiated their status is made evident by their going to South Africa, becoming migrant commuters during the day, and returning to Bechuanaland in the evening, regaining the status of refugee again and becoming what Laura Hammond (2014: 508) defined ‘part-time returnees’. This aspect has interesting implications in the context of refugee identity and protection. Bafurutse refugees, by commuting between Botswana and South Africa, turned themselves into transnational migrants, since engaging in ‘cross-border livelihood activities’ became the best alternative to a return to their home country that was perceived as unsafe (Van Hear, 2014: 185). Transnationalism has recently been considered a valuable and durable or at least enduring solution for displaced people (Ibidem; see also Long, 2013). In fact, being active in multiple places helps manage the risks of return (Hammond, 2014: 508). By becoming transnational migrants, the Bafurutse reduced the risks that they would encounter if they returned to South Africa permanently.

According to a later report in May 1961 from the Resident Commissioner in Mafeking to the High Commissioner in Cape Town, the Bafurutse were still living in the village of Peleng (Lobatse) and in the Bamalete Reserve. In Peleng most of the men were employed, although some women and children required some, unspecified, assistance from the Bechuanaland government. Those living in the Reserve were engaged in agriculture, together with the local Batswana people. Although they freely moved back and forth to South Africa, they showed no sign of settling

83 BNA OP 33:13: Bakhurutse refugees, 13 September 1960
permanently in the Protectorate or returning to their homes.\textsuperscript{84} In a subsequent report, the Resident Commissioner discussed the situation of the refugees who settled in the Bamangwato district. In this case they had been given lands and cattle and were becoming integrated into local life.\textsuperscript{85} This situation is also explained by Nugent and Asiwaju (1996: 10): ‘many migrants have not sought formal refugee status, because kinsmen on the other side of the line have been prepared to provide them with food and lodgings’. Because of ethnic affinity, some of the Bafurutse refugees got absorbed in the local community and economy and were provided with land and cattle in order to get integrated. In their case, the border was an opportunity to settle in a place where they could feel safer and had the chance to work, reshaping their lives according to the opportunities offered in the Protectorate. Again here it is possible to highlight the fluidity of the refugee/immigrant identities and how easily people can move from one category to the other. Bafurutse refugees working in Peleng, in the Bamalete Reserve and in the Bamangwato district have become immigrants.

The colonial administration’s efforts to persuade the Bafurutse refugees to move back to Gopane worked only in part, as in mid-1961 their number in the Protectorate decreased to 351 (Southall, 1984: 157). Eventually, faced with the fact that the refugees were not returning to South Africa permanently, the colonial administration opted for a policy of assimilation into local Batswana communities (Southall, 1984: 157). The Bafurutse thus undertook different survival strategies: many shifted from one category (refugees) to other, more convenient categories, such as transnational migrants (those who travelled back and forth to South Africa) and immigrants (those who were employed in the Protectorate). Others settled in the Protectorate and got absorbed within the local population, illustrating how local integration could be a solution to refugees’ displacement (Hovil, 2007: 603). They thus offer an interesting example of resilience, strategies of survival and adaptability and the fluidity of identity.

In the early 1960s the Bafurutse were not the only concern of the colonial government in Bechuanaland. These in fact are the years when the first wave of political refugees left South Africa seeking a haven in the Protectorate.

\textsuperscript{84} BNA OP 33/13: Zeerust refugees, 3\textsuperscript{rd} May 1961
\textsuperscript{85} BNA OP 33/13: Zeerust Refugees, 29 May 1961
4.3: Bechuanaland as a transit place: ‘escape route’ and corridor for freedom fighters, 1960-1966

From 1960 political refugees from South Africa and other neighbouring countries began entering Bechuanaland in search of asylum. For the following decades the Protectorate would therefore become a haven for exiles from South Africa as well as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia and Angola. In particular, the influx of South African refugees continued into the 1980s and early 1990s, since the lifting of the ban on opposition parties and the release of political prisoners in South Africa did not bring an end to the violence in the country. In fact many left South Africa in the early 1990s as a result of the violent clashes in Natal between the Inkatha Freedom Party, the ANC and the police, and others fled the townships in Johannesburg and other provinces. Hundreds of refugees, for the most part young people, arrived at the ANC camps in Zambia while passing through Botswana.86

This section explores the dynamics of the arrival in the Protectorate of South African political refugees who left in the 1960s, by discussing the ‘escape route’ to the north and the difficulties and risks that refugees encountered while in Bechuanaland. The ‘escape route’ allowed numerous refugees to flee South Africa across the border with the Protectorate, and then towards other destinations in Africa (mostly Zambia and Tanzania) or overseas. It was managed by different people, and for security and practical reasons it had to change across the years. The organisers in fact had to adapt it to various circumstances. Initially, for instance, the ‘escape route’ consisted in airlifting refugees out of the country: Zambia did not become independent until 1964, and therefore refugees had no other choice, considering that Bechuanaland at the time was surrounded by white minority-ruled countries. After 1964, the overland route opened, which took refugees across the Protectorate and out of it through the very small border between Bechuanaland and Zambia on the Zambezi River at the village of Kazungula.

An analysis of the ‘escape route’ is necessary in order to understand the role of Botswana as transit. The main task of Botswana in the liberation struggle was to provide a safe passage for political refugees and student refugees, who mostly

86 AG2918 ‘Refugees stream out of South Africa’ 1990-1992. This is the Kairos Dutch anti-apartheid organisation collection.
wanted to go to other countries. However, the country was also the corridor through which many freedom fighters passed in order to reach training camps in Africa or overseas, or on their way back to South Africa. The use of Botswana as transit had therefore multiple purposes, with important political implications, since Botswana has always opposed the passage of guerrilla fighters and the use of its territory as a springboard for attacking neighbouring countries.

The ‘escape route’ to the north

The political upheaval that occurred in 1960 in South Africa saw the beginning of a small but steady flow of political refugees leaving the country, many passing through Bechuanaland in their attempt to move further north, while others settled in the Protectorate. Mr. Ronald Watts in his memorandum to Mr. Betts on South African refugees in the Protectorate in the early 1960s, distinguished four categories of people in exile in Bechuanaland: leaders of political parties sent out from their organisations; those who had a scholarship or work offer in another country but did not have a passport to travel; ‘genuine’ refugees wanted by the police for political offences who tended to move to Tanganyika, and people who heard about the possibility of obtaining a scholarship and tried to take advantage of this. In addition to these categories, this thesis also considers economic refugees who settled in Botswana to work and freedom fighters who travelled across the country in order to participate in military training in other parts of Africa or overseas. It is important to be clear about the different types of migrants that arrived in Botswana in order to understand the multiple uses of the country as transit or settlement place.

Ronald Watts was the first organiser of the ‘escape route’ that flew refugees from Serowe (in the Central district) to Tanganyika (Parsons, 2008: 19). At that time Watts was working in the Protectorate in the Bamangwato district as Tribal Agricultural Officer in a two-year contract from 1959 until 1961 (Watts, 1997: 105). He got involved with the refugees at the request of the District Commissioner in Serowe, since neither the colonial administration nor the Bamangwato leaders wanted to get directly involved in the issue (Watts, 1997: 109). Because of his

87 Mr. T.F. Betts used to work for international organisations such as War on Want (Watts, 1997: 112)
88 Ronald Watts: letters and documents relating to his work on Bechuanaland and to South African refugees 1955-1965: File 2: Memorandum on the needs of South African Refugees
connection with Canon Collins, who in the 1950s had set up a fund to help the Treason Trialists, Mr. Betts talked about him as acting ‘in voluntary capacity as the link within the Protectorate between the Christian Action Defence and Aid Fund and the South African United Front in Dar-es-Salaam’.89

His involvement with refugees lasted from 1960 until 1961. His role in helping them consisted in regulating and facilitating the traffic northwards from Serowe and Francistown. The problem with the latter was that the airport belonged to WNLA and it was used to recruit workers for the mines. The staff of the airport were often hostile towards the refugees and on one occasion a Ghana Airways DC3 plane was prevented from landing. Only after the intervention of the Resident Commissioner was the aircraft allowed to land (Watts, 1997: 106-107).

Many prominent refugees, in the early 1960s, used the ‘escape route’. For example Oliver Tambo and Ronald Segal had passed through Bechuanaland in 1960. According to a telegram sent by the Deputy High Commissioner to the Resident Commissioner in Mafeking, Tambo said he feared being arrested by the South African police and had therefore escaped to the Protectorate with the intention of going to London. Segal, editor of the magazine Africa South, had a valid passport and he intended to stay in Lobatse or go to the United States.90 After a first failed attempt to reach Plumtree (southern Rhodesia) by car on 12 April, an aircraft was supposed to arrive on 15 April in Francistown to fly Segal and Tambo to London or Tanganyika.91 Later on 15 April Segal and Tambo (joined in the meantime by Yusuf Dadoo92) managed to leave by plane from Palapye.93

Furthermore, on 14 September 1960 Watts, in correspondence with his mother, recalled the escape of a group of 19 people, including Sam Khan,94 Patrick Van Rensburg and Adelaide Tambo (Oliver Tambo’s wife) with her children.95 The group arrived in four flights from Swaziland: Watts and his wife accommodated the

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90 BNA OP 33/29: Telegram from Chief Secretary, Cape Town, to R.C. Mafeking, 30 March 1960
91 BNA OP 33/29: Telegram from R.C. in Mafeking to C.S. in Cape Town, 13 April 1960
92 Yusuf Dadoo was a South African of Indian origin and a member of the South African Communist Party (http://www.sahistory.org.za)
93 BNA OP 33/34: Correspondence between R.C., Mafeking with H.C., Cape Town, 15 April 1960
94 Sam Khan was a member of the Communist Party and a member of the Parliament as native representative in 1946 (Watts, 1997: 114).
95 Ronald Watts: letters and documents relating to his work on Bechuanaland and to South African refugees 1955-1965: File 2: Letter from Watts to his mother, 14 September 1960
European refugees, Mrs Tambo stayed with some missionaries, while locals hosted the rest of the group. The operation was kept secret to avoid attracting the attention of the press. According to Watts, ‘South African Police knew about things almost as soon as they had started, but it appears that they didn’t particularly want the press to find out either’. Watts had a few problems organising the flight out of Bechuanaland, as the aircraft that was supposed to take the refugees crashed in Congo, and when another one was finally organised, the group encountered some trouble with the WNLA.

The most prominent South African to pass through Bechuanaland and use the pipeline was Nelson Mandela. He arrived in Bechuanaland on 12 January 1962 and then left by plane for Mbeya with Joe Matthews on 19 January. During his stay in Bechuanaland he used the Setswana alias ‘David Motsamayi’ (Parsons, 2008: 21). The Security Branch of the Bechuanaland police carefully followed his movements. When he arrived in Lobatse he was refused accommodation at the hotel, so he was hosted by Keitseng in the village of Peleng. When he eventually met the police he declared that he had no intention of asking for political asylum in the Territory because he had promised to work underground in South Africa, so he needed absolute secrecy concerning his departure. In the meantime, South African police were aware of the fact that Mandela was in Bechuanaland, thanks to informants and agents who had been sent to Lobatse to trace him. After he left Bechuanaland, the Security Branch of the South African police visited the office of the Bechuanaland police in Mafeking, saying that according to their secret sources, they were expecting Mandela to return to South Africa via the Protectorate at some point in mid-February. The police, therefore, asked the Bechuanaland authorities to inform them about Mandela’s movements. Mandela eventually returned to South Africa via Bechuanaland in July 1962, and the following month he was arrested in Natal (Parsons, 2008: 21).

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96 Ronald Watts: letters and documents relating to his work on Bechuanaland and to South African refugees 1955-1965: File 2: Letter from Watts to his mother, 14 September 1960  
97 Ronald Watts: letters and documents relating to his work on Bechuanaland and to South African refugees 1955-1965: File 2: Letter from Watts to his mother, 14 September 1960  
98 BNA OP 33/6: Telegram from the H.C. in Cape Town, 22 January 1962  
99 BNA OP 33/6: Undesirable in the B.P., 15 January 1962  
100 BNA OP 33/6: Nelson Mandela, 14 February 1962
These examples show that the ‘escape route’ worked smoothly and was safe, despite attempts at disrupting it by South Africa. It also showed a relative level of commitment from the colonial authorities, who indirectly helped political refugees leave the Protectorate as soon as possible, aware of the potential threat that their long stay in the country could represent. With regard to this last point, Watts, in his personal correspondence, explained the attitude of the colonial authorities regarding the issue of political refugees: ‘The Govt. people are quite sympathetic but cannot do anything too obvious in case the S. African Govt. find out’.

After Ronald Watts left in 1961, the aerial pipeline, operative in 1961 and 1962, was organised by some key colonial officers and one police officer who reported directly to Resident Commissioner Peter Fawcus. The pipeline flew from Lobatse to Tanganyika, passing through Kasane to refuel, Northern Rhodesia and finally Mbeya and Dar es Salaam (Parsons, 2008: 20-21). The pilot was the German citizen Herbert Bartaune, who also flew Nelson Mandela to Dar es Salaam (Watts, 1997: 115). After the arrest of Mandela, however, the aerial pipeline closed down (Parsons, 2008: 21).

In 1962 the Bechuanaland police issued a directive regarding dealing with political exiles. Prominent refugees, who had asked for temporary asylum and had eventually left by air, were subject to the protection of the Special Branch in order to avoid them being kidnapped by the South African police. Other refugees who were travelling overland through southern Rhodesia, were subject to different policies by the Protectorate police, who were instructed ‘neither to assist nor prevent “refugees” using the escape route. If they are arrested in the Federation and declared prohibited immigrants then the onus lies with the Federal authorities as to what shall be done with them’. The ‘escape route’ therefore differentiated between prominent political refugees such as leaders, who required particular assistance and special protection by the Protectorate’s authorities, as they were at risk of being kidnapped, and normal refugees. Regarding the latter, the Bechuanaland government did not want to have any responsibility for their safety in their passage through the country.

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102 BNA OP 33/6: Political Refugees, 19 January 1962
Considering this last point, this attitude towards non-prominent refugees is more visible with the post-Soweto refugees. As Southall (1984: 169) recalled, many youngsters who could not find a school or university place either in Botswana or abroad were left loitering around Gaborone. They ended up being ‘stranded’ in Botswana (Collyer, 2010) as their initial plans of continuing their studies were abruptly interrupted by the lack of resources in Botswana and the difficulties in moving further north. This was explained in a draft policy paper of the Botswana government, which stated how these student refugees are mostly on transit in Botswana, hoping to get a scholarship, but ‘their hope to get scholarships tend to be frustrated as they remain in Botswana more than anticipated’.\(^\text{103}\)

In the meantime the ANC took over responsibility for the ‘escape route’. The transit route became more politicised, as it fell under the direct control of a liberation movement, which wanted to get directly involved in the movements of its members in order to safeguard their passage. In 1960 Joe Modise, a prominent ANC and MK member, met Fish Keitseng, a Motswana member of the ANC and ex-Treason Trialist, and charged him with the task of assisting refugees going northwards. Again, the organisation of the ‘escape route’ would differentiate between prominent refugees and others: the most prominent leaders were to be kept safe until a plane could fly them out of the Protectorate. Other members were taken to Francistown and then driven up to Livingston or Kazungula (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 50-52). At Kazungula there was a ferry operating transport across the Zambesi River that connected the Protectorate with Northern Rhodesia. This ferry became the ‘freedom ferry’ as it was used by refugees to leave Bechuanaland and enter what would soon become Zambia (Parsons, 2008: 23). Keitseng constituted an informal cell of local Batswana, sympathisers with the liberation struggle, who helped him drive refugees and host them in safe houses. They were mostly ANC veterans or members of the Bechuanaland People’s Party: Michael Dingake, Motsamai Mpho, Klaas Mothsidisi and Anderson Tshepe (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 50).

Among the refugees who arrived during these years were a young Thabo Mbeki, Walter Sisulu and Hilda and Rusty Bernstein. Thabo Mbeki arrived in the Protectorate in October 1962 as a young man, together with another 26 refugee

\(^{103}\) BNA OP 27/78: Refugee settlement in Botswana: General policies relating to refugees, 1979
students, aiming to reach Tanganyika. They entered southern Rhodesia accompanied by Fish Keitseng and here they were all arrested and detained. After some time they were deported back to Bechuanaland via train. They then arrived in Palapye, where they risked being deported back to South Africa. Keitseng eventually made sure all students flew safely out of the country towards Tanganyika on a plane financed by Oliver Tambo (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 67).

Fish Keitseng’s commitment in helping refugees in transit lasted a few years. It is reported than in 1966, just before independence, he was still hosting incoming refugees and assisting them in arranging their journeys further north, as was the case with an ANC refugee who arrived in the Protectorate in May 1966 with the aim of going to Tanzania for military training. Keitseng hosted him and helped him organise the trip. Other refugees, particularly PAC members, were accommodated at the ‘White House’ the refugee accommodation built by Amnesty International in Francistown. Besides helping prominent exiles, therefore, Keitseng mainly assisted numerous other refugees who were transiting in Bechuanaland. They constituted the bulk of the refugees, and moved to the Protectorate with different aims: some wanted to further their education in Tanzania, Zambia or other countries; others frankly stated that they wanted to undertake military training. Others on the other hand, had no clear plans for the future, and simply wanted to settle in Bechuanaland and find employment.

We can see from this, then, how transit migration in Bechuanaland illustrates the complexities and fluidity of migration experiences (Collyer, de Haas, 2012: 479). Transit opened a window of different opportunities for incoming refugees; it created new spaces for migrants to reconfigure their life strategies and consider various options for the future. An interesting example of a group of ANC and PAC refugees in Bechuanaland encompasses these features of transit migration and the different strategies and opportunities, which in some cases included long-term plans involving the families left in South Africa. In late June 1963, fourteen South African refugees arrived in the Protectorate: four were PAC, nine were ANC and one was a member of the Indian Congress. All PAC refugees wanted to go to Tanganyika, although their

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105 BNA OP 33/40: Immigration – Refugees: David Pelane, 8 June 1966
106 BNA OP 33/40: Immigration – Refugees – Interrogation Reports, January - June 1966
future intentions were not specified. Seven ANC refugees were also about to go to Tanganyka for military training and were waiting for more instructions from Fish Keitseng. The other two ANC aimed at settling in Bechuanaland and eventually asking their families to join them. The Indian refugee planned to proceed to Dar es Salaam where his family could eventually join him.107

Many refugees set up their networks before moving to Botswana. Informal networks, in fact, ‘make migration easier by reducing the costs and risks of moving… [and] help migrants to finance their travel, to find a job or accommodation’ (Haug, 2008: 588). Collyer (2007: 675-676) discussed the importance of social networks for transit migrants: ‘the geographies of social networks were extremely significant; they were those they travelled with, those they had left at home, those that they were perhaps going to join and those who were elsewhere’. From the interrogation reports of the Botswana police with incoming refugees it is possible to understand what kinds of networks they established. Some were based on political affiliation: many refugees arrived in little groups usually belonging to the same liberation movement. For instance, in 1965 a group of five ANC refugees arrived in the village of Mochudi: according to the police report, they all aimed to go to Tanzania for military training.108 Another example, more specifically an organised social network, involved 21 fully qualified nurses, ANC members, who arrived in the Protectorate from different cities in South Africa in early December 1961. They had been recruited through the ANC by the Tanganyika government and offered employment for a salary of more than double what they were earning in South Africa. They arrived in Bechuanaland in transit waiting for the plane to airlift them.109

As Haug (2008: 588) argues, the multiplier effect of social networks may result in migration chains. For instance, one refugee, Mr. Madikizela, arrived in Botswana in 1965 and wanted to join another refugee, Mr. Essack, in his law firm. Eventually also Mr. Madikizela’s secretary arrived as refugee. They all belonged to NEUM (Non-European Unity Movement).110 Other networks were based on kinship,

107 BNA OP 33/6: Refugees – From the Commissioner of Police to the Government Secretary, 8 July 1963
108 BNA OP 33/39: Immigration – Refugees, 30 August 1965
109 BNA OP 33/6: Political refugees, 7 December 1961
110 BNA OP 33/39: Immigration - Refugee: Cameron Mbulelo Madikizela, 28 September 1965
and this was particularly visible for refugee women. Many interrogated by police officers in these years (mid-1960s) left South Africa with the only purpose of joining their husbands who were already in exile. An important network of South African refugees and immigrants was through the village of Mahalapye, as there is still a high number of people of South African origin living there. Mr. H.X, for instance, stated: ‘On the whole my family was fine, because we were living in Mahalapye, which is quite different from other villages, since it is the only one in Botswana with Xhosa wards’.111

Incoming migrants' movements were influenced by whether or not they were granted refugee status in Bechuanaland: if they were refused they would be declared prohibited immigrants, and forced to leave the country, even if their initial plan was to settle in the Protectorate. Others depended on what their political organisation wanted them to do: staying in the country to help other refugees or going north to complete their education or for military training. One ANC refugee for instance arrived in Bechuanaland in October 1965; during his interrogation he stated that he ‘had nothing definite planned, but is considering staying in the B.P. and finding employment. Should his organisation instruct him to, he will go elsewhere’.112 In this sense, another interesting life history concerns Mr. G.X., a political refugee member of PAC. His life is noteworthy because of the different meanings that Botswana assumed during his life: sometimes it was a transit place, other times a temporary settlement, finally a permanent place to live with his family. The author of this thesis has interviewed one of his sons and an old friend in Mahalapye. The son recalled:

My father was the first person in the family to arrive in Botswana, in 1957. He then travelled quite a lot, in Tanzania, Zambia, Algeria and Nigeria, and overseas too. He was an active member of the PAC, even in exile…. My father never joined local politics in Botswana, but was still active in South African politics.113

111 Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23rd June 2011
112 BNA OP 33/39: Interrogation report on Letsolo James, 29 October 1965
113 Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23rd June 2011. He probably got confused with the date of his father’s arrival in Botswana, since Mr G. X. in a memoir recalled to have arrived in 1962 (BNA OP 2/8: Letter from Gordon Xhallie to the Botswana’s President, 18 October 1982)
In January 1981 he was declared a prohibited immigrant and left Botswana.\textsuperscript{114} In 1983 he was allowed to return on humanitarian grounds.\textsuperscript{115} Botswana therefore assumed different meanings for refugees at different stages of their lives, according to various circumstances. As Mr. G.X.'s life shows, behind the decision to stay or move is not only the refugee’s will, but also external factors: his political organisation, which had asked him to travel around Africa, and Botswana laws, which expelled him from its territory and afterwards allowed him to return. Furthermore, as Bredeloup (2012: 460) argued, it shows the complexities inherent in transit migration, which is by no means a mechanic configuration (country of departure - transit country - country of arrival) but a constellation of different dynamics that shape the migrant’s journey.

The ‘escape route’ and the freedom fighters

As Düvell (2006: 10) explained, migrants’ decisions are also related to the nature of the networks to which migrants are attached. In the case of South African refugees, the organisation of belonging was a fundamental network. Some for instance had been sent into exile in order to be trained militarily and then return to South Africa. Bechuanaland became thus a transit place for guerrillas. Freedom fighters, en route to training camps or on their way back to South Africa, constituted what Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo (1989: 275) defined as ‘refugee warriors’, namely a community of highly conscious refugees organised in a structured political leadership (the ANC and PAC mostly) and an armed wing (the MK and Poqo, the PAC’s militia) engaged in warfare with the aim of overthrowing the apartheid regime.

Botswana explicitly opposed the use of its territory as a transit for guerrillas, or as a settlement from where they could organise acts of sabotage in the neighbouring countries. This attitude became official policy with the no-politics clause that forbade refugees from engaging in any political activity. The case of the political refugees Jack and Rica Hodgson provides an example of this situation. The couple entered Bechuanaland on 30 April 1963, together with another political

\textsuperscript{114} In fact, according to Botswana’s police, he accused the country of ill-treating refugees (BNA OP 2/8: Letter of Commissioner of Police to Permanent Secretary of the President about Gordon Xhallie, 2\textsuperscript{nd} February 1983)

\textsuperscript{115} BNA OP 2/8: Letter of Commissioner of Police to Permanent Secretary of the President about Gordon Xhallie, 2\textsuperscript{nd} February 1983
refugee, Michael Harmel, all listed as communists in South Africa. Pretoria asked the Protectorate authorities to return the refugees, but they refused. The Hodgsons and Harmel were issued with a 90 day-permit, which included the no-politics clause. The three refugees, however, refused to sign the declaration with the clause and accused the British of being on the side of Verwoerd’s Government. Their movements were strictly controlled by the Botswana police, which suspected that the couple was deeply involved in political activities in breach of the no-politics clause. The Hodgsons had in fact bought a farm near Lobatse with the intention of establishing a conduit for MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe) operations (Parsons, 2008: 22). Furthermore, they held political meetings at their house, and later the Bechuanaland authorities found out that they were actually among the organisers of the Umkhonto we Sizwe. They were therefore declared prohibited immigrants. Eventually they were deported to the United Kingdom, as they both had a British passport (Parsons, 2008: 23).

During a meeting in Zambia, the ANC leadership agreed to send back to South Africa around 200 trained saboteurs, at the rate of five per week. Daniel Tloome, administrative secretary of the ANC, and Ismael Chacalia, secretary of the Transvaal Indian Congress, both listed as communists by the South African authorities, were requested by their organisations to stay in Bechuanaland as representatives and to organise the return of trained saboteurs to South Africa. From their arrival in the Protectorate they helped other refugees in transit. In time they were joined by Jonas Matlou, whose task was to guarantee a safe passage through Bechuanaland for trained freedom fighters on their way back to South Africa. After a meeting with ANC leaders in Zambia, Tloome became the ANC representative in Bechuanaland and Chacalia was responsible for garnering support for the ANC struggle amongst the Asian community. Even the PAC, through the activities of the refugee Solly Ndlovu, was organised for the transit of refugees northwards and the return of trained saboteurs to South Africa.

116 BNA OP 33/20: Immigration of refugees, 2nd May 1963
117 BNA OP 33/20: Telex from R.C. in Mafeking to H.C. in Pretoria, 16 July 1963
118 BNA OP 55/42: Immigration Policy – Political Refugees, 29 March 1965
119 BNA OP 55/42: The Refugee Problem in Bechuanaland, 30 August 1965
120 BNA OP 55/66: Return of trained saboteurs, 9 April 1965
Information regarding trained saboteurs on their way back to South Africa had been circulating since 1963, when the colonial authorities got evidence of student refugees who went northwards to receive training and then returned to South Africa through Bechuanaland. In order to avoid jeopardising the security of the Protectorate, the administration considered ceasing to recognise student refugees as such (who, according to Parsons, 2008, were by far the majority of those transiting through the Territory) and lifting the ban on exchanging information with the South African police about them. Furthermore, the colonial administration tried to curb this traffic of freedom fighters back to South Africa by implementing a policy based on three points. First, road checks, whereby cars were obliged to stop and register at police stations, as had been the case during wartime. The authorities would also try to obtain sympathy and assistance in the guise of informants from the local population on this matter. The second point of the policy consisted in organising railway patrols, with the aim of enforcing immigration controls. The final point was the application of restriction orders, in order to limit the movements of active refugees like Ndlovu and Tloome. This policy was not successful since, as will be seen in the next chapter, Botswana was to be used in the 1970s and 1980s as a corridor southwards for trained freedom fighters.

The role of Bechuanaland as a transit place was therefore twofold: on the one hand the country was used for the ‘escape route’ that took political refugees out of the country, either by air or overland across the Territory. On the other, the Protectorate was used as a path for freedom fighters, either on their way to the north or on their way back down to South Africa. Colonial authorities tried to help refugees leave the country, mostly in the name of their pragmatic policy of not wanting to create frictions with South Africa. The attitude towards guerrilla or those who promoted sabotage was one of firm opposition, trying to curtail their activities by implementing new policies and arresting or deporting trained saboteurs. An example is presented by Parsons (2008: 25) with the case of PAC refugee Elliot Sihandipa Magwentshu, who, after being arrested by the police, admitted that his purpose was establishing a

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121 BNA OP 33/24: Sabotage and military training: refugees, 6 March 1963
122 BNA OP 55/66: Return of trained saboteurs, 9 April 1965
safe route through Bechuanaland for trained saboteurs on their way initially to Basutoland.

Transit for refugees also had different meanings and purposes. It gave migrants the opportunity to leave oppression in South Africa, but it also presented insecurities, as refugees were not the only ones responsible for their future. As has been shown, other factors played a role in the decision-making process. The rules set by Bechuanaland legislation might or might not grant refugee status; the political organisation of belonging decided whether a refugee could be enlisted for military training or for continuing education abroad, or only for settling in Bechuanaland to help others. As has been seen with the concept of the border that of transit holds different meanings and intentions for each migrant. Its dynamic aspect makes the journeys and lives of migrants and refugees extremely unpredictable.

The ‘escape route’ as a structured system stopped working before the 1970s. Refugees and freedom fighters who arrived in the country afterwards had to organise differently. Despite the end of the ‘escape route’, the role of Botswana as a transit place was not over, as political refugees, guerrilla members and economic migrants kept crossing the border in their attempt to reach their final destination.

4.4: Formulating the first refugee policies in the Protectorate, 1965-1966

Although refugees kept entering Bechuanaland throughout the 1960s, the colonial government never really formulated a clear policy on the issue until 1965 and 1966, just before independence. As has been discussed in the previous section, the dominant practice was to offer asylum to political refugees from South Africa, but not allow the country to be used as a harbour for saboteurs and at the same time trying to avoid giving the impression of condoning apartheid. The only thing Bechuanaland could do, therefore, was to encourage refugees crossing its borders to carry on northwards by restricting their rights while they were on its territory. The best example of this is the no-politics clause included in the permits issued to

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123 BNA OP 55/42: The refugee problem in Bechuanaland and proposals for a policy relating to refugees, 23rd April 1966

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refugees in order to curb their activism, applicable to both Botswana and South African politics.

The first draft of immigration policy, dated March 1965, stated the difficulty of identifying *bona fide* refugees among all those who arrived, claiming to have been persecuted in South Africa. This was exacerbated by the lack of travel documents, which made verification of identity nearly impossible.\(^{124}\) Basically, the lack of a clear-cut policy towards refugees had caused problems in defining genuine refugees and dealing with them in a way that would not harm the relations with South Africa but at the same time, not provoke criticism from anti-apartheid organisations. Southall (1984: 158-159) explained how the difference between political refugees and freedom fighters was blurred because the former ‘have historically provided a fertile source of recruits for the various liberation armies dedicated to the overthrow of white supremacist rule’. This difficulty provided a pretext to white minority regimes for indiscriminately accusing countries hosting refugees (such as Botswana) of harbouring ‘terrorists’ (Southall, 1984: 159).

Furthermore Zambia, the second stage of the ‘escape route’ towards the north, had implemented a stricter policy concerning the entrance of refugees. According to some British officials in Bechuanaland, this was the result of a change in policy in Tanzania, one of the main final destinations for many refugees and freedom fighters, who had become less willing to host refugees.\(^{125}\) This meant that Bechuanaland found itself having to host those people who were not accepted by the Zambian government or did not want to go northwards. Zambia had hosted ANC refugees since 1964, when a semi-official representative was set up after Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda granted permission (Macmillan, 2009: 308).

Bechuanaland and Zambia reached an agreement on the traffic of refugees through the Thompson Convention, signed in 1964 in Mafeking. This stated that Zambia would be ready to accept only those refugees who held valid travel documents, but provided Tanzania or any other third country would be ready to accept them. Those people entering illegally would be sent back to Bechuanaland. Very few would be allowed to reside in Zambia, only those with skills who would

\(^{124}\) BNA OP 55/42: Immigration Policy – Political Refugees, 29 March 1965

\(^{125}\) BNA OP 55/42: The refugee problem in Bechuanaland and proposals for a policy relating to refugees, 23\(^{rd}\) April 1966
not deprive locals of jobs and would not become a burden for the state. Bechuanaland would therefore make any efforts to prevent refugees from crossing the border with Zambia illegally, whereas Zambia would try its best to prevent returning trained saboteurs from entering Bechuanaland on their way back to South Africa.\textsuperscript{126} Basically, the Convention, by attempting to regulate the traffic of refugees onwards and downwards, officialised the role of Botswana and Zambia as transit passages. It was a compromise to guarantee that Zambia did not become overwhelmed with refugees that could not move further north and that Bechuanaland did not jeopardise its security with the presence of trained saboteurs.

The number of MK members who passed through Zambia between 1962 and 1964 was around 800. Even though this figure is not particularly high, the country was concerned about being overwhelmed with asylum seekers because it hosted refugees belonging to many liberation movements in southern Africa. According to the International Refugee Council of Zambia, at that time there were twelve liberation movements in Zambia and refugees from other countries such as Congo and Malawi (Macmillan, 2013: 20-22).

An example of the functioning of the Convention is offered with the case of a trained saboteur, member of the ANC, stopped in Francistown by the police. During the interrogation, he recalled that he first arrived in Bechuanaland in June 1963, where he stayed for a few weeks before being airlifted to Tanzania. For about a year he received military training in Tanzania and China. In May 1966 he arrived in Maun (northern Bechuanaland) with a flight from Livingstone using a British passport (with an alias) issued in Lusaka. He also admitted that his purpose was ‘to organise an escape route to South Africa for other ANC trained saboteurs now in Zambia’. The police officer recommended declaring him a prohibited immigrant and returning him to Zambia.\textsuperscript{127}

In a later policy draft in July 1965 it was suggested that a refugee settlement camp be established. Since 1963 the number of refugees had increased: they numbered 101 by 15 September 1963, a bit less than 300 at the end of September.

\textsuperscript{126} BNA OP 55/42: Review of Refugee Policy, 19 July 1965
\textsuperscript{127} BNA OP 33/40: Immigration - Refugees: Mack Futha (alias Stephen Hliziyo), 1\textsuperscript{st} June 1966
1964, and 200 after the general elections in March 1965. Of all the refugees present in Bechuanaland, 101 were considered ‘refugees of note’ because of their political activity. In order to control them within the borders of Bechuanaland, the draft proposed the establishment of a settlement camp, defined in the paper as a ‘detention centre’. The idea underpinning the proposal for the settlement camp was that it ‘would require refugees to live in conditions which, while not inhumane, should at least be of such austerity as to deter all but genuine refugees from trying to enter illegally’. The idea was rapidly abandoned because, whether it was administered by the Government or by international organisations, it would have generated criticism from both the South African authorities and from public opinion. However a settlement camp was eventually built in the late 1970s at Dukwe, when the flow of a high number of Zimbabwean refugees necessitated this action.

Having temporarily dismissed the idea of the camp, the colonial authorities decided to intensify the screening of refugees, so that people had to demonstrate that they had left their country due to circumstances of a political nature, which arose prior to their escape. The mere act of leaving South Africa without documents was not considered enough to claim the status of refugee, despite being an offence under South African law. The question of distinguishing ‘genuine refugees’ was a complex matter at the time, since before the Protocol that amended the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees (1967) there was no international treaty that included African refugees. The Bechuanaland government, thus, had to envisage its own mechanisms for recognising and categorising incoming migrants. The screening was supposed to help police officials distinguish ‘genuine refugees’ from those who were not or who could cause trouble to the Protectorate. In order to enforce the screening of refugees, committees were set up in four centres: Lobatse, Francistown, Maun and Ghanzi and staffed by three people, including a Special Branch agent.

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128 This figure did not include the Bafurutse, who in 1965 counted 150, although most of these were assimilated within the local communities, except those in Lobatse.
129 BNA OP 55/42: Review of Refugee policy, 19 July 1965
130 BNA OP 55/42: Review of Refugee policy, 19 July 1965
131 BNA OP 55/42: Review of Refugee policy, 19 July 1965
132 Dukwe is in the north-eastern part of Botswana and more than 100 kilometers from Francistown. It is the only refugee settlement in the country (Zetterqvist, 1990: 37)
133 BNA OP 55/42: Review of Refugee policy, 19 July 1965
committee would interrogate the refugee, and assign them to one of five categories; they would then be granted a permit accordingly.\(^{134}\)

The refugee policies prepared by the colonial authorities officialised the role of Botswana as a transit place, as they were drafted with the main intention of not making the country a permanent settlement for political activists. They also aimed at trying to distinguish so-called ‘genuine refugees’ from freedom fighters and anyone who could potentially cause trouble to the country or become a burden. The proposal to establish a settlement camp and the screening of incoming refugees were the result of the government’s attempts to find the best way of identifying people crossing the border. Finally, these policies paved the way for the refugee policies that independent Botswana would draft in the following years.

**Conclusion**

Through the example of the ‘escape route’ and the traffic of refugees in and out of Bechuanaland, the chapter has demonstrated the multiple purposes and meanings of the concepts of transit and borders. The two are not fixed and do not aim at ‘fixing’ the movements of refugees, migrants and freedom fighters into a linear trajectory composed of place of origin → transit → place of destination (cf. Düvell, 2006: 11). There are multiple dynamics underpinning the passage of South Africans through Bechuanaland and multiple actors played a role in shaping the destiny of migrants crossing the border. The organisation of the ‘escape route’ in both directions mirrors these dynamics, showing the different paths that incoming refugees could undertake once they arrived in Bechuanaland. The ‘escape route’ was used by prominent and ordinary refugees alike and it was supported by different networks that facilitated their migration out of South Africa, their transit in Bechuanaland and their arrival to their final destination.

The ‘escape route’ had important political effects on the Protectorate: on the one hand it induced colonial authorities to the first draft refugee policies; on the other it brought the country into the heart of the liberation struggle, giving it roles as a

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\(^{134}\) BNA OP 55/42: The refugee problem in Bechuanaland and proposals for a policy relating to refugees, 23\(^{rd}\) April 1966
transit path and as a host country for refugees. Therefore, while this chapter focused mostly on Bechuanaland’s role as a transit passage, the following one will discuss the different facets of the presence of refugees and freedom fighters in post-independence Botswana.

This chapter explores the multiple aspects of political refugees and freedom fighters in transit or settling in Botswana in the post-independence years. Through the analysis of the country’s relationship with apartheid South Africa and the liberation struggle, the chapter argues that Botswana’s overall approach towards the liberation movements and political refugees in the country was twofold. On one side Botswana expressed solidarity towards the struggle, through the setting up of a network of South African immigrants and refugees in the country. This network was supported by Batswana citizens, members of the ANC, and through a relative open policy towards incoming refugees. On the other hand, the need of security imposed a pragmatic attitude, since Botswana could not afford to let freedom fighters use its territory as a military base.

The chapter deals with different and overlapping themes, which will be discussed from a state-centric perspective as well as through a bottom-up approach: international solidarity and transnationalism, refugee policies and protection, security and questions of integration and citizenship. The first section takes a broader look at the transnational aspect of the liberation struggle; the discussion then narrows down to Botswana, with an analysis of the contribution to the struggle from three Batswana citizens. The third section explores the dynamics of refugee movements in the country and issues of protection and security. The chapter ends with a discussion on the government’s policies on refugees.

5.1: The ANC in exile and the transnational dimension of the South African liberation struggle

As it has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, the movements of people in southern Africa have had a transnational character through the continuous connections that migrants and refugees have maintained with their home countries. This section analyses the transnational aspect of the South African liberation
struggle, with a particular focus on the ANC in exile (cf. Sapire, 2009) and on Botswana. The ANC had set up structures and bases in many countries in Africa and overseas in the attempt to overturn the apartheid system. Botswana was fully part of this network through its role as a transit passage, but mostly through the extensive network of support that former refugees and immigrants established when they settled in Botswana.

The movement of political exiles out of South Africa started in 1960 with the declaration of a state of emergency in the country and the banning of the main opposition parties. In 1961, the ANC and the SACP formed the armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). Consequently, many cadres left South Africa in order to get trained for guerrilla warfare.

The historian Stephen Ellis recently wrote an important account on the ANC in exile, stating that the decision to turn to violence was made by the communists allied with the ANC, who, in the second half of 1960, visited China and Soviet Union (Ellis, 2012: 12). In his account, Ellis (2012) argued that the SACP exercised a decisive influence over the ANC. Furthermore, he discussed how internal opposition to the ANC was suppressed following Stalinist methods, with the example of the brutalities perpetrated against the cadres in the training camps (Saunders, 2013: 160). Ellis is among those scholars who have revised the ‘official’ history of the ANC in exile and the armed struggle, arguing against the emphasis the ANC added to its achievements and instead unveiling and counteracting its myths (Ellis, 2012: 308). Other scholars criticised Ellis’ standpoint. Saunders (2013: 161) maintained that Ellis overstated SACP’s influence, arguing that the ANC also influenced the SACP and that Christianity was not entirely suppressed by communist ideology, since religious life continued in exile. Furthermore, Macmillan (2013: 10) criticised Ellis’ stance for almost equating the ANC to the apartheid state and for giving little credit to the former for the end of apartheid.

135 As noted by other scholars, one of the merits of Ellis’ work is based on his extensive archival research, such as Stasi documentation in former East Germany, which had been recently made available for consultation.

136 There has been a long debate about the influence of the SACP over the ANC, with different positions assumed by scholars. For instance, Ellis (1992, 2012), supports the thesis that the former dominated the latter, whereas Macmillan (2009, 2013) denied the SACP’s predominance, presenting Jack Simon’s argument whereby it was the apartheid regime that portrayed the image of the ANC run by non-African communists (Macmillan, 2009: 322)
The question of the alliance with the SACP strained the initial relations between the ANC and other African countries. This was to the advantage of the PAC, which had always refused multiracialism, deeming it to be a ‘method of safeguarding white interests’, while advocating pan-Africanism instead (Lissoni, 2009: 291). The dynamics linked to the ANC-PAC rivalry were different in Botswana. Some political parties in the Protectorate were intertwined with the ANC and the PAC: politics in Bechuanaland represented a way in which strong transnational links developed between the two countries. The Botswana Independent Party (BIP) was closer to the ANC because of its leaders’ membership (Mpho and Keitseng), who also ran the ‘escape route’. Matante’s BPP was closer to the PAC representative, Matthew Nkoana (Parsons, 2008: 25). However, the PAC and ANC did not have an open rivalry in the country. Notably, Keitseng stated that he sometimes helped PAC people by offering them a shelter (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 60). The Botswana National Party (BNP) and Khama, with their conservative tendencies, were ideologically opposed to both the ANC and the PAC.

With regard to the arrival of political refugees into the country, Khama was reported as saying to the representative of IRCOZ (the International Refugee Council of Zambia):

…most of the refugees who came from the Republic of South Africa belonged either to the ANC or to the PAC, and then sought contact with their sister parties in Bechuanaland – which were in opposition to his Government. Thereby they almost automatically became his opponents as well – a situation he found very embarrassing and unsatisfactory; he did not want to figure as “the enemy of refugees”\(^\text{137}\)

It is probably because of this, that Khama and his party, once Botswana became independent, never manifested an open preference for either the ANC or the PAC. Both movements were in fact subject to the same rules concerning refugees, their political activities in the country and the transit of freedom fighters.

Once abroad, the ANC in exile managed to establish and cultivate a web of networks in support of the struggle. Outside of the African continent the ANC embarked on a successful diplomatic strategy: ‘the external mission that Oliver Tambo set up won large-scale recognition and support’ (Saunders, 2013: 162). As

\(^{137}\) BNA OP 55/9: Refugee Situation in Bechuanaland, June 1965
explored by Thörn (2009: 436), political exiles were crucial in establishing transnational networks in different countries that would have eventually constituted solidarity movements. One of the main symbols of this transnational solidarity was the establishment of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Mr. Patrick Van Rensburg, former refugee in the UK and in Botswana, remembered contributing to the formation of the organisation: ‘I stayed in the UK for quite a while. I joined the British Liberal Party and I campaigned against apartheid in London for quite some time… Yes, I did help organising the Anti-Apartheid Movement’.\textsuperscript{138}

In Botswana transnational links were facilitated by the lengthy border that connects the country with South Africa. Former immigrants, after naturalising as Batswana citizens, were able to travel back and forth between the two countries. For them, it was easier to maintain contacts with their family in South Africa. Mr. E.R. for instance, offers an interesting example of transnational ties established by former immigrants. He moved to Botswana with a travel document, which allowed him also to go back to South Africa:

I never felt like being in exile, because I could go back to South Africa, even before getting Botswana citizenship: before 1963 I had a temporary travel document issued in South Africa, and later I took the passport [Botswana’s passport], so I could travel back and forth anytime… Now I have permanent residence in South Africa, stamped in my passport. I was granted it because I was born there.\textsuperscript{139}

Crossing the border during apartheid, even for those with a Botswana passport, was not always safe. Mr. D.A. was a former immigrant of Tswana ethnicity: he was highly involved in the struggle, by not only hosting refugees in his house in the village of Mochudi, but also smuggling money and carrying messages across the border:

I could not go back to South Africa before 1990 because I was once arrested. They knew about my activities with refugees. In the later stages of apartheid (it was 1984) I crossed the border with lots of cash without declaring it. It was a trap because they were there waiting for me, with all the Special Branch. So I was arrested and detained for questioning for two weeks in Zeerust.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{138} Interview with Mr. P. Van Rensburg, former refugee, Gaborone, 3\textsuperscript{rd} August 2011
\textsuperscript{139} Interview with Mr. E.R., former immigrant, Gaborone, 5 December 2010
\textsuperscript{140} Interview with Mr. D.A., former immigrant, Mochudi, 16 July 2011
Transnational ties developed not only at a state level (such as through the Frontline States – FLS); the strongest links in fact were at the grassroots level, consisting of a web of support networks that former refugees and immigrants residing in Botswana were able to establish. The main aspect of the transnational links between Botswana and South Africa was the sense of solidarity expressed by those immigrants and refugees that had already settled in Botswana and were keen on helping incoming exiles. Mrs. D.N. remembered how she helped refugees through financial support that she received from other South Africans living in other countries:

I was involved with YWCA and we had a house for women refugees, and I was part of a committee and we used to receive money from people from overseas. From South Africans who were overseas. They sent money for us to hire the house and to help women. And I was involved with another group who received money from some South African refugees mainly connected with the Norwegian Church, and they gave us the money for education of refugees.141

Refugees and immigrants in Botswana formed a community of solidarity committed to help incoming refugees. Mr J.H. recalled that the people who hosted his refugee father were partly South African and partly Batswana, but they were not refugees.

People who came from South Africa who resided in Botswana, not for refuge or political purpose, but because they rather stay here because of the stability there compared to South Africa. So, when he came in here he stayed with those people.142

Furthermore:

That family was helping a lot of South African refugees who were coming over. So it was within that circle, so that’s why, that’s why actually they knew each other, because they were related more closely.143

The Batswana with whom Mr. J.H.’s father spent time with were his wife’s relatives, but otherwise he associated with former refugees and helped the newcomers settle in Botswana. He also helped those people who crossed the border in the 1980s, taking them to his house to be introduced to his family. As Meyer (2001: 93) argued, ‘connections with earlier migrants provide potential migrants with many resources that they use to diminish the risks and costs of migration’. This bond was particularly

141 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
142 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
143 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
strong among refugees. Sharing the same predicament made them feel closer to each other. In fact, refugees often tended to stay and live together:

I stayed with refugees…they spent time at my house. I accommodate some of them personally. [They were] 100% refugees from the ANC, from the BMC, from my organisation was already banned in South Africa, SASO. That’s our group. We were the group in terms of time, a pre-Steve Biko, like a couple of years. When we were at University he was at secondary school. Something like that. So we were all connected, we didn’t care which group was that group.¹⁴⁴

Refugees in exile went beyond the ideological barriers of the political parties they belonged to. In exile those barriers were blurred, and finding themselves in the same predicament, sharing the same condition of uncertainty made them overcome the political differences. One of the participants in this research, Mr. J.H., talked about the experience of his father, former PAC freedom fighter and refugee in Botswana:

He used to associate with other South Africans who were already in the country than with local Batswana; he also used to meet other refugees from PAC and ANC, and they related well despite belonging to different organisations.¹⁴⁵

Refugees were helped find accommodation, take up a job or further their studies by other South Africans, who had arrived in Botswana as immigrants. Immigrants helped the exiles in the name of solidarity, as the felt united by a common sentiment against apartheid.

The sense of solidarity that united refugees and immigrants appeals to the ‘moralised concept of community’ expressed by Mason (2000: 27), intended as mutual concern among the members of the community. Most of the former immigrants belonged to political organisations as well, although their involvement in politics varied. Mr. A.K. was a member of the Non-European Unity Movement and, as a lawyer, he defended people committed to the struggle and accused of sabotage and defying the government.¹⁴⁶

An important example of solidarity manifested in Botswana was through the cultural organisation called ‘Medu Art Ensemble’.¹⁴⁷ In 1977 a group of South African artists moved to Botswana into exile (some were ANC militants who

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
¹⁴⁵ Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010
¹⁴⁶ Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 25 May 2010
¹⁴⁷ Medu in the Sepedi language means ‘roots’ (http://www.sahistory.org.za)
belonged to Umkhonto We Sizwe), and they set up Medu; among those members, who called themselves ‘cultural workers’, were Thami Mnyele, Wally Serote, Patrick Fitzgerald and Hugh Masekela (http://www.sahistory.org.za). Artists were active in different disciplines, such as theatre, graphic art and design, publication and research, film, music and photography. Medu provided an important contribution to the liberation struggle through its cultural aims (training Batswana and exiles in those disciplines, enforcing relations and cooperation among southern African cultural workers) political posters and activities (the Culture and Resistance Symposium held in Gaborone in summer 1982) (Gonzales, 2009: 79-86).

Furthermore, ‘[Visual art education] should instill in our people a meaningful interest in their culture and art and move them to recognize these as an integral part of the nation’s struggle against racist domination’.148 Similarly, Thami Mnyele stated: ‘for me as craftsman, the act of creating art should complement the act of creating shelter for my family or liberating the country for my people. This is culture.’ (Thami Mnyele in an interview with Tim Williams quoted by Judy Seidman, in Gonzales, 2009: 87). Barry Gilder (2012: 72), an MK intelligence agent who worked underground in Botswana in the 1980s, remembered his participation at the 1982 Symposium:

It is July 1982. It is the Gaborone Culture and Resistance Symposium. The hall is filled with hundreds of artists, writers, film-makers, musicians, photographers and dramatists who have made the pilgrimage from South Africa just across the border to gather together with South African culture workers in exile to share thoughts and experiences on the role of culture in the struggle against apartheid.

Medu collaborated with the Botswana National Museum and Art Gallery. Mrs. D.N., a former immigrant, was employed there at that time, and helped the organisation and the symposium: ‘Through my work at the National Museum I was able to help the artists. We used to have exhibition of works by artists who were not able to publish in South Africa.’149

The Botswana government, fearing retaliation from South Africa, which had started to conduct attacks against neighbouring countries, warned Medu to loosen their links with the liberation movements. Medu ceased to exist on the 16th June

148 SAHA AL2596: Gavin Jantjes, Paper on Fine Art, 1982
149 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 1st December 2010
1985, when the South African Defence Force (SADF) raided Gaborone. Among those who perished in the attack were the artist Thami Mnyele and Mike Hamlyn, a young white refugee and treasurer of the organisation (http://www.sahistory.org.za).

Mr. A. K., also member of Medu, remembered the night of the raid:

They [the South Africans] killed that chap, Thami Mnyele. I had been his lawyer for his divorce... Then the others, Tim Williams and Michael Hamlin, lots of them I knew, because they were all part of Medu. So Wally Serote came to our house that night, and we gave him shelter for that night. That was a very traumatic experience, and I knew lots of the people who were killed.150

An important contribution to the liberation struggle in South Africa came thus from the commitment and sense of solidarity of South African immigrants and refugees that had already settled in Botswana. Like in a chain, those who arrived first helped those who followed. In this elaborated but informal network, they were also helped by a number of Batswana citizens, sympathisers of the liberation struggle.

5.2: Batswana against apartheid: Michael Dingake, Fish Keitseng and Motsamai Mpho

There were also many Batswana citizens, sympathisers with the ANC or with the anti-apartheid struggle, who formed part of the network of solidarity towards the liberation struggle that developed in Botswana. Among them were three men who can be singled out for their commitment, since they had been active in the politics of both Botswana and South Africa: Michael Dingake, Fish Keitseng and Motsamai Mpho. I decided to discuss their lives because their commitment was important in the strategies of the anti-apartheid struggle and the political landscape in Botswana. Not only were all three ANC activists, but also founders and members of Botswana’s political parties. Their actions and choices therefore had an impact on the political future of Botswana as well as on the dynamics of the liberation struggle in South Africa.

150 Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 26 May 2011. While Thami Mnyele and Michael Hamlin were killed in the raid, Wally Serote and Tim Williams survived. The latter left Botswana after the raid.
Their lives and contributions have been discussed in biographies and autobiographies mostly; this account however brings them together in a comparative analysis. This section is based on archival material, autobiographies and one interview (with Michael Dingake in May 2010) and is organised across three overlapping strands that characterise crucial stages of South Africa’s and Botswana’s history: labour migration to South Africa; militancy and radicalisation of the ANC; birth of political parties in Botswana. Dingake, Keitseng and Mpho’s lives intertwined with each other and unfolded across these historical phases.

Labour migration has been a fundamental aspect of the transnational interactions among the states of southern Africa, particularly since the opening of the diamond and gold mines in South Africa. The possibility of finding employment, in the mines as well as in other sectors, incentivised thousands of people from the whole region (including Botswana) to migrate to South Africa within a migration circle carefully regulated by pre-apartheid and apartheid legislation. Migrant labour was constructed on an oscillatory base (Beinart, 2001: 30), whereby migrants worked in the mines for a fixed period and then had to return home. This system was meant to limit migrants from residing and settling in urban areas.

The three men moved to South Africa in the early 1940s. Michael Dingake crossed the border in order to study; afterwards he decided to stay and work. He lived between the townships of Sophiatown and Alexandra, doing occasional jobs and sometimes getting in trouble with the police (Dingake, 1987). Fish Keitseng initially worked in the mines for a while before deciding to find a job in town. He worked in the construction sector and afterwards he was employed in other businesses. He encountered problems with the apartheid legislation when he moved to town to look for a job without having a pass (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 22-24). Motsamai Mpho went to South Africa to study, and then, after a brief return to Bechuanaland, he moved back to South Africa to work in the mines as a welfare assistant (Edge, Mpho, 1996: 20-24). Ethnically he was a Yei, one of the minority groups comprising Botswana’s population. In his autobiography Mpho recalled the discrimination he felt as a child in Maun as a member of a minority tribe, as he felt that his tribe was oppressed and treated as serfs by the Tswana (Edge, Mpho, 1996: 6-7). It is most likely that experiencing discrimination in Botswana for belonging to a
minority group was the reason why he developed a strong political consciousness that would lead him to join the South African struggle.

Dingake, Keitseng and Mpho were among the thousands of Batswana people who have historically migrated to South Africa in search of employment or education. Keitseng was the only one with experience as a mine worker, before joining the manufacturing sector and the life in the townships. All three encountered the brutalities of the apartheid regime. Dingake noted it when he was still at school: he had realised that white pupils had their own institutions, while blacks had others, like mission or church schools.\(^{151}\) He thought that due to education black people would eventually be treated as equal by the whites; but the situation worsened with the implementation of the Bantu Education Act: ‘for the first time I understood as never before that white privilege was set to entrench itself in perpetuity’ (Dingake, 1987: 54). The oppression they felt heightened their political consciousness and drove their decision to join the ANC, which in the 1950s had turned to militancy. In 1952 the organisation launched the Defiance Campaign, encouraging people to defy apartheid legislation. In 1955 anti-apartheid groups, transcending class and race lines, joined forces in a coalition called the Congress Alliance, which a few months later drafted the Freedom Charter (Ellis, Sechaba, 1992: 26-27).\(^{152}\) Dingake, Keitseng and Mpho were all part of this change.

Dingake joined the ANC in 1952, and within a few years he became secretary of the branch in the township of Alexandra and then regional chairman.\(^{153}\) After the Sharpeville massacre he was ordered to move to Botswana to take over the coordination of the network of exiles. According to Macmillan (2013: 28), Dingake was charged to take over the organising of the ‘escape route’ from Keitseng and Mpho since, unlike them, he was not involved in local politics. In 1965, he was arrested in southern Rhodesia, and after a few weeks in detention in Bulawayo, he was handed over to the South Africans.\(^{154}\) Eventually, he was sentenced to 15 years of prison: three for being a member of the Communist Party, a banned organisation,

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\(^{151}\) Interview with Mr. M. Dingake, former ANC and Robben Island prisoner, Gaborone, 11 May 2010

\(^{152}\) This umbrella included organisations representing whites, Indians, coloured and black.

\(^{153}\) Interview with Mr. M. Dingake, former ANC and Robben Island prisoner, Gaborone, 11 May 2010

\(^{154}\) BNA OP 55/41: From C.P. to the P.S. 26 January 1966.
and 12 years for recruiting people for military training abroad and collecting information for SACP, ANC and MK.\textsuperscript{155}

Keitseng started his political commitment by joining the trade unions when he was working in the mines. Having joined the ANC around 1948, he worked as an ANC organiser in the township of Newclare where he lived, becoming notorious for his commitment to the party. He was then involved in the Defiance Campaign and the Treason Trial, for which he was jailed; after which, in 1959, he was deported back to Bechuanaland. He settled in Lobatshe and started his activity for the ANC (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999). Keitseng began his work with the refugee pipeline when one of the MK leading members, Joe Modise, went to Bechuanaland to tell him that he would be responsible for the safety of the ANC refugees on their way northwards. In his job he was helped by other Batswana, like Motsamai Mpho and Michael Dingake (for the period he stayed in the Protectorate before being arrested in Rhodesia). According to the colonial authorities, Keitseng and Mpho were active not only in helping refugees move northwards, but also in assisting trained saboteurs in their journey back to South Africa.\textsuperscript{156}

Mpho joined the African National Congress in 1952 in Sophiatown, soon becoming an active member. In 1955 he contributed to the organisation of the Congress of the People, when the Freedom Charter was adopted. In 1956 he was accused number 48 in the Treason Trial\textsuperscript{157} and one of the first to be released. He was arrested again during the state of emergency and then deported to Bechuanaland in 1960, where he carried out his activities within the ANC by helping refugees moving northwards. Fish Keitseng recalled the role played by Mpho, in particular when Thabo Mbeki and other student refugees were about to be deported by train from Rhodesia back to South Africa. Keitseng praised his comrade: ‘Mpho was there [in Palapye, where Keitseng and the students alighted from the train] with many supporters. They had an ANC flag and were singing songs for us. Motsamai saved these students from being sent back to South Africa’ (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 67).

\textsuperscript{155} BNA OP 55/41: Dingake, 12 May 1966
\textsuperscript{156} BNA OP 33/24: Report from C.P. to G.S., 1\textsuperscript{st} March 1963
\textsuperscript{157} BNA: Motsamai Mpho’s Papers: Who is Nelson Mandela, 30 June 1981
What emerges from these narratives is the transnational dimension of the solidarity towards South African struggle, with the direct participation of non-South Africans as freedom fighters. The thousands of migrant workers in the country were also subject to discriminatory legislation as much as South African people and, at the same time, they were also exposed to the rising politicisation of the locals, accompanied by the radicalisation of opposition movements. Keitseng (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 22) for instance joined the African Mineworkers Union (AMWU), which organised one of the largest strikes in South African history in 1946 (O’Meara, 1975: 161). This was also the period that saw the transformation of the ANC into a militant mass movement and the start of its alliance with labour organisations and other opposition parties that cut across class and race lines (O’Meara, 1975). Mpho (1996: 27) recalled this period when we was also working in the mines:

After all that was the period 1949-1954 when the African National Congress held popular meetings on weekends in the African townships. The ANC were demanding higher wages for workers and the mining authorities feared that townships politics might influence the miners. Thus they limited the number of people to leave the compound at any time.

The solidarity discussed in the previous section takes here the form of open militancy. Dingake’s commitment to the struggle led to him ending up in Robben Island until the early 1980s. Keitseng’s and Mpho's contributions lie mostly in the management of the 'escape route' in Botswana, which provided crucial support for many refugees in transit. Their sacrifice was not however inferior to Dingake's. Their life had become similar to the refugees': the South African police knew about their activities, and Keitseng survived a couple of murder attempts (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1997: 70). Colonial authorities in Bechuanaland viewed them with suspicion for their involvement with the refugees, in particularly with those belonging to the communist party. Mpho (1996: 69) for instance stated:

I don’t know if there were any communists in the BPP or the Bechuanaland Protectorate for that matter. Due to my association with the ANC and the South African Communist Party I had been labelled communist by the South African government. I suspect that was the reason why the officials of the Protectorate came to call me a communist as well.
In 1965 the colonial government was particularly concerned about members of the South African Communist Party but also of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) present in the Protectorate for their links with Kenneth Koma, a communist Motswana citizen and founder of the Botswana National Front (BNF), the main opposition party in the country. Koma had studied in the Soviet Union and the colonial administration accused him of trying to establish communism in Botswana. They considered him ‘a serious threat to security’, especially with regard to his ties with communist South African refugees.  

Both Keitseng and Mpho, once back in Botswana in the late 1950s, devoted their lives to help refugees with the ‘escape route’ and to lay the foundations of organised politics in Bechuanaland. They put what they had learnt during their years in South Africa at the service of their country in order to achieve independence. As Mpho stated:

> At a personal level my arrest and deportation was a blessing in disguise. It helped us to get the British out of our land and transform it into the independent republic of Botswana… The racism inside South Africa helped us to expedite independence in this country (Edge, Mpho, 1996: 53)

Upon his return to Bechuanaland, Mpho founded the BPP (Bechuanaland People’s Party), the first, national-based party of Botswana. The party was anti-colonial and against the rule of chiefs, becoming therefore unpopular with both the chiefs and the British (Makgala, 2006a: 119). In 1963 the BPP split into three factions, and Mpho became the leader of the BIP (Bechuanaland Independence Party), which, according to Makgala (*Ibidem*), became a formal ally of the ANC in Botswana. Keitseng also joined the BPP and, after the split, the BIP. He was however stripped of his membership by Mpho himself in 1965, due to some frictions between the two arising from Keitseng’s allegiance and work for the ANC (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1997: 100). He would eventually become member and co-founder of the BNF with Koma. During the early 1960s he was also active with the Bechuanaland Trade Union Congress (BTUC) (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1997: 101).

Dingake was released in 1981 and returned straight back to Botswana, where he resumed the struggle against apartheid, although working underground to avoid

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158 OP BNA 55/42: The refugee problem in Bechuanaland, 30 August 1965
being taken by South African agents and embarrassing Botswana. In the 1990s he got involved in local politics, joining the BNF.159 In 1993 Dingake became the party’s vice-president. In 1997 friction within the BNF caused the party to split: the wide majority of the BNF parliamentarians formed the Botswana Congress Party with Dingake as President (Makgala, 2006a: 126-129). Whereas Keitseng’s and Mpho's contributions to Botswana's politics were crucial because they marked the beginning of active political life in Botswana, Dingake's contribution is still ongoing.

Dingake, Keitseng and Mpho's lives were entwined with major events in the history of both South Africa and Botswana. Their commitment to the ANC and their belief in the liberation struggle had a price. Dingake was tortured and then jailed in Robben Island for 15 years. Mpho and Keitseng suffered marginalisation and were looked at with suspicion by the colonial authorities for their support to the ANC and refugees. They all lived long enough to see the end of apartheid; Fish Keitseng recalled how he felt the day of the first democratic election in 1994:

Today I am happy because Africa is free. I am taking off my hat to my fellow comrades, including these young fellows who came after me. When I was in the struggle I was hoping but not knowing when we would achieve freedom for Africa. Today all of Africa is free because we did it together (Keitseng, Ramsay, Morton, 1999: 127).

These narratives are also important to demonstrate once again the development of transnational connections between the countries in southern Africa. These three lives are exceptional in the context of Botswana's role in the liberation struggle, as they represent the best-known ANC activists of the country. But in the context of the overall liberation struggle they are an example of many migrants who moved to South Africa after WW2 and, after becoming politicised, they took active part in the fight and became protagonists.

159 Interview with Mr. M. Dingake, former ANC and Robben Island prisoner, Gaborone, 11 May 2010
5.3: Refugee protection and state security: Botswana’s dilemma

This section takes a closer look at the situation of political refugees and freedom fighters in Botswana after independence. Despite the fact that the number of refugees settling in Botswana rose in the 1970s, particularly in the second half of the decade, the country was still mostly used as a transit corridor, even though there was no official ‘escape route’ like during the 1960s.

In hosting refugees, Botswana faced a dilemma: guaranteeing the protection of the exiles in the country and at the same time the safety of Botswana’s borders and its population. The question of security was the main driving force behind the attitude of the Botswana government towards southern African refugees. With independence, Botswana carried on the approach that was started by the colonial administration: the country would continue hosting refugees, but without allowing its territory to be used as a springboard to attack the neighbouring territories.

Refugee protection is regulated by a number of international instruments: the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol to the Convention (which overcame the temporal and geographical limits imposed by the 1951 Convention) and the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problems in Africa. Botswana adhered to all these treaties (Maluwa, 1990: 589). A few months before the 1951 Convention, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) was established, with a focus on protection of the refugees (Long, 2013: 74-76).

Securing protection in Botswana meant trying to ensure refugees’ safety from attacks perpetrated by the South African forces. Attempts of kidnapping and raids happened anyway, due to the porosity of the lengthy border and the fact that Botswana cities are mostly located near it. Refugees were therefore an easy target for South African incursions because, basically, they lived in a borderland area (Bakewell, 2002: 230).

In the early 1960s for instance there were attempts of kidnapping prominent political refugees such as Ronald Segal and Arthur Goldreich. The latter arrived

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160 As Long (2013: 86) highlighted, the OAU Convention was drafted with the important involvement of the UNHCR.
161 BNA OP 33/34: Ronald Segal, 16 April 1960
162 BNA OP 33/12: From R.C., Mafeking to H.C., Pretoria, 27 August 1963
in Bechuanaland with Harold Wolpe in 1963. The plane that was supposed to fly them out of the Protectorate was blown up in the WNLA aerodrome.\footnote{BNA OP 33/32: Message from R.C., Mafeking to H.C. Pretoria, 28 August 1963} Goldreich and Wolpe afterwards were sheltered by the police in jail in Francistown, and then escorted to Palapye where they boarded a plane that took them out of Bechuanaland (Dale, 1995: 35). A year after the aircraft events, the refugee centre in Francistown, called the ‘White House’ and built by Amnesty International, was blown up. According to the police investigation and subsequent report, the attempt was clearly targeting the refugee community in Francistown.\footnote{Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010} The police made no arrest for the bombing of the White House, as had happened for the sabotage of the aircraft in 1963, with nobody found guilty (Dale, 1995: 42).

The question of protection and safety of refugees in Botswana needs to be discussed not only through the government’s approach, but also through the testimonies of refugees themselves, who perceived their own security differently from the government’s discourse. Mr. J.H., for instance, remembered the fear he and his family felt after the 1985 raid:

Since then, my mother was never at ease, she pressed to leave Gaborone and move to Francistown, because they had the suspicion that the Boers were still after my father. They then started running around: from Francistown they moved to Phikwe and finally back to Gaborone.\footnote{Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011}

His mother in particular was very scared, and because of this they resorted to a survival strategy of constant moves from place to place:

She was very afraid…I mean, she was very afraid of the Boers, so that when they started…you know, attacking all those freedom fighters in Botswana, my mother never wanted to stay in one place for a very long time…We moved all over.\footnote{Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011}

Refugees in Botswana have experienced different kinds of issues in terms of safety. Some for instance complained about the harassment of the police, often accused of being an accomplice of the South African Special Branch. Mr. Cunningham, a representative of a welfare organisation, wrote a memorandum on the matter. In this document he reported the stories told by two South African refugees that highlighted

\footnote{BNA OP 33/9: Malicious injuries to property, 30 July 1964}
the alleged links between the Protectorate police with the South African Special Branch and the exchange of information between the two bodies.\textsuperscript{167} Another refugee, Mr. Yussef, recalled that after arriving in Bechuanaland, he was visited by his brother and brother-in-law a few times: they carried messages from the South African police telling him to return otherwise they would arrest his wife. In the light of the events, he stated:

I believe that the South African Security Police frequently entered Bechuanaland with a view of obtaining information about refugees, and possibly arranging their abduction. That the Bechuanaland authorities know all about these visits into their territory by the S.A.S.P. but do not attempt to curtail them.\textsuperscript{168}

Mr. D.A., who migrated to Botswana in the early 1960s, shared a similar view:

The attitude of the government was hostile. They liked to harass, you know, the police...They had that attitude of harassment. And then some police members were collaborating with the South African police as well.\textsuperscript{169}

The risk represented by employing South Africans in the police was real. Dale (1995: 91) explained that around eight South Africans were employed in the police department, together with five British, but they were often prevented from accessing sensitive information, especially regarding refugees, as there was fear of their sympathetic feelings towards the apartheid regime. This aspect is linked to the general mistrust towards white people. Mr. R.M., former immigrant and journalist for \textit{Botswana Guardian}, remembered the days after the 1985 raid and how his suspicion towards white South Africans in the country had mounted:

There are a number of people of South African origin...whose children would study here...then they would go to South Africa and study there... (once there they get conscripted into the army). And then they would come back to Botswana to work on fathers’ farms, parents’ business, or whatever. I was particularly suspicious about those people then, they could have had a role in doing the intelligence work for the South African Defence Force.\textsuperscript{170}

The question of race is not new in Botswana. Makgala (2004: 14) reported how racial discrimination was present in the Protectorate since the early colonial years: towns

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{167} AB 218/6/51: Memorandum
\item \textsuperscript{168} AB 218/6/54: Statement by Mr. Youssef, 30 June 1965
\item \textsuperscript{169} Interview with Mr. D.A., former immigrant, Mochudi, 16 July 2011
\item \textsuperscript{170} Interview with Mr. R.M., former immigrant, Gaborone, 22 July 2011
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
were racially divided following the South African model of European quarters and black townships. Racial segregation of public spaces, such as hotels, transports and hospitals, continued throughout the 1900s until independence (Makgala, 2004: 19-23). Also Mpho (1996: 66-68) remembered strained relations between blacks and whites in the country in the early 1960s:

Under colonial rule social relations between Blacks and Whites were strained at best, openly antagonistic and even racist at times. Whites monopolised all the political and economic power... Whites and Blacks mingled during the day in the streets, but there was no social interaction between the two races. You could not find Africans at the homes or social clubs of Europeans at night as friends. They only interacted at work.

Colonial practices and the proximity of the apartheid regime entrenched and enforced racial tensions in Botswana. The next chapter will show how, despite the government efforts in applying its non-racial policy, xenophobic episodes with racial tensions have continued after independence.

The question of refugee protection overlapped with Botswana’s quest for security. According to Milner (2000: 2), it is possible to improve the quality of protection of refugees ‘by recognising and addressing the legitimate security interests of the state’. The security interests are defined as ‘security burdens’, namely the threats perceived by the host state in granting asylum and the resources required to address these threats (Ibidem). This cost can be alleviated through the principle of ‘burden sharing’, which implies sharing the financial and physical efforts of hosting refugees among a number of states (Milner, 2009: 39). The organisation of the ‘escape route’ and the Thompson Convention discussed in the previous chapter may be looked at also as forms of burden sharing. Because Botswana could not afford to host all incoming asylum seekers, it shared the burden with Zambia, which in turn would have been another transit step for further relocation in Tanzania or other countries. This burden sharing benefitted Botswana, not only due to the reduction of the financial cost of providing for the refugees, but also a way to enforce its security, since freedom fighters were pushed to move north while Zambia tried to limit the passage of trained saboteurs southwards.

As Loescher and Milner (2004: 5) argued, forced migration has always had security implications. During the Cold War, refugees were seen as part of the global
struggle between East and West. The conflicts in southern Africa at that time, which had a significant security dimension, were no exception and need to be contextualised within this frame (Ibidem). This was particularly evident for the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique, where the United States and Soviet Union fought a proxy war, by financing their respective sides (Unita and Mpla in Angola, Renamo and Frelimo in Mozambique). The liberation struggle in South Africa should be read in a similar way, whereby the apartheid regime saw itself as the last bastion of capitalism in the region against communist-driven forces, such as the ANC, but also Mpla and Frelimo. In the international security field thus refugees have been perceived not only as the consequence of insecurity and conflict, but also as a possible source of such problems (Betts, 2014: 64)

The case of South African refugees can be seen as a case of a protracted refugee situation (Loescher et al., 2007), since flows of asylum seekers leaving apartheid stretched across three decades. Prolonged refugee crisis can cause instability in the host territory, trigger interventions and can cause the radicalisation and militarisation of refugee communities in camps (Loescher et al., 2007: 493). Botswana found itself in a similar situation: security meant safeguarding its boundaries and the population from the actions of ‘refugee warriors’ (Zolberg et al., 1989) that could trigger South Africa’s reactions. The need to guarantee security, however, justified a number of tight measures adopted by the Botswana government. Refugees, for instance, were bound to the ‘no-politics clause’ that forbade them from taking active part in politics, either local or of their own countries:

The main object of (d) is to ensure that a refugee’s activities on the political front are entirely passive and amount to no more than perhaps card-holding in respect of his own political party of the country of his origin and any financial (on a modest scale) and moral support.171

The clause meant not taking an active part in politics in any of the Territories or bordering countries. ‘Active part’ referred to the publishing of any political material, delivering any speeches and contributing in the creation or organisation of political

171 BNA OP 55/71: From the Commissioner of Police to the Permanent Secretary of the President, 9 May 1968
associations; mere membership, however, was allowed.\textsuperscript{172} Outspoken and opinionated refugees were hardly tolerated. This was in fact the reason why Mr. G.X., former refugee, was declared a prohibited immigrant in the early 1980s. As his friend Mr. S.M. recalled: ‘He was outspoken, so that is why Botswana authorities did not want him there’.\textsuperscript{173} Mr. G.X. was lucky, as for similar reasons another refugee, Mr. Godfrey Beck, a trade unionist and leader of the Coloured Peoples Organisation, was deported back to South Africa with his family. He was very outspoken, had contacts with freedom fighters and often got engaged in confrontations and disputes with the Botswana government. In April 1973 Mr. Beck, his wife and eight of their children were loaded into a police truck and taken to the border with South Africa without explanations.\textsuperscript{174} This was a case of refoulement\textsuperscript{175} which was justified by Botswana authorities on grounds of state’s security. Article 33(2) of the UN Convention suspends the right of non-refoulement for refugees who are considered a danger to the security of the country (Milner, 2009: 63). International law, therefore, ‘recognizes that the security of the host state takes precedent over the protection of refugees’ (Ibidem).

In the 1980s the question of security became more compelling, as South Africa deployed its politics of destabilisation. In the early 1980s South Africa signed non-aggression pacts with Swaziland and Mozambique (the latter known as Nkomati Accord). As Ellis (2012: 140) explained, the government in Pretoria was exerting an enormous pressure on the Frontline States. Mozambique and Swaziland surrendered to South African pressure and signed non-aggression treaties, which would lead to the expulsion of MK cadres from their territory, ‘despite the rhetorical and moral support given to the liberation struggle’ (Sapire, 2009: 283). Botswana refused to sign and soon became victim of acts of retaliation from the South African Defence Force, the worst being the 1985 raid. As a result of the raid twelve people were

\textsuperscript{172} BNA OP 55:17: Instructions for the Chief Immigration Officer regarding permits for refugees, 25 March 1965
\textsuperscript{173} Interview with Mr. S.M, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 19 July 2011
\textsuperscript{174} BNA OP 27/80: Rand Daily Mail: Banned Refugee Deported to SA from Botswana, 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1973
\textsuperscript{175} Refoulement is the practice of returning refugees to the country where they had escaped from. The prohibition of refoulement is expressed in the 1951 UN Convention on the status of refugees in article 33: ‘No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’ The Convention does not allow contracting states to make reservation or derogations on this principle (http://www.unhcr.org)
killed, many were South African refugees, but also Batswana nationals, a small child and a Somali citizen. General Herman Stadler, former head of the security branch unit, stated that SADF confiscated firearms and computer systems in the houses raided and, consequently, they could prove to Gaborone that they were in fact harbouring ANC cadres. Botswana vehemently protested, resulting in condemnation of South Africa by the UN Security Council Resolution n.568 (1985), but Pretoria replied accusing Botswana of harbouring ‘terrorists’ who were infiltrating into South Africa to undertake attacks (Dale, 1987: 87).

In the 1980s Botswana was actually hosting a ‘refugee-warrior community’ (Zolberg et al., 1986: 165). The non-aggression treaties had led to the expulsion of the ANC and MK from Mozambique and Swaziland, making Botswana, as Gilder (2012: 96) recalled, ‘a key infiltration route for MK cadres into South Africa’. Zolberg et al. (1986: 165) explained that refugee-warrior communities engage in military operations across the border, involving their hosts ‘in an act of war’. In spite of its effort to curb freedom fighters’ movements in its territory, Botswana was thus associated with their actions. During an interview, Mr. A.K. explained the situation in the country:

Mr. A.K.: I had many good friends who were in the ANC military wing
E.S.: Umkhonto we Sizwe? They were here then?
Mr. A.K.: Yeah yeah.
E.S.: Alright. But what about Botswana government?
Mr. A.K.: You see, as long as they were not carrying arms openly. They were refugees. The government here didn’t ask ‘Are you MK, are you this, are you that…’ Are you ANC? That’s all, and they got refugee status.

This point was confirmed by another interviewee, Mr. R.M., who claimed that refugees used to carry weapons, but for their own defence. An interesting account of the presence of freedom fighters in Botswana has come from Barry Gilder, a member of the ANC’s secret intelligence unit, trained firstly in Angola, and then in Moscow. In the 1980s he was based in Botswana where he set up an intelligence unit.

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176 BNB 9834: The raid on Gaborone: June 14, 1985. A memorial
177 AL3283: Interview with Herman Stadler, 31 August 2009
179 I use the inverted commas to highlight the fact that freedom fighters were called terrorists by South Africa, but I do not share this opinion.
180 Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 26 May 2011
181 Interview with Mr. R.M., former immigrant, Gaborone, 22 July 2011
with the aim of infiltrating trained MK cadres to South Africa (Gilder, 2012). As happened in the 1960s for the transit of refugees northwards, freedom fighters in the 1980s used ‘the pipeline’ on their way back to South Africa (Gilder, 2012: 97). The guerrillas would arrive at Livingstone from Lusaka; they would cross the Zambezi River overnight, where Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia’s borders meet. In Botswana they would walk to the road near Kasane, where they would be picked up and driven to Gaborone and the surrounding areas. They would be accommodated in safe places for a few days before being sent to South Africa at various points along the border (Gilder, 2012: 97-98). In the 1980s, thus, an organised transit route was established again in Botswana, although this time with the purpose of secretly infiltrating MK cadres back in South Africa.

When Gaborone was raided in 1985, General Stadler argued that Pretoria knew that the ANC was using facilities in Botswana. They knew where the houses and offices with computers were located, thanks to an extensive use of informers, agents and through the interrogation of freedom fighters whom they arrested.182 The Botswana government was not able to control the activities of the refugees and prevent them from attacking South Africa. Mr. A.K. again argued:

Botswana government knew about ANC activists, and it told them: ‘Look, we don’t want you to carry arms. If you do it, we would arrest you and lock you up.’ That was quite clear. So the Botswana government wasn’t aware. But you know, in the intelligence community it’s really easy to find out about these things. I know if you’re trained you have your arms somewhere. People were doing it clandestinely, and the Botswana government did not have control over.183

The attacks perpetrated by the South African forces had important effects in Botswana. As Gilder (2012: 91) explained:

Batswana themselves became terrified. They wanted nothing to do with South Africans. They started reporting any suspicious strangers to the police. Many of our comrades were arrested and deported to Zambia. Many of the Batswana and expatriates who had supported us with safe houses and other logistical assistance began to get cold feet. Our support network dwindled. The vibrant cultural life ended. Medu closed down.

182 AL3283: Interview with Herman Stadler, 31 August 2009
183 Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 26 May 2011
In addition, the government tightened up its security measures. In 1986 the Botswana National Assembly passed the National Security Act, which imposed penalties for disclosing and publishing information classified as secret by the government. The new law had repercussions for the press and the work of journalists as well: as a consequence of tightening measures towards the press, Mxolisi Mgsaxhe, a South African refugee and journalist for the Botswana Guardian, was deported (Zaffiro, 1989: 60).

Not only journalists, but other exiles also suffered the same fate: Maluwa (1990: 593-594) stated that in 1988 a number of South African refugees, who had previously been granted asylum, were expelled from Botswana. Many of them belonged to the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA).¹⁸⁴ The government never gave official explanations for this, but according to the UNCHR, the refugees were allegedly planning a military training camp in Botswana, but the BCMA denied the allegations. As Loescher et al. (2007: 496) stated, refugee warriors often make use of camps ‘as a source of material and recruits to support campaigns against the country of origin’. The best solution would be to separate freedom fighters and exclude them from refugee status. This would prove difficult for Botswana, as South African freedom fighters and refugees mingled well and, as explained above by Mr. A.K., the Botswana government did not have full control over them and their actions.

5.4: Botswana’s policies towards refugees

During the Protectorate years the colonial administration tried to balance a relatively open policy of granting asylum to refugees with a strategically ‘good-neighbourly attitude’ with South Africa. After independence, the new Botswana government generally perpetuated the same approach. During a speech in October 1966, Sir Seretse Khama declared:

My Government will not attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and will not tolerate interference in Botswana affairs by other

¹⁸⁴ The BCMA is the name with which the Black Consciousness Movement was known in exile (Maaba, 2001: 432).
countries. In particular we will not permit Botswana to be used as a base for the organization and direction of violent activities directed towards other states and we will expect reciprocal treatment from our neighbours. We have yet to formulate our policy with regard to political refugees but I can say at this stage that whilst we will continue to offer genuine political refugees a safe haven in our country, we will not permit such people to plan and attempt to achieve the violent overthrow of the Government of any country from within the boundaries of Botswana. Any political refugee who behaves in this manner will do so at their own peril and if they are detected, appropriate action will be taken against them (Carter, Morgan, 1980: 15-16).

This section argues that the Botswana government drafted and implemented refugee policies following the model previously implemented by the British during colonial times. It also argues that the rationale behind the policies was to safeguard the security and economy of the country in light of its relations with South Africa. The restrictiveness of the policies towards refugees aimed at controlling and containing refugees’ activities that could potentially endanger the country economically and politically.

It is important to outline the objective difficulties in which Botswana found itself in the aftermath of independence, which would partly justify the restrictive attitude towards refugees. When they departed, the British left a legacy of poverty and underdevelopment on the new government’s shoulders. According to Carter and Morgan (1980: 4-5) in 1966 the country was among the poorest in the world and before the discovery of diamonds the only source of revenue was the export of beef. South Africa and Rhodesia, with their minority-ruled regimes, were the countries from which Botswana imported most of its goods, increasing in this way an already high dependence on them. Furthermore, the British left the territory with inadequate infrastructure, especially in terms of roads, telecommunications and water and power supplies. There was basically no educated class in the country and the colonial administration failed to build one single secondary school.

With such difficult constraints, Botswana granted asylum to refugees, and the government had to provide for their needs, together with those of its population. According to government statistics, between October 1965 and September 1966 (therefore, just before independence) there were less than 200 refugees in the country. In those 12 months 183 refugees arrived and 122 had departed: among those who arrived, 34 were South Africans who crossed the border and 14 were South Africans who had left Botswana. The breakdown of the number of refugees in the
country is made more explicit when divided according to their political affiliation. Concerning South Africa they can be distinguished as showed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTIES</th>
<th>ARRIVALS</th>
<th>DEPARTURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Congress</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity Movement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soya(^{185})</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Source BNA OP 55/70: 'Number of refugees arriving each month' 1967

In 1969 the total number of refugees in the country amounted to 3,820, scattered in different areas:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GABORONE</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCISTOWN</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOBE DISTRICT</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL DISTRICT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOBATSE</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOCHUDI</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAKUNDA</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAKAWE AREA</td>
<td>3,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Source BNA OP 55/68: ‘Material for Supplementaries’

The Angolans in the Shakawe area constituted the wide majority; according to Southall (1984: 155) they ‘were deemed not so much political refugees as peasant refugees’. They eventually settled in Etsha. The Herero and Damara fleeing South West Africa who settled outside the village of Makunda were not recognised as refugees (Southall, 1984: 158). The Botswana government hoped that those people in

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\(^{185}\) Society of Young Africa
Makunda and in Chobe District would eventually be able to move on, since some had already resettled in Zambia.\(^{186}\) The remainder were likely to be political exiles from South Africa and Rhodesia: the authorities were afraid that, while some would be able to move on, the majority would stay in the country indefinitely.\(^{187}\) Furthermore, these figures counted registered refugees only, which meant those who had reported to the police after their arrival and had been officially recognised as such. It is important to take into account, therefore, the concrete possibility that the number of refugees in Botswana could have been higher, if those who did not register with the police when they crossed the border are also considered.\(^{188}\)

Polhemus (1985: 34) reported that in 1974-75 92.5% of the refugees present in the country lived below the poverty line. Job opportunities available for refugees were minimal, and the government adopted a policy of allowing them to take up jobs only if no Motswana were qualified. Similar conditions existed for student refugees who wanted to continue their studies in the host country: priority in accessing schools was given to locals before them. According to a report from the Botswana Christian Council, of the total number of refugees in the country in 1970, 37 were employed and 91 lived with financial assistance. Among them, the South Africans were categorised as 25 who were assisted and 29 who were employed.\(^{189}\) By taking into account this framework, the Botswana governments elaborated their policies towards refugees.

A first policy was prepared in October 1966, which resembled in words and content the approach adopted by the colonial administration. It in fact re-stated the availability of Botswana in hosting genuine political refugees, but without allowing it to become a springboard for attacks towards neighbouring countries. The policy also included the concern around the return of trained freedom fighters, as the authorities were anticipating more people entering Botswana from the north on their way back to South Africa. This fact was regarded with great concern and as a threat to the country, to the extent that it was recommended to evolve the policy towards freedom

\(^{186}\) BNA OP 55/68: Letter to the Minister of State about refugees in Botswana, 19 March 1969
\(^{187}\) BNA OP 55/68: Letter to the Minister of State about refugees in Botswana, 19 March 1969
\(^{188}\) There are no statistics considering unregistered refugees; providing data about them in this thesis is therefore not possible. The figures related to refugees reported here, thus, consider only officially recognised refugees.
\(^{189}\) BNA OP 55/68: Welfare Officer’s Report, 6 July 1970
fighters, and political refugees more generally, firstly prioritising the security of Botswana.\textsuperscript{190}

In a note on this policy, President Khama highlighted the discrepancies between the policy itself and the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees, which was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1954 and then extended to its colonies, therefore also including Botswana. President Khama, thus, proposed to make reservations to those articles of the UN Convention which contrasted with the governmental policy so that the two would no longer clash.\textsuperscript{191}

The following year, in 1967, the Botswana government enacted the Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act and then a bill with amendments to bring the Act into conformity with the UN Convention.\textsuperscript{192} The Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act established screening of refugees along the same lines of the screening proposed in the policies elaborated during the Protectorate years. According to the Act, thereafter the screening centres would be called Refugee Advisory Committees, which would be set up in Gaborone, Lobatse, Francistown, Maun, Ghanzi, Kasane, Mochudi and Serowe. When an individual asked for asylum, he would be detained until summoned before the committee to be interrogated. Afterwards, the committee would classify the individual into one out of eight categories and then grant a resident permit accordingly. The screening of individuals was adopted with the same purpose of the colonial policy, namely to try to guarantee the safety of refugees and Botswana population by increasing initial controls.

The presence of members of the Special Branch in the Advisory Committee in Lobatse raised some concern among the refugees, who felt intimidated by the police agents.\textsuperscript{193} The concern must not have resulted in changes, since Tshosa (2007: 61) reports the predominance of police officers in the 1990s as well, according to the Refugee (Recognition and Control) Order of 1993:

\begin{quote}
…It is evidently clear that the police force dominates the membership of the Committee. This means that the police have a major role to play in the refugee determination process. The domination of the Committee by police officials creates the impression that the asylum seekers are viewed as either criminals or
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{190} BNA OP 55/69: Immigration Policy Towards Refugees and Freedom Fighters, October 1966
\textsuperscript{191} BNA OP 55/69: Cabinet Memorandum: refugee policy, 17 October 1966
\textsuperscript{192} BNA OP 55/70: The Refugees (Recognition and Control) (Amendments) Bill, 1967
\textsuperscript{193} BNA OP 55/68: Report to DC Lobatse, 10 October 1968
potential criminals and as such there should be heavy involvement of the police in the process.

Botswana adhered to the UN Convention (and subsequently to the 1967 Protocol Relating to the status of refugees) as an independent state in 1969, but made reservations on a number of articles of the 1951 UN Convention: 7, 12(1), 17, 26, 31, 32 and 34 (Zetterqvist, 1990: 28). These reservations reflected the country’s concerns about security due to the refugee context of the time (Makhema, 2009: 16). Among them, article 12(1) deals with the personal status of a refugee, stating that it should be governed by the law of the country of domicile or by the law of the country of residence. Article 17 deals with paid work and provides the exemption from restrictive measures adopted to defend national labour market (Macharia-Mokobi, Pfumorodze, 2013: 155). Article 26 deals with freedom of movement, by which refugees should be allowed to choose where to live and be free to move within the boundaries of the host country. Article 31 deals with refugees entering a country unlawfully, who should not be given any kind of punishment for that; article 32 prevents contracting states from expelling refugees unless the security of the country or public order are at stake. Finally, article 34 encourages the naturalisation and assimilation of refugees (http://www.unhcr.org). Botswana put reservations on these articles, meaning it did not grant refugees any exemption when seeking employment, it restricted refugees’ movements within its borders, it made expulsion of refugees easier and it curtailed possibilities of integration by restricting rules on naturalisation. Regarding the reservation on the articles of the UN Convention, Matlou (1992: 61) stated:

Most of these articles enhance the integration process; they actually emphasize the openness and liberality of a country’s refugee policy. Thus by reserving them Botswana was proclaiming the security-conscious and largely non-integrationist refugee policy it intended to practice.

The restriction on the possibility of taking up paid jobs should be seen as a measure to protect Botswana’s economy and its population from the competition of refugees. It however undermined the possibility of refugees to integrate in the society: Ager and Strang (2008: 171) highlighted the importance for refugees to have employment in order to reach integration, as it promotes economic independence, it provides opportunity to meet members of the host society and it encourages self-reliance.
In addition, the restriction on naturalisation was adopted due to the concern in changing the balance of power between ethnic groups, should a high number of foreigners be naturalised (Makhema, 2009: 16). The non-racial policy that upholds the dominance of the eight Tswana tribes and which is at the basis of the construction of citizenship in Botswana, could have in fact been jeopardised. Limiting the possibilities for refugees to naturalise, however, could undermine the process of local integration. According to Hovil (2014: 489) local integration can be *de facto*, ‘whereby refugee individuals or groups negotiate belonging in the locality in which they are living’ or *de jure*, which is mostly about national belonging and ‘it is represented by the formal process of obtaining a new citizenship and is an overtly political process’.

In the case of refugees arriving in Botswana, *de facto* integration occurred for a number of Bafurutse refugees, who were allowed by the Botswana government and local chiefs to settle permanently. *De jure* integration usually occurred on an individual basis. Only in the case of the Hambukushu refugees in the settlement of Etsha did the granting of citizenship occur on a community basis: after a few years of their successful resettlement after escaping Angola, the Hambukushu were granted citizenship by the Botswana government in 1974 (Potten, 1976: 113). However, as Hovil (2014: 489) highlighted, granting citizenship to refugees would be a durable solution, and usually governments try to avoid it, since they ‘prefer an approach to citizenship that is both exclusive and protectionist.’ In Botswana, granting citizenship to refugees during the apartheid years was a matter of security. For instance, in 1977 a refugee’s application was turned down because of his involvement with the ANC. Botswana authorities were afraid of the consequences that his political commitment could have provoked if he would have carried out these same activities after becoming a citizen.\(^{194}\) The restrictions to naturalisation, thus, was a way to protect the conception of citizenship that entrenched Tswana dominance, but also a mechanism to enforce the country’s security measures in light of the political context of the time.

\(^{194}\) BNA OP 2/3: Botswana citizenship, 1977
Dukwe refugee camp

The question of refugees’ settlement became part of the government’s policy in the mid-1970s, when the number of refugees in the country increased with the arrival of thousands of Zimbabweans. As Southall (1984: 167) explained, with the exponential growth of exiles flowing into Botswana the two transit camps in Francistown and Selibe-Phikwe became overcrowded. At the end of 1978 a settlement camp was established at Dukwe, 133 km from Francistown, with a capacity of accommodating up to 20,000 people (Zetterqvist, 1990: 37). Dukwe settlement camp was established through a Tripartite Agreement between the Botswana Government, the UNCHR and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and with the purpose of making refugees self-sufficient in rural productive activities, so that they could be less dependent on external aid.

As Matlou (1992: 138) claimed, self-sufficiency was not really reached, due to a number of constraints such as state security, the amount and kind of aid provided, limited opportunities and lack of refugee participation in the policy-making process. The Botswana government maintained that the main aim of Dukwe was integrating refugees in the local community. This statement can be contested by considering the policies and the attitude adopted. In the name of refugee and state security, the settlement was established in a very remote area. According to Matlou (1992: 139), the decision of the site for setting up Dukwe ‘suggests the policy-makers perceived refugees as social misfits and sought to isolate them in order to reduce their influence on Batswana’. Loescher (2001: 226), explained how the use of camps to locate refugees was considered by governments as the most convenient solution, in order ‘to segregate refugees and to limit their impact on the local community’. In addition, the use of camps was supported also by the UNCHR, which thought that assembling refugees in one place would facilitate the provision of food, shelter, sanitation, health care and clean water. Camps therefore become a tool to guarantee state security, and this was particularly explicit in the attitude of the Botswana government with post-1976 South African refugees.

South African refugees were relocated to Dukwe from 1980. Until that date, the settlement camp only hosted Zimbabwean refugees, while other nationalities

\[195\] BNA OP 27/70: Dukwe Refugee Settlement, 8 May 1981
were scattered across the country. The number of South African refugees in Botswana increased with the escalation of violence in South Africa in the aftermath of the riots in Soweto in 1976. As a consequence of the clashes between students and police, hundreds of predominantly highly politicised school children and young people poured into Botswana claiming asylum. According to Tony Hodges (1977: 41) in an interview with Mr. Charles Tibone, the administrative secretary of the Office of the President, the number of South Africans in 1977 was 550, and they kept coming in at the rate of 50 per day. According to Southall (1984: 156), between January 1975 and February 1977 around 1,200 South Africans crossed the border; after a number of departures, the figure dropped to 400-500 by mid-1978.

The presence of these young refugees soon became a problem for Botswana: they wandered around Gaborone, without a job and without the possibility of education, since the country lacked spaces in its institutions (Hodges, 1977: 41). These aspects resulted in them becoming scapegoats to rationalise the increase of crime in the capital city. Yet, what most concerned the government of Botswana was the militancy and radicalism of the young students. As Hodges (1977: 41) explained, in 1977 the US Ambassador in Botswana announced a programme founded by his government to build two secondary schools that could host almost 1,000 children. However, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, Mr. David Finlay, expressed the intention of the government to segregate South African refugees ‘because there was a risk that their militancy and political sophistication could infect Batswana students if they were spread throughout the country’s secondary education system’. Soweto refugees became what Milner (2009: 62) defined as ‘indirect security concerns’, the result of the increased crime and insecurity in refugee-populated areas and grievances by the local population.

The government soon had problems in accommodating these young refugees. The rationale underpinning the policy towards Soweto refugees, as Mr. Daniel Kwelagobe, at the time Minister of Public Service and Information, made clear, was resettling and rehabilitating them in a place far away from the urban centres.¹⁹⁶ The problem facing the Botswana government was the fact that the United Nations were

¹⁹⁶ BNA OP 27/59: Resettlement of South African Student Refugees, 21st October 1977
not keen on funding a rural settlement, but, rather a peri-urban refugee centre or a low-cost housing scheme.

The solution therefore, rested on the idea of establishing a rural settlement even without UN support, in order to exercise tighter controls over the refugees. The government opted for Mosetsanamontle, an under-utilised farm with basic infrastructure and not too far from urban centres. The settlement would have hosted a few hundreds South African refugees, those who were not employed or enrolled in schools and therefore received the monthly allowance, and it would have provided education facilities and the possibility of engaging in productive activities, like the establishment of vocational training centres on the same line as the Brigades set up by Patrick Van Rensburg. An evaluation committee was held with Government and UNHCR members to discuss the project. The site was not considered fitting with the socio-economic background of the refugees and it was deemed too distant from urban centres. Because of these reasons, convincing the refugees to move there would have been difficult. The UNCHR and the Botswana Council for Refugees (BCR) interviewed some refugees who opposed the resettlement: they agreed with the educational opportunities but they felt that their security would have been at stake.

In 1980 Zimbabwe achieved independence. After the Lancaster Agreement, Zimbabwean refugees in Botswana were repatriated to their home country. At the time their number in the country had increased to 30,000 people (Dale, 1995: 40). After their departure, Dukwe settlement camp became available; the Botswana government thus decided to make Dukwe a multinational settlement and therefore refugees from all nationalities were resettled there. The following table shows the number of refugees in Dukwe per nationality in 1980:

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197 BNA OP 27/59: Resettlement of South African Student Refugees, 21st October 1977
198 BNA OP 27/69: New project submission 1979: Mosetsanamontle, January 1979
199 BNA OP 27/69: Mosetsanamontle project, 14 September 1979
South African refugees opposed the decision to be moved to Dukwe, fearing for their safety, as they reminded the Botswana government, through a letter signed by the main liberation movements, about the incursions of the South Africans and Rhodesians in similar camps in Zambia, Angola and Mozambique, with several casualties among the refugees. Another problem was the fact that Rhodesian refugees who lived in Dukwe were rural and accustomed to growing their own food, so they did not find it difficult to adjust to Dukwe’s lifestyle. South African refugees, however, were urbanised and not used to rural life (Polhemus, 1985: 41-42). The government, despite the clear opposition of the South African refugees, decided to carry out its policy, and all refugees who were not employed or not enrolled at school were forced to resettle in Dukwe. The roundups of the police, the suspension of the 30 pula allowance and threats of being returned to South Africa forced the refugees to move to Dukwe (Polhemus, 1985: 42).

It is interesting to highlight how the question of security is perceived differently by the state and humanitarian organisations on one side and the refugees on the other. While for the former, a camp to agglomerate all refugees was considered the most suitable solution, for refugees it was considered a dangerous alternative. What was at stake was not only refugees’ protection, but also their control. Congregating them in one place (the camp) gave the Botswana government the possibility to maintain a grip on refugees’ activities and movements, and reduce their potential political influence on the local population. Refugees, on the other hand, saw the camp as unsafe and a place where they would be exposed to South

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African retaliations. The clash between state interests and refugees’ needs, thus, is apparent.

A new influx of Zimbabwean refugees entered Botswana as a consequence of the unrest in the Matabeleland region. In 1983 their number in Dukwe had reached 4,000 people (Zetterqvist, 1990: 26-27). South African refugees stayed in Dukwe across the whole decade, with a total number swinging between a minimum of 56 in 1983 to a maximum of 161 in 1988. In 1989, the year before the unbanning of the opposition parties in South Africa and Mandela’s liberation, the overall number of South African refugees in Dukwe was 96 (Matlou, 1992: 147-148, citing LWF figures).

It is interesting to notice that, when authorities and aid agencies undertook a background study of the refugees in Dukwe, the South Africans, unlike the other nationalities, were divided by their political affiliation. Not only did this division highlight the heterogeneity of the group, but also emphasised the different ways in which the political parties organised themselves. The Botswana government, for instance, explained that those belonging to the ANC and PAC were ‘well behaved’; those belonging to other parties like SASO and BCM, considered ‘less serious political organisations’ misbehaved, since they caused more trouble and were less cooperative.201 Southall (1984: 169) suggested that the fragmentation was due to the fact that the majority of refugees did not recognise the legitimacy of ANC and PAC, nor were they united in other parties like SASO. The Botswana government, therefore, had major problems in controlling them, since there was no organisation responsible for the refugees’ behaviour.

This section demonstrated how Botswana’s refugee policies were driven by security concerns. In the late 1970s and in the 1980s in particular, Botswana safety was jeopardised by South Africa and Rhodesia’s incursions and their accusations of hosting freedom fighters. But security here is intended not only as safety of the borders, but also as ‘social’ security, namely safeguarding Botswana’s population’s rights of citizenship and employment. The reservation on certain articles of the UN Convention and the establishment of Dukwe reflected this need of security. The measures taken by the government, therefore, aimed at containing refugees’ freedom

201 BNA OP 27/69: Report on the visit to Dukwe, 15 April 1980
in order to avoid giving credit to its neighbours’ accusations and to limit the impact of refugees on Botswana society. Finally, this section highlighted the different ways the idea of security was perceived by the government and international organisations at one side, and refugee at the other; different perceptions that assume opposite and contrasting needs.

Conclusion

The chapter argued that the rationale behind Botswana’s approach towards the South African liberation struggle was driven by both a sense of solidarity and a security quest. Solidarity was stronger at the grassroots level, as the community of former refugees and immigrants and the three biographies demonstrated. The government, on the other hand, had to be pragmatic and therefore it privileged the security of its borders above an explicit open attitude towards refugees and freedom fighters in particular. Solidarity was transnational and support to the ANC spanned across borders. But the Cold War climate generated mistrust and fear, which pushed governments like Botswana to dedicate special attention to its security to the detriment of refugees’ welfare.

The chapter also showed how the dynamics around political refugees in Botswana sheds light on questions of protection, integration and citizenship. The quest of security of the borders, particularly in light of South African reprisals in the 1980s, motivated Botswana to restrict policies on refugees, to the detriment of their integration. Security thus became a tool to control and reduce the possibilities of refugees to integrate in the society, as Botswana put reservations on a number of articles of the UN Convention that explicitly encourage the integration of refugees. Dukwe settlement camp also served to guarantee this social security, since, as Bakewell (2014: 135) claims, refugee camps are devised to ‘segregate refugees from citizens, thereby upholding the primacy of the nation state as the arbiter of the refugees’ fate’. The next chapter will continue the discussion on integration and citizenship by looking at the struggle for recognition of former refugees and immigrants.
Chapter 6: Constructing ideas of citizenship in Botswana

Citizenship in Botswana has been initially discussed in chapter 2 in relation to minority rights and the country’s nation-building process. This chapter will take the analysis forward, by exploring how the conceptualisation of citizenship and nationhood around the idea of Tswanadom has generated claims of autochthony by the Tswana citizens but also perceived feelings of discrimination by former South African migrants, now naturalised citizens.

This perception of discrimination finds its roots in certain aspects of the legal conceptualisation of citizenship (sections of the Constitution and land rights). Additionally, the attitude of Batswana citizens often makes former migrants feel as if they ‘do not quite belong’. Jokes, comments and labels from Batswana citizens of Tswana ethnicity have often been perceived as a ‘threat’ by naturalised citizens, who feel that their citizenship in the country is in question, or second-class, because they do not belong to the eight Tswana ethnic groups. Underpinning these discriminations are claims of autochthony. Autochthony here is understood as the claim of a part of the citizenry of Botswana of having an alleged right of access to resources and rights before strangers, ‘whoever they may be’ (Ceuppens, Geschiere, 2005: 386). This right is ‘given’ to them by the fact that they belong to one of the eight Tswana ethnic groups.

In addition, the chapter argues that South African former migrants have created different spaces to resist these forms of discrimination. Some migrants resisted discrimination by focusing on maintaining their own values; others opted for integrating and assimilating into Botswana society. Moreover, former migrants constituted a sense of community and established a transnational sense of citizenship and identity that would include an attachment towards both South Africa and Botswana. These forms of resistance have the double purpose of protecting and enforcing former migrants’ feelings, but also reaffirming their belonging to Botswana and their membership to the citizenry of the country where they reside.

The chapter contributes to the debate on citizenship and belonging by illustrating the dynamics and complexities that revolve around the way citizenship is
negotiated in Botswana, particularly in relation to naturalised citizens. In addition, it examines how different forms of resistance have been envisaged by former immigrants and refugees in order to reaffirm their identity as South Africans who have naturalised as Batswana citizens within the legal frame of their Botswana citizenship.

In particular, the case of the Xhosa community in Mahalapye is of great interest in this scenario, as it exemplifies all the aspects discussed throughout the chapter: the establishment of a community of South African former immigrants and refugees, their feeling of being discriminated by the country’s legislation and in the everyday practices, and their struggle to create spaces to express their resistance to cultural assimilation.

6.1: Citizenship and its transnational dimension

The resurgence of politicised ethnic consciousness in Botswana since the 1980s has not manifested through battles in the streets, but in the media, ballot boxes, in courts and so on (Solway, 2003: 488). That is because the country has legitimate and orderly means that can be used by agents to express dissent and challenge the status quo (Solway, 2003: 490). Moreover, minorities, in their struggle for recognition, do not have secessionist aims, as what they claim is for their culture and language to be recognised as part of Botswana culture: ‘it is not Botswana citizenship that is in question, but the terms of that citizenship. And it is not the Botswana nation that is in question, but rather its cultural basis and terms of inclusivity’ (Solway, 2004: 134). This is a very important point to highlight, since South African former migrants have also taken the same stance: they do not contest their Botswana citizenship in its legal frame, but the way it is regarded by Tswana-ethnic citizens and the state, which makes them feel like second-class citizens. Second-class citizenship, according to Werbner (2004: 49), is defined by minorities as being ‘required to assimilate to others’ terms, even when those terms are imposed as coming from “the national culture”. What others call “national cultural” they regard as simply other people’s culture’.
The fact that South African former migrants do not contest their Botswana membership becomes evident in the analysis of the sense of community that they have established. This community has been discussed in chapter 5 in its historical development as a solidarity network committed to help incoming refugees and to fight apartheid. After 1994, when its major scope was finally reached, the community assumed the form of a network with loose boundaries, as many of the ‘original’ members were refugees who returned to South Africa after 1994. Anthony Cohen (1985: 15) defines community as:

That entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediately than the abstraction we call ‘society’. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home.

A community therefore refers to things that bind people together and that gives them a sense of belonging together (Day, 2006: 1). Also, according to Levitt (2001b: 199), members in a transnational community often know each other or have acquaintances in common, as is the case of the South African former migrants in Botswana. South African migrants, in fact, are bound together by the similar experience of apartheid discrimination, migration abroad and then a life in Botswana.

This community has two important and intertwining characteristics that have endured across the decades. One is its transnational dimension: post-1994, the cross-border ties that former migrants had established increased and became more intense in comparison to the apartheid era. The second characteristic is the fact that former migrants tended to stay together as a way to resist forms of exclusion in Botswana. This sense of community, therefore, has opened spaces to resist the Tswana hegemonic discourse, the practices of exclusion and to reinforce their membership in the Botswana citizenry.

This last point is particularly important and it has manifested itself in relation to former migrants’ identity. There is not necessarily a link between someone’s sense of national identity and the papers they hold. Some can have a handheld nationality in one country but a heartfelt nationality in another (Bakewell, 2007: 12). This aspect highlights how national identity can be fluid and does not necessarily reflect the ‘official’ papers that someone holds. Former migrants hold Botswana citizenship but have diverse degrees of attachment towards their country of origin: they have an
attachment towards Botswana, the country where they reside and where they have citizenship, and an attachment towards South Africa, the country where they come from. The case of Mr. R.M. is an interesting example for the ethnic dimension of his identity that needs to be considered in the way he relates to both Botswana and South Africa:

I am a Motswana by ethnicity and because of my documents, but I feel attachment to South Africa because I have close relatives living there. From my mother’s side they are all living there; it is from my father side that they are from Botswana.202

Mr. R.M. shows how identity is constructed when life is shaped by migration processes, as ‘self- and other-identification is fundamentally situational and contextual’ (Cooper, Brubaker, 2005: 71). His answer suggests that he has a handheld Botswana nationality (enforced by his Tswana ethnicity that adds an emotional element to his bond with Botswana) and a heartfelt South African nationality (strengthened by the presence of relatives). He feels Motswana partly because of being ethnically Tswana (an individual’s identity used to be inherited from the father’s side, as seen in chapter 2), but also because of his passport, which identifies his Botswana citizenship. At the same time, kinship links still tie him to South Africa, the country where he was born and where relatives from his mother’s side live.

The transnational dimension of citizenship, thus, has two important and overlapping functions: one is maintaining the connections with the home country, enforced by the sense of community among former migrants. The other is providing former migrants, through the intensity of the cross-border connections, with a way to resist forms of discrimination and feelings of not quite belonging. As Ralph and Staeheli (2011: 522) argued, maintaining contacts with the place of origin serves in some cases as a response to ‘the hostile and unreceptive context in which migrants often find themselves’. Botswana was not hostile towards South African migrants (besides the citizens’ complaints about the allowances given to refugees203), but

202 Interview with Mr. R.M., former immigrant, Gaborone, 22 July 2011
203 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 1st December 2010. The money of the allowance was given by the UNHCR but was channelled through the Botswana Council for Refugees (BCR), an agency funded by the Botswana Christian Council and the Botswana Government in 1974 (BNA OP 27/61: Botswana Council for Refugee, Constitution).
some discriminatory practices, expressed through certain aspects of the country’s legislation and through the interactions with local people, have transmitted a feeling of ‘not quite belonging’ to former migrants.

It is important to highlight that, while certain forms of discrimination are institutionalised, such as some contested sections in the Constitution, other forms have emerged amongst people’s interactions and during conversations. As Mr. J.H. explained, the discrimination that he perceives usually comes out when he introduces himself to Tswana-ethnic citizens: ‘The thing with the South Africans here it’s the names, they define who you are. With names, the South African identity comes out, and suddenly you’re no longer seen as a Motswana, but rather an outsider’. Discriminatory practices, then, emerge mostly in certain circumstances and during discussions. Also, it is important to remember that this chapter is mostly based on narratives of former migrants’ feelings and memories, and their account of discrimination is based on their perception of prejudice that stems from the interactions with Tswana-ethnic citizens. This distinction between different forms of discrimination reflects the way citizenship can be understood; within its legal framework (therefore through the state discourse), and as a ‘social practice’, distinct from the legal notion of citizenship (see Turner, 1993: 2).

6.2: Negotiating belonging: the use of identity papers

It is noteworthy to highlight the importance of identity cards in the discourse of citizenship and belonging. Torpey (2000: 5) refers to identity papers as the state’s monopolisation of the ‘means of movement’, namely the authority that the state has in order to restrict people’s movement. Papers are used by migrants to enhance their resiliency, to shift from one identity to another, but also to claim rights and belonging. Mhlauli (2011), in his study on teachers’ perspectives on citizenship education in Botswana, argued that possessing the Omang card (identity card) was seen as a way to distinguish between citizens and foreigners. Furthermore, he found out that the identity card can be perceived also as a way to differentiate between ‘true’ Batswana (those who were born in the country and belong to one of the main

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204 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
ethnic groups) and those who achieved citizenship through naturalisation (as they do not belong to the main ethnic groups).

This is an interesting perspective: the Omang does not report citizens’ ethnic belonging, as ethnicity is excluded in the legal conceptualisation of citizenship in Botswana. It then suggests how ethnicity, however, remains relevant in the way citizenship is conceptualised among Batswana people, whereby belonging to one of the eight Tswana tribes becomes a criterion to identify an ‘authentic’ citizen of Botswana. In addition, ethnic identity is perceived as a dividing line between Batswana citizens of Tswana ethnicity and citizens belonging to other ethnic groups.

Deborah Durham (2003) discusses this issue by analysing the way the Herero in Mahalapye have negotiated their identity as Batswana citizens and their ethnic belonging as Herero. Holding Botswana citizenship entitles an individual to a number of rights. The Omang card gives the right to hold property, to vote, to attend schools and to receive state benefits. The card thus ‘shapes the way in which citizenship, and through it the state as the source of that power, is understood’ (Durham, 2003: 155).

The Herero community in Mahalapye adopted their own passport which is valid for travelling to other Herero areas, where the holder would receive a stamp and inscriptions. This tradition traces its origin back to nineteenth-century Namibia (Durham, 2003: 153). The Herero, basically, hold two passports: one that states that they are Batswana, understood here with the political meaning of citizens of Botswana, the other states that they belong to the Herero community. As Durham (2003: 154) argued:

The two passports point out that power is located and relocated in radically different forms. The state passport is part of a project to “rationalize” citizenship; it locates a person in a map of states and identifies him by his location. The Otjiserandu passport counters the state’s claim to define and designate its citizens with the individual’s claim to create her own identity.

Passports and identity cards therefore are markers of identity, but also of belonging and exclusion. Having or not having them indicates an individual’s membership to a community, which could be the state as well as the Herero community. The question of papers is also fundamental when discussing immigrants and refugees. A difference that is evident across the research is between those who crossed the border as
refugees and those who entered as immigrants. Those who left as immigrants had a passport or a travel document issued by the South African government, which allowed them to travel and return home. Refugees usually did not have any documents, so they had to ‘skip the fence’ to come into Botswana. The case of Mr. Van Rensburg was slightly different, since, despite the fact that his South African passport was withdrawn after he went into exile, he held a British passport too. This allowed him to settle in London as a refugee and carry out his activities in the anti-apartheid struggle before relocating to Botswana. He used to work in Congo as a diplomat, but he resigned in the late 1950s in protest against the apartheid regime:

I resigned, I came back to Johannesburg, I got a job at the Liberal Party. And I got a lot of police attention…and that’s when I decided that I had to get out for a while. I then went to England for a while and upon my return in South Africa I was declared a prohibited immigrant.

Mrs. K.M., on the other hand, arrived in Botswana as a child ‘jumping the fence’. She recalled how initially she had the UN documents; afterwards, her father (who was a refugee) applied for Botswana citizenship in 1970 including her as a minor. When she turned 21 she registered as a citizen:

After I got my passport in 1978 I went back home, I was going there to meet my family. I went there for the first time for the funeral of my grandmother, the one I used to live with. It was nice to go back where I was born and bred, I had a very good feeling. It was good to be able to go to South Africa whenever I wanted. That was a wonderful feeling because before I knew there was no way I could go to South Africa.

The two examples above illustrate how citizenship can be flexible (see Ong, 1999). Both Mr. Van Rensburg and Mrs. K.M. held papers that reflected the fluidity of their identities, which was expressed in the swapping from one identity to another and the changes of papers according to the circumstances. The use of identity papers are important instruments for the individual’s identity and for creating boundaries of

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205 A travel document allowed South Africans to go to border countries only, such as Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and so on. To go further, they had to apply for a national passport (Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011)
206 Skipping the fence or jumping the fence were the expressions used in Botswana to refer to refugees, since, in the absence of any document, the only way to cross the border was literally jumping the fence (Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011)
207 Interview with Mr. P. Van Rensburg, former refugee, Gaborone, 3rd August 2011
208 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2010
belonging, especially between citizens and foreigners. Their instrumental use allowed former migrants to shift from one identity to another, but also to claim their membership in Botswana. Papers set boundaries, and in this way they have become the government’s instrument to determine insiders and outsiders, but also an instrument for Batswana citizens ‘by birth’ to draw a line between them and naturalised citizens, who are not part of the eight Tswana ethnic groups, and therefore ‘do not quite belong’.

6.3 Claims of autochthony: land rights and political offices

Debates around autochthony in Botswana never reached the point of violence unlike in other countries of the continent, such as Cote d’Ivoire. Peter Geschiere wrote extensively on the topic of autochthony, ‘to be born from the soil’, considered as a highly mobilising force in different parts of the world (Geschiere, 2009: 2). Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000: 423) linked the insurgence of the use of the notions of autochthony and ethnic citizenship in Africa to the 1990s wave of democratisation. The political liberalisation intensified discourses on belonging based on roots and origin, which led to debates on who has the right to belong (Ibidem).

In Botswana, autochthony took a different trajectory, but it is still ‘a product of state formation in postcolonial time’ (Geschiere, 2009: 121). It stems from the legal understanding of citizenship that emphasised the rhetoric of equal rights for all when in practice this equality occurred to a limited extent. This section explores how discourses around autochthony in Botswana arose in the issue of land rights and concerning political office. This section is relevant to the argument of the thesis, as it reconnects to the question of unequal access to rights and resources that affects the most vulnerable categories of citizens in Botswana, such as women, the poor and minorities.

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Land rights

There are three categories of land tenure in Botswana: freehold land, state land and tribal land (Adams, Kalabamu, White, 2003: 2). Freehold land gives the owner unlimited rights to the land. State land comprises land for national parks, game reserves and urban development. Tribal land constitutes 71% of the national land (Molomo, 2008: 160-161). In 1970 the Botswana government enacted the Tribal Land Act that established Land Boards to regulate and manage the use of the land. The Boards are named after only the eight recognised Tswana tribes. When a land certificate is issued, it states that it is situated in a specific tribal territory (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008: 3). Before 1993, land was allocated to the tribesmen only; this was considered discriminatory because it excluded citizens of Botswana who did not belong to that tribe (Molomo, 2008: 163). In 1993, the Tribal Land Act was amended, opening the allocation of land to all citizens, irrespectively of the tribe of belonging. This amendment ‘nationalised’ all customary land (Kalabamu, 2000: 313).

As Preece (2004: 5) explained, ‘a Botswana citizen is entitled to obtain land for free, [and] to buy land or houses that are built by the Botswana Housing Corporation’. This means that in theory all citizens are entitled to a piece of land. As Keller (2014: 28) argued, however, ‘even when a national constitution and public rhetoric itself proclaim the rights of all members of a nation to protection by law, in practice this right might not be accorded’. The 1993 amendment eliminated the discrimination by replacing ‘tribesmen’ with citizens (Adams, Kalabamu, White, 2003: 7), but problems in accessing land rights remain. Certain categories of people, such as women, marginalised minority groups and poor people are still disadvantaged in the land allocation process (Adams, Kalabamu, White, 2003: 10-11). The demands of political and ethnic recognition from minority groups, as discussed in chapter 2, included land rights. In 1999, minority groups like the Bayei demanded jurisdiction over their tribal lands along with the recognition of other rights (Molomo, 2008: 165).210

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210 The Balopi Commission (as discussed in chapter 2) failed to successfully address the questions of exclusion and ethnic equality (Molomo, 2008: 166)
The alleged discrimination that one interviewee, Mr. L.N., mentioned, can be understood within this frame. He stated:

The government once advertised 500 plots, commercial plots, industrial plots, in all the towns...And then we all applied. I applied in about six towns. My wife did the same. A friend of mine did the same: we were all born in South Africa. Not one of us got anything. First preference. Then I tell my kids: “you’re looking for jobs? You can’t get first preference”.\footnote{Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011}

Without underestimating the perception of discrimination that Mr L.N. felt with regard to the fact that he was not allocated the plot because of his South African origin, this situation should be read within the frame of the tensions between what the laws state and the actual practice. In fact, as Werbner (2002: 677) explained, fully open access to land has yet to be realised in practice. The implementation of extension of land rights by the Land Boards remains a contentious matter (\textit{Ibidem}).

The question of land rights and control over it is an instrument to negotiate belonging (Lentz, 2007: 37) and to define autochthony (Nyamnjoh, 2007a: 308). Nyamnjoh (2007a) brought up a case which took place in Mogoditshane, a suburb of Gaborone. In Mogoditshane land is ‘tribal’, therefore it is allocated freely, while in Gaborone the land is ‘national’ and therefore for sale. In addition, as a result of the 1993 amendment to the Tribal Land Act, people from all over Botswana have applied for land in the suburbs of the major cities such as Gaborone, Francistown and Lobatse (Kalabamu, 2000: 313). Mogoditshane is one of these suburbs. Unrest has grown in Mogoditshane between those who considered themselves more indigenous, and therefore with a right over the land, compared to others who were considered outsiders regardless of how long they have lived there (Nyamnjoh, 2007a: 308).

This case highlights the weight of indigeneity (which Keller equates with autochthony\footnote{For the purpose of this thesis, I take Keller’s stance and equate indigeneity with autochthony.}) that involves ‘claims of primordial attachment to the place in which they themselves were born’ (Keller, 2014: 26). Indigeneity has fuelled different forms of conflicts over citizenship in Africa, as the aforementioned case of Mogoditshane showed (\textit{Ibidem}), where people’s claim to be more indigenous in the suburb village challenged others’ rights to land (Nyamnjoh, 2007a: 308).
Holding of political offices

The elite’s claims of autochthony in Botswana have been used to contest roles and ambitions of politicians, but also to highlight someone’s right to be ‘son of the soil’. The following examples relate to members of the elite; however, similar situations can still happen to other Batswana citizens. The examples show how rights of citizenship can be manipulated and used as political weapons to curb an opponent’s ambition, to question the President’s right to hold office and, more broadly, to advance discourses of autochthony that differentiate between citizens by naturalisation and citizens by birth.

Manby (2009: 132-134) presented the case of John Modise as an example of manipulation of citizenship and discourse over autochthony. Modise was born in South Africa to Batswana parents before 1966 and held Botswana citizenship without problems. In 1978 he founded a political party that was in opposition to the BDP which was the then governing party. The same year the authorities decided that his citizenship by descent was not valid, and therefore he was declared a prohibited immigrant and deported to South Africa. He tried to re-enter Botswana numerous times, but he was always arrested and deported again. South Africa did not recognise him as a citizen either, so he was forced to live in Bophutatswana as a stateless man. In the early 1990s he appealed to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, which in 2000 ruled in his favour. Modise however was compelled by the attitude of the Botswana government to accept citizenship by naturalisation, which has some limits with regard to the holding of political office. In fact, he could not run for the highest political office, the presidency of the country.

The implications of John Modise’s case were clearly political. The withdrawal of his citizenship rights first and the denial of them across the years were in fact strongly linked to his decision to found a political party. The African Commission also recognised the connection when, in the sentence, it stated that the deportation ‘suggests a pattern of action designed to hamper his political participation’ (Manby, 2009: 134). Therefore, citizenship can be used as a political weapon to obstruct certain citizens’ participation in the politics of Botswana, and to reduce and limit the opposition to the dominant elite. As Dorman, Hamnett and Nugent (2007: 8) argued,
leaders who feared to lose their office in the elections ‘sought to manipulate citizenship and redefine nationhood; making nations and creating strangers’.

Furthermore, the fact that naturalised citizens are not allowed to run for presidency reconnects with the issue of belonging and how those who claim autochthony articulate this concept with a ‘purified’ idea of citizenship (Geschiere, 2009: 26). Thus, only those who can claim an allegedly ‘pure’ citizenship can become President in Botswana. I use ‘pure’ here to refer to the fact that the 1966 Botswana Constitution, 33, 1(a) clearly states that an individual, in order to be qualified for presidency, needs to be ‘a citizen of Botswana by birth or descent’. As Takirambudde (1983: 76) explained, the 1982 Citizenship Act used to incorporate both *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* in order to determine the right of citizenship. The Act has been amended a few times since, and in the last version in 1998 *jus soli* (citizenship by birth, as defined in the Act) was cancelled so that an individual born in Botswana is citizen only if at the time of his/her birth at least one parent was a Botswana citizen as well. (1998 Citizenship Act, S.4(1)). The Act in S.5(1) refers explicitly to *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by descent) which is accorded to an individual born outside Botswana if at least one parent is a Botswana citizen (1998 Citizenship Act). In both cases, therefore, the descent from a Motswana parent is the fundamental criterion to be recognised as citizens.

Other ways to acquire citizenship are through settlement (for those born to a person who has settled in Botswana before 30 September 1966), adoption, by registration (for a minor at the age of 21 when parents are naturalised citizens) and by naturalisation (when a person has lived in Botswana for at least 10 years). Despite the different ways listed in the Citizenship Act that allow an individual to become a citizen of Botswana, only through citizenship by descent or birth (which still requires one parent to be a citizen) can an individual be allowed to run for presidency. This provision therefore excludes all South African former migrants from the possibility of holding the highest office in Botswana, but also their children if both their parents are naturalised citizens, since their status would be that of citizens by registration.

Modise’s case was by no means an exception, although it acquired international resonance because it dealt with a politician and thus had important implications. As the local NGO Ditshwanelo explains, however, many people in the
country have their citizenship withdrawn because they are considered as having dual citizenship since one parent is a foreigner. Because of the fact that it is not always clear who actually has citizenship in another country as well, many people risk finding themselves stateless (Ditshwanelo, http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw).

Botswana in fact does not allow dual citizenship and this has become another political case when it implicated the current President Ian Khama, son of Sir Seretse Khama.213 Opposition members of Parliament questioned the President about the fact that he might not have renounced his British citizenship and that he might therefore hold both Botswana and British citizenship. The President was defended by the Speaker of the National Assembly, who denied the fact that the President had dual citizenship and that there was no doubt that the country ‘is not being governed by a foreigner or somebody with dual citizenship’ (Direng, 2011).

The issue of holding dual citizenship has here become a question of belonging: having dual citizenship is equated with being a foreigner. Keller (2014: 31-32) refers to ‘autochthony of national public figures’ to discuss the cases when the citizenship of national public figures is questioned. President Khama’s case did not have consequences for his position as leader of the country, unlike Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, who in the mid-1990s was constitutionally barred from running for presidency because, even though he was born in Zambia, his parents were from Malawi (Keller, 2014: 32). It is interesting to highlight how in recent years many African countries have adopted dual citizenship, especially thanks to the pressure exerted by emigrants and diaspora groups abroad (Whitaker, 2011). In Botswana only very recently has the political debate opened spaces for dual citizenship: in December 2014 the newly elected MP Unity Dow proposed to amend the Citizenship Act in order to allow dual citizenship (Mmegi online, December 2014, at http://mmegi.bw). We will have to wait and see if her proposal will be brought forward.

This section has explored how discourses of autochthony have become part of Botswana society and assume that Batswana citizens of Tswana ethnicity can claim access to certain rights before other citizens that do not belong to the eight Tswana

213 President Ian Khama was born in England during his father’s exile in the early 1950s. Sir Seretse Khama had been sent into exile after marrying a white, English woman.
tribes. Concerning land rights, the Botswana government has tried to reduce
discrimination by amending the Act; in practice, though, discrimination, whether
perceived or real, persists, and it is coupled with claims of autochthony. Concerning
the holding of political office, discourses of autochthony have been used as a
political tool to constrain the elite’s ambitions and rights. The next section will
continue the analysis of perceived forms of discrimination that have affected
naturalised citizens.

6.4: Narratives of ‘not quite belonging’ and the spread of xenophobia

This section further elaborates the concept of autochthony, with an analysis of the
way South African former migrants perceive a degree of discrimination. It focuses on
practices and on former migrants’ perceptions of not quite belonging because they
are naturalised citizens, are of non-Tswana ethnicity and were not born in Botswana.
On a social level, then, autochthony has been used by Tswana ethnic citizens to mark
the difference between them, allegedly ‘original’ as born in Botswana by Batswana
parents, and those who achieved their citizenship by naturalisation, highlighting a
distinction between autochthones and presumed ‘strangers’, or allogènes, as defined

Discourses on autochthony do not only involve the elite in high profile
political cases. Claims of autochthony are manifested also among people’s relations,
as I was told by former South African migrants during the interviews. Many of the
interviewees explained how they have perceived some forms of discrimination in
their relations with Tswana ethnic citizens, which have been expressed through
jokes, comments and labels. Sometimes, the jokes and comments that Batswana
citizens of Tswana ethnicity made were perceived as ‘threats’ by South Africans, a
‘threat’ to their identity and their recognition as Batswana citizens. Mrs. D.N. stated
how she used to feel:

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214 The term allogènes means ‘strangers’. Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000) used this term in
contraposition to autochthones. They explained that since the late 1980s political liberalisation in
Africa seems to have strengthened a tendency towards closure and exclusion, and autochthony has
become a slogan to exclude the strangers, the allogènes (Geschiere, Nyamnjoh, 2000: 423).

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Now if Batswana say I’m South African I don’t look at it as a threat, it’s more often a joke. When you’re younger you don’t see it as a joke, it becomes threatening to you. I mean now I can stand among Batswana and say I’m Zulu, and they say: “Ah, we can see that way you do” and things like that. But you know, it doesn’t threaten my being Motswana.215

The reality of these ‘threats’ obviously needs to be considered. In part, the ‘threat’ is perceived in relation to the fact that the jokes and comments show that Batswana citizens ‘attach’ a status of ‘foreigner’ to naturalised citizens that makes them feel as though they do not quite belong. To many former migrants, the jokes and comments sound like a way for Tswana ethnic citizens to devalue their Botswana citizenship. Mr Ntshingane for instance, argued: ‘Then they would regard you as a foreigner. Even if you integrate with them, they would just regard you as a foreigner. I was born here but they still regard me as a foreigner’.216 The perception of still being considered as foreigners and thus of not quite belonging was enforced by the use of the label ‘citizen by paper’. In part, however, these ‘threats’ could have been felt as real especially by refugees. We have seen in chapters 4 and 5 how the Botswana government could declare refugees as prohibited immigrants and deport them if it deemed that the refugees did not comply with the government’s obligations. For instance, Mr J.H. recalled that his father was threatened with being reported to the police by his Batswana neighbours when they had disputes.217

Batswana citizens of Tswana ethnicity tend to use the label ‘citizens by paper’ to define those who were born abroad and applied for citizenship after moving to Botswana, and those who were born in Botswana from foreign parents, and had to naturalise as well. A former refugee, Mr. L.N., stated: ‘Citizenship is just a piece of paper. That’s what they call it. The paper Motswana. That’s what I was told when I got citizenship’.218 Similarly, John H. said:

If your father is from South Africa, that’s where the problem is. That’s in fact the reason why we had to naturalise. Batswana say: ‘You’re a Motswana because of papers’, even though you were born here.219

215 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
216 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011
217 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2011
218 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
219 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
The label ‘citizen by paper’ suggests a presumed ‘difference’ between the insiders who were born in Botswana and have the right to claim ‘autochthony’ in the country, against the outsiders, who achieved citizenship at a later stage, and, in Geschiere’s terms, are considered *allogènes* (Geschiere, 2009: 25). More than the jokes and comments, the label ‘citizen by paper’ would give former immigrants and refugees a sense of insecurity and of being discriminated. Another former immigrant said on this point: ‘I can’t help feeling that it has never been eradicated in their minds that ‘this one is not ours… I don’t think that he is completely with us’. The question of authenticity and the idea of belonging are closely tied, and the reverse of this aspect is the risk of segregation and separation. Holloway and Hubbard (2001: 77) warned about this risk, by explaining how a sense of belonging may imply a place where only certain people and things belong. Having a sense of place is thus a way to mark differences between groups of people (Rose, 1995: 99).

The use of this label and the ensuing enforcing of the dichotomy insiders/outsiders strengthen the idea of a hierarchy of citizenship ‘fostered by political, economic, social and cultural inequalities’ (Nyamnjoh, 2004: 41). This hierarchy clashes with the official rhetoric around equality of citizenship, which claims ‘we are all Batswana’, but supports people’s persistent feeling of discrimination based on ‘tribal’ differences, ethnicity and race (Durham, 1999: 198). In this hierarchy, therefore, some are considered ‘less Batswana than others’, even if they all carry the Omang, the identity card (Nyamnjoh, 2007a: 311). This is also visible in Mhlauli’s study: according to it, for some Tswana-ethnic citizens ethnic identity (perceived as belonging to a Tswana tribe) precedes national identity:

This was interesting in that their conception of national identity and belonging was exclusionary as it totally left out ‘foreigners’ or ‘expatriates’ (as they are usually referred to in the country) who have naturalized as citizens (Mhlauli, 2011: 171)

The discourse then returns to the question of ethnicity, nationality and citizenship that is at the base of this discrimination towards naturalised citizens. These narratives suggest that this perceived prejudice would be based on the fact of not belonging to the eight main Tswana ethnic groups, of not being born in Botswana and of having

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220 Interview with Mr. T.V., former immigrant, Gaborone, 28 July 2011
South African (or, more broadly, foreign) origin, which support Nyamnjoh’s reference to the existence of a hierarchy.

On one side, for instance, are Batswana citizens by birth, whose ethnic, civic and national identities overlap, since they are Batswana citizens, born in the country by Tswana ethnic parents. On the other side are South African former migrants like John, who is ethnic Pedi, born in Botswana from South African parents. Again, this point underlines how concepts of ethnicity, citizenship and nationality can be conflicting for the way the different layers of ethnic, civic and national identities intertwine. In the case of Mrs. K.M.’s father, ethnic and civic identity overlapped (he was of Tswana ethnicity and became a citizen of Botswana), but he was born in South Africa. In the following quote Mrs K.M. explains why, in her opinion, her father left Botswana for Bophutatswana:

He might have had problems in terms of, you know…you’re not a Motswana. Motswana of Botswana. So some of the things that you might think you’re entitled to, like perhaps a promotion at work and so on, you maybe can’t get because of your status.221

The man’s perception of being discriminated against was based on the fact that, despite being a Motswana by ethnicity as well as by citizenship, he was not born in the country and therefore was not entitled to certain rights, which would instead be granted to Tswana-ethnic citizens born in Botswana. Because of these overlapping and conflicting identities, Oommen (1997: 28) highlighted the importance of differentiating the concept of citizenship from nationality and ethnicity: ‘citizenship provides the non-national ethnic and minority populations in a multi-national state with a sense of belonging and security’.

The perception of being marginalised and considered foreign because of being ‘citizens by paper’ is felt, to different degrees, among both immigrants and refugees and across generations. Some of them have resided in the country for at least two to three generations: nevertheless they still perceive a sense of being considered outsiders because their family originated from a foreign country. A former immigrant in the village of Mahalapye, for instance, noted: ‘born in Botswana, grow up in Botswana, but they still regard you as a foreigner…because your grandparents came

221 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011.
from another country’. The perceived feeling of exclusion and integration also varied according to when the refugee or immigrant arrived. Mr. L.N, who arrived in 1973, when asked if he felt integrated in Botswana he answered: ‘No, I came too old. I was already…Mind was set already’. The daughter of a refugee, for instance, explained how different it was for her compared to other refugees:

I think for me, having grown up here is what makes it different to other people who came in from other societies at a later point in their lives. I came here as a young child and I grew up and I was able to absorb some of the values and things in this country… So for me the experience is really bound to be very different from that of people who came here when they were already in their 20s or 30s and all of that, it’s very, very different.

Being able to grow up and study in Botswana with local children played a major role in the way Mrs. K.M. has integrated in the country, as she assimilated the local culture. In certain cases, some former migrants feel 100% Batswana because they have assimilated completely. Mr. Jongman for instance stated: ‘People see me as a Xhosa even though I was born in Botswana, but this is not a problem for me because I feel and I know that I am a Motswana’. This case is interesting because it shows the contrast between the way Mr. Jongman is seen by Batswana citizens and the way he sees himself. Despite the fact that Batswana regard him as a Xhosa, he considers himself a Motswana, reaffirming his right to belong to the Botswana citizenry.

As Solway (2004: 131) argued, ethnic groups in Botswana are internally differentiated along class lines, and members experience these forms of discrimination differently. This has impacted on their integration, as those former migrants who felt the discrimination less are also those who are better integrated, or assimilated. It is important to remember that assimilation and integration also depend on migrants’ choices. In the previous chapter I discussed how refugees tended to stay together, or with other South Africans. This may have hampered the degree of their integration and assimilation. Other migrants, instead, may have decided to assimilate in the host country. Mrs. N.S., for instance, feels she is rooted and grounded in

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222 Interview with Mr. S.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 21st June 2011
223 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
224 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011
225 Interview with Mr. Jongman, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011
Botswana, and that is why she never thought about returning to South Africa after 1994. Unlike other South Africans, she knew:

Some people felt persecuted, rightly or wrongly, but you can’t take away from people what they feel because of their own experience. Some people felt assimilated, others were on their own.\textsuperscript{226}

Integration and assimilation, thus, can become a strategy to avoid exclusion and discrimination. According to a former immigrant, the way to overcome the feeling of isolation for immigrants and refugees would be through assimilation:

It comes a time when you have to identify. And when you identify fully, you identify fully with the cultural norms of the place. I used to feel a foreigner, but not anymore. I refused to.\textsuperscript{227}

Moreover, integration and assimilation can have a ‘generational dimension’ and also a gender dimension. For example, Mrs. K.M. admitted:

You see, for a woman I think, when you marry a Motswana it means that you are a Motswana. Perhaps for women it’s easy for them to assimilate if they are married to Batswana, but for men, the fact that they are South African even when they marry a local Motswana, you know, it’s still assumed that you’re, you’re a man, and that doesn’t change who you are. Because you’re a man. But for women it changes.\textsuperscript{228}

Mrs. K.M. also disclosed that when she applied for a job she risked not getting it, because her nationality was in question. Due to the fact that she was the daughter of a former South African refugee, and that she herself was a refugee who had achieved Botswana citizenship at a later stage, she did not take being a Motswana for granted. When eventually her citizenship was confirmed through marriage with a Motswana man she was appointed to the post she had applied for. Having married a Motswana man, thus, ‘made the difference’.\textsuperscript{229} Intermarriage is therefore considered an axis of assimilation and naturalisation (Malkki, 1995a: 170).

\textsuperscript{226} Interview with Mrs. N.S., former immigrant, Gaborone, 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 2010
\textsuperscript{227} Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
\textsuperscript{228} Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011
\textsuperscript{229} Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011
Xenophobia

In chapter 2 we have seen how the southern African region has been experiencing a rise in xenophobia towards foreigners: Botswana is not excluded from this growing intolerance. Discrimination and claims of autochthony that have affected minorities and naturalised citizens alike have assumed a more virulent form with regard to foreigners. This led Nyamnjoh (2004: 41) to talk about the existence of a hierarchy of citizenship in Botswana, which is paralleled by a hierarchy among foreigners, whereby ‘not all the outsiders are welcome, and not all who are welcome are accorded the same respect, privileges or rights by the Batswana’ (*Ibidem*). Nyamnjoh (2007b: 73) argues that these narratives of belonging in Botswana suggest that citizenship is hierarchical and inequalitarian, affecting individuals and discriminating by race, ethnicity, class, gender and geography.

According to Nyamnjoh (2007b: 75), white migrants are at the top of this hierarchy and are usually generously regarded for their economic power. At the bottom are other Africans, often defined as *Makwerekwere* and are treated as scapegoats for the economic and social problems of the country (*Ibidem*). In particular, Zimbabweans are the main scapegoat to channel Batswana’s frustration over unemployment and insecurity (see Morapedi, 2007). In the middle ground are Asian immigrants, Indian and Chinese, who are accused of reducing citizens’ economic empowerment, particularly in the construction sector and small business ownership (Marr, 2012: 66). The hierarchy of foreigners to which Nyamnjoh referred is therefore based on racial terms and preference is given to those who are not perceived as an economic threat.

However, it is interesting to highlight that, notwithstanding the fact that xenophobia has become an issue only recently, cases of intolerance towards foreigners had been noticed in the past as well. Makgala (2006b) argued for instance that intolerance, bordering on xenophobia, was present towards Zimbabweans in the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, Mr. John Sheppard of the Botswana Special Branch, referred to anti-immigrant feelings towards other Africans and Asians. Anti-white feelings were not common, since white people were not perceived as a threat in the
competition for employment.\textsuperscript{230} In support of this point, a former counsellor of the Botswana Council for Refugees confirmed during an interview that competition for jobs between refugees and locals also generated xenophobic feelings and fear from local Batswana citizens towards refugees.\textsuperscript{231}

Since the mid-1980s xenophobic episodes have increased, with a ‘resurgence of identity politics and overt tensions over belonging’ (Nyamnjoh, 2006: 82). Even through the 1990s, Botswana favoured the arrival of skilled migrants from other African countries as well as Europe and Asia: around 17,000 skilled workers were employed in various sectors of the economy. Since 2000, the attitude has changed, with a preference for locals over foreigners in order to reduce the dependence on immigrants (Crush, Williams, 2010: 18). On this point, Oucho (2006: 57) highlighted how the overall approach of Botswana towards immigrants has changed and, whereas it was more welcoming at the end of the 1990s, the situation ‘has deteriorated since then and increasing xenophobia and less tolerant policies compel many foreigners to move back to their home countries or to other countries’.

Xenophobia, in the past decades as well as in more recent times, has developed according to the economic logic that sees certain categories of migrants more in competition for employment with locals than others. Xenophobic discourses are rooted in an exclusive conception of citizenship that is articulated ‘around access to resources of the state and the country’ (Durham, 1993, quoted in Nyamnjoh, 2002: 763). The scarcity of the resources available has therefore enforced discourses of belonging and ensuing xenophobic tendencies. The media also played a role in fuelling tensions between locals and foreigners and exacerbating the distinction between autochthones and the ‘other’: because of the substantial emptiness of the concept of autochthony, the ‘other’ can be redefined and readapted (Geschiere, Jackson, 2006: 6). In the media therefore the ‘other’ can be a minority group, such as the Kalanga, labelled as foreigners from Zimbabwe who want to seize power over ‘real Batswana’ (Nyamnjoh, 2002: 764), or it can be the Zimbabweans, accused of threatening Botswana’s safety (Morapedi, 2007: 240; Marr, 2012: 77).

\textsuperscript{230} FCO 45-1093: From Mr. G.D. Anderson to the FCO, 20 November 1972
\textsuperscript{231} Interview with Mrs. J.M., former counsellor at BCR, Gaborone, 17 May 2010
6.5: The Xhosa community of Mahalapye

The Xhosa community in the village of Mahalapye is worth being analysed because it encapsulates some of the main trends discussed in this thesis. Citizenship, identity and politics of belonging are explored for the way they have been elaborated through the century-long process of migration and resettlement of Xhosa that has contributed to shaping village life. This section analyses dynamics of identity construction and strategies of cultural survival, by comparing the Xhosa community with the Herero community also living in Mahalapye, and examining these notions within the framework of the broader discourse on citizenship.

It is important to highlight that the Xhosa community is very heterogeneous, as its members arrived in Mahalapye during different waves of migration and across the whole twentieth century. Some now belong to the third generation (such as Mr. Ntshingane), while others arrived in the 1960s (such as Mr. S.M.) Therefore, it would be more correct to refer to the Xhosa community as a minority group, composed of Batswana citizens born in Botswana with parents or grandparents of South African origin, and former South African migrants now naturalised citizens. Despite the difference, however, the section shows how the attachment to the South African identity persists not only among those of more recent migration, but also among some of those belonging now to second or third generations.

Mahalapye is a village in the Central district of Botswana, in the Bamangwato territory. It is strategically located and historically linked to the construction of the railway from South Africa to Rhodesia at the end of the 1890s. It was in fact the site of a main station, which attracted workers from other parts of Bechuanaland and the region. Mahalapye, no more than a small settlement at that time, grew and developed along the rail line, becoming an important centre. The Xhosa wards, Xhosa 1 and Xhosa 2, are located across the railway line. The Xhosa have been living in Mahalapye since its existence. The Xhosa, but also the Herero, are therefore those who established and shaped Mahalapye.

According to the newspaper Mmegi, during colonial time some of the Xhosa were recruited in the Cape Colony by the British South African Company to work on the railway (Mmegi online, August 2007 at http://mmegi.bw). This was confirmed by an interviewee who...
talked about some Xhosa families that kept arriving in the village to work on the railway. Others, conversely, arrived as employees of the farms or to work at the cattlepost for Sekgoma Khama (Kebonang, 1988: 44). The Ntshingane family, for example, was one of the first to arrive and settle in the area at the beginning of the twentieth century. During the interview, Mr. Ntshingane recalled how his grandparents ended up settling in Mahalapye:

And then when the parents wanted to retire, the parents to my uncles and even to my fathers, they wanted to retire from their working in the farms with the whites, then they wanted to settle in Mahalapye. That’s when they came to meet the father to Seretse Khama, Sekgoma. He’s the one who gave them this piece of land.

Decades later, Tshekedi Khama, Sir Seretse Khama’s uncle, appointed a member of the family, David Ntshingane, as chief of the Xhosa ward. As headman, his task was mainly arbitrating the disputes that arose among families. This role is now called arbitrator, but it used to be referred to as headman. Other South Africans (not only Xhosa) joined later, after the implementation of apartheid and the liberation struggle, both to work and as refugees. Mr. Ntshingane remembered how his family hosted Mr. S.M., when he escaped apartheid in 1962. Also, another South African (of Sotho ethnicity) remembers hosting and befriending refugees, such as Mr. G.X. At their arrival they had to report to the headman of the ward, who, in turn, had to report to the chief of the village.

Mahalapye is nowadays a village shaped by different communities of immigrants who created the settlement; consequently, Mahalapye does not have an indigenous population. The ethnic groups include Xhosa (originally from South Africa), Batalaote (Kalanga-shona), Borotsi (Lozwi, coming mainly from Malawi and Zambia) and Herero, who crossed the border from South West Africa as refugees after the massacre perpetrated by the Germans in 1904 (Kebonang, 1988: 44).

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233 Interview with Mr. S.N., local headman who arrived in Bechuanalnd at the age of 7 with his family in 1955, Mahalapye, 23 June 2011
234 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
235 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011
236 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
237 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011
238 Interview with Mr. Tsobebe, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
239 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
ethnic communities gathered together in wards, with their own kgotla inside. A ward is

A collection of households living together in their own hamlet, and forming a distinct social and political unit under the leadership and authority of an hereditary headman, who had well-defined administrative and judicial powers and functions… Each ward has its own kgotla, where cases are tried and other local business dealt with under the leadership of the headman. (Schapera, 1955: 19-21)

The kgotla is the place of assembly, where chiefs and headmen would meet other men to discuss different matters concerning the community. It differs from lekgotla which usually refers to the body of men gathering at a place (Schapera, 1955: 19). Before independence, women and servants were excluded from participating to the kgotla, but post-independence they were allowed to take part (Odell Jr., 1985: 65). A hierarchy exists among the chiefs in the village. The headmen of the wards deal with small disputes. When a bigger issue arises, the headman has to refer to the chiefs at the main kgotla: there are three chiefs appointed there, and the issue comes to them according to its importance. The first of these three is a Herero, and all the local headmen are under his rule and report to him first. He would eventually report to the second one, who, if necessary, will report to the third one. In case the matter is too big for the third one too, he has to report to Serowe, since Mahalapye is under its jurisdiction.240 As Durham (2002: 144) explained, at the top of this rank is the Senior Subordinate Tribal Authority, assisted by a junior one, and then the Herero chief.

The establishment of wards and appointment of headmen could sometimes bring political and ethnic questions to the surface. Mr. Ntshingane explained during the interview that initially there used to be one Xhosa ward, and for unspecified ‘political’ reasons there are now two, Xhosa 1 and Xhosa 2.241 According to Mr. Ntshingane, ‘the area that is now Xhosa 2 is the area where the Ntshingane family have settled, it’s their territory’.242 At the time of my trip to Mahalapye (2011), the headman of one of the Xhosa wards was a Tswana man. Mr Ntshingane explained to me that Xhosa people occupied posts as teachers and doctors, but not in politics,

240 Interview with Mr. S.N., local headman, Mahalapye, 23 June 2011
241 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011
242 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
because they are regarded as foreigners. In fairness, it is important to highlight the fact that this is not the first time that the Xhosa ward has a non-Xhosa headman. Mr. Ntshingane explained that after his uncle (a former chief) passed away, the uncle’s brother refused to step up; they therefore appointed an Ndebele man as headman.

Interestingly, Deborah Durham (2002) found a similar situation during her study on the Herero in Mahalapye. In 1996 a dispute occurred about who was going to become junior chief; this post ultimately would have led to the post of senior chief of the village, since the one in charge at that time was about to retire. One candidate was the hereditary Herero chief and the other was Tswana. According to the Chieftainship Act, the headman is appointed by the chief ‘after consultation with the kgotla and in the customary manner’ (http://www.gov.bw). However, as Durham (2002: 146) argued, this expression is quite ambiguous, and in fact the Herero understand the consultative process as an election. Eventually the Herero candidate won the election, but the Ministry of Local Government and the Ngwato regent appointed the Tswana man (Durham, 2002: 145-147). The discussions that followed the outcome had both ethnic and political connotations: the failure of the Herero candidate was assessed ‘as evidence of ‘tribalism’, by which they meant Tswana antagonism towards non-Tswana’ (Ibidem). In addition, many young Herero tended to support the BNF, the opposition party (whereas the elders were closer to the BDP and Mahalapye is historically a stronghold of the ruling party), including the Herero candidate’s sister, because opposition parties are considered closer to the problems of minority groups (Ibidem). The candidate who won was sponsored by the old headman, who used to be chairman of the local BDP committee (Ibidem).

The lack of adequate political representation of minorities in the House of Chiefs and the politics of cultural assimilation have exacerbated the sentiments of people belonging to minority groups. The feelings of Xhosa and Herero of being considered ‘second-class’ citizens is expressed through powerful statements, like Mr Ntshingane’s ‘they regard them as foreigners’ and Herero’s perception of ‘coming to an end’ (Ibidem).

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243 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
244 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
Overall, the Xhosa have reached a high level of integration in the village. Not all of them are living in the Xhosa wards, some are in other areas, and not all the people who are living there are either Xhosa or South African. The two wards therefore, are not an ethnic enclave of former immigrants and refugees, but an arena of encounters and interconnections where different cultures have met. Evidence of this is the fact that intermarriages have occurred, mixing up the cultures, with the result of strengthening the Tswana one, since it is dominant, to the detriment of Xhosa culture. The question of intermarriage is relevant to the Herero community as well. In the late 1980s Kebonang (1988: 53) noted the reduction of intra-Herero marriages in Mahalapye, reporting the feeling among the elders of the community about cross-cultural unions contributing ‘to the abandoning or diluting of traditional Herero ways’.

The heterogeneous character of the Xhosa community becomes more apparent when discussing the degree of transnational connections that the members still have with South Africa and their attachment to it. An interesting example comes from Mr. and Mrs. Jongman. They are both Xhosa, born in Botswana (although, interestingly,
Mrs. Jongman is a Xhosa of Zimbabwean origin. Because Mr. Jongman lived and worked in the South African mines for many years, he retained a degree of attachment towards South Africa due to the presence of family members. His wife however, identified completely with Botswana and considered herself a Motswana. These different feelings highlight a high level of assimilation and identification of certain members of the Xhosa community of Mahalapye within the Tswana society, whereas other members have balanced a high level of integration with a degree of attachment towards the country of origin of the family. As Mr and Mrs Jongman show, then, there are many nuances connected to citizenship and identity that enhance the heterogeneity of the Xhosa minority.

These nuances are visible in the way in which some Xhosa and Herero showed less inclination to be absorbed within the mainstream of Tswana values. Spaces for contesting and thus reaffirming their own values are created as a way to resist hegemonic impositions. A Xhosa woman, for instance admitted her disagreement with certain aspects of the Tswana way of life, namely concerning how they bring up children and the fact that women ‘bear children from different men’. Similarly, Durham (2002: 151) noted how Herero negatively commented on the behaviour of Tswana children and women.

The Xhosa language is spoken mostly by the adults, while the youngest generations cannot speak it in most cases. Mr. Ntshingane explained that the language which is spoken within a family depends on the mother, since she is the one who educates the children. Children will therefore learn their mother’s language, which, in this particular case, can be either Xhosa or Setswana. In this regard, a Xhosa woman, who arrived in 1960 from South Africa with her father, stated that, since only Setswana is taught at school, she teaches Xhosa to her children so that the next generation can speak their mother’s language.

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245 The Xhosa have historically arrived from Cape Town to Zimbabwe with Cecil Rhodes in the 1890s, employed as domestic workers and wagon drivers. They settled and were given land in the area around Bulawayo (Ndlovu, 2009: 64)
246 Interview with Mr. Jongman, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011
247 Interview with Mrs. Jongman, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011
248 Interview with Mrs. Mentysi, former immigrant, 22 June 2011
249 Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, Mahalapye, 21 June 2011
250 Interview with Mrs. S. Boko, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011. Mrs. Boko is related to current opposition leader, Mr. Duma Boko.
Botswana authorities have stressed the idea of a united Tswana nation, leaving minorities aside. Minority languages and cultures are therefore not encouraged outside of the household. Kebonang (1988: 52) identified the same difficulties regarding the Herero community in Mahalapye and their problems in keeping their language alive, because in Botswana, the use of languages other than English and Setswana is not permitted in the education system. Xhosa adults always speak their native language when they gather together, unless Tswana speakers are present. One example occurred during my fieldwork in the village, when I was invited to take part in a family reunion to discuss the lobola, the ‘bridewealth’ that the relatives of the groom have to pay, usually in terms of cattle and money. The gathering was conducted in Setswana, because, although the majority of the people there were Xhosa, some were not, so Setswana was the vehicular language. The discussion was chaired by the groom’s father. It was interesting to notice that Xhosa men could be distinguished from non-Xhosa by the fact that they were carrying a stick, as a symbol of their passage from youth to adulthood.

Although both Herero and Xhosa suffered from the politics of assimilation of minority cultures, it seems that the former has been more successful in finding new spaces to resist Tswana hegemony. Durham (2003: 174) argued that the liberalism professed by the Botswana state has failed to define the content of belonging to an ethnic group as, for the state, ‘they are all Batswana’. Because of the fact that being Herero has not been legitimised and defined by the state, the Herero had to imagine diverse ways of creating their belonging (Ibidem). The use of a Herero passport is a way ‘to escape government taxonomy’ (Ibidem) and therefore to shape and enforce a sense of ethnic belonging. This ethnic belonging is not widely felt across the whole Herero community. As Durham (Ibidem) explained, for some being Herero means simply participating in weddings and funerals. This is what happens among the Xhosa, as they also tend to meet with other Xhosa communities scattered across the country (Otsi, Mankodi and Manyana) during social events such as funerals and weddings and talk about their culture. Xhosa have not found an alternative and

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251 Informal conversation with a member of the Ntshingane family, Mahalapye, 25 June 2011
252 The community in Manyana was recognised eligible to apply for citizenship in Botswana in 1968 (BNA OP 33/28: From Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, 26 September 1968)
more visible way to negotiate and reaffirm their ethnic identity within the frame of their Botswana citizenship as the Herero did with the passports. Xhosa ways of resisting Tswana dominance consist only in trying to preserve their cultural roots by keeping the language alive and participating in social events.

As already seen for the other South Africans (now naturalised citizens) Xhosa and Herero do not contest their Botswana citizenship. The recognition of being Herero or Xhosa is not meant to replace or contrast with their national identification as Batswana citizens. Despite the fact that Mahalapye is structured in wards that carry names that emphasise ethnic identities, people mix with each other, for instance through marriage. As Durham (1995: 116) suggested, it would be misleading to talk about a Herero population totally distinct from the Tswana one. Rather, she argues, it is better to consider them ‘as cultural identities whose construction is currently being forged along with a national culture in Botswana’. This is also true for the Xhosa community: considering the high level of integration and identification with Botswana, they also represent a socio-cultural minority whose identity is entrenched within the framework of their national citizenship.

Referring more specifically to citizenship, Durham (2003: 173) noted how the Herero valued their national citizenship, mostly because of the advantages (access to land for instance) that it bears. Similarly, many Xhosa who have been interviewed for this research recognise their South African roots but they identify themselves also as Batswana.

As we have seen in the previous sections for naturalised migrants, Xhosa also move from one identity to the other, following what is more convenient. They speak Setswana when they cannot speak Xhosa, and speak Xhosa in the household to preserve and perpetuate their culture; they have integrated in the life of the village, but have retained their own values. These complex and conflicting identities intersect with citizenship, but do not contrast with it. Mr. S.M., for instance, refers to himself as a Xhosa from South Africa, but also as a ‘Motswana by citizenship’.\textsuperscript{253} Furthermore, Mr. H.X., instead, said that he feels both Motswana and South African, since his background is South African, but his orientation is Motswana, as he grew

\textsuperscript{253} Interview with Mr. S.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011
up in Botswana. These narratives upholds Bakewell’s (2007) dichotomy between heartfelt and handheld identities, and thus how the Xhosa shift from one identity to another to resist assimilation to Tswana culture, but also to reaffirm their membership of Botswana’s citizenry.

Xhosa and Herero’s claims concern the recognition of their languages and cultural rights. Gulbrandsen (2012: 220) in fact argued:

Minorities make small claims relating to the major conflict of interest in the country, namely, the mounting inequality of wealth distribution. Nor is this a struggle for political power, since the Ntlo ya Dikgosi is only an advisory body with very limited impact on government decisions. Yet we have at hand a struggle for minority empowerment: that is, a fight for equal rights – for official recognition of their languages and cultural traditions and for the right to be respected in public as equal to the Tswana majority.

The Xhosa, like the Herero, strive to maintain and reaffirm their ethnic identity and to resist the pressure of assimilation. Their claims are limited to the cultural sphere and are in defence of their own values but do not pose a threat to the political and social unity of Botswana. Their vindications and spaces of resistance are constructed within their citizenship, not in opposition to it.

**Conclusion**

Within the state rhetoric ‘we are all Batswana’, the Botswana government imposed an idea of citizenship that would include and assimilate minority groups within the rhetoric of equality of citizenship. This chapter demonstrated how this imposition has been conducive to different forms of discrimination, real or perceived, towards minorities and naturalised citizens alike. These forms of discrimination entailed claims of autochthony that would consider an idea of citizenship as hierarchical (Nyamnjoh, 2004), whereby those who are not Tswana-ethnic perceive a feeling of being second-class citizens and of ‘not quite belonging’. Across the decades, the idea of citizenship has become more contested, leading the country into debates over

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254 Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23rd June 2011  
255 This is the Setswana for House of Chiefs
rights of belonging that have recently stirred up, developing into increasing tensions and a rising number of cases of xenophobia.

Former South African immigrants and refugees have tried to resist the sense of exclusion stemming from this perceived discrimination, and reaffirm their citizenship in Botswana by creating spaces of resistance, such as the sense of community and the construction of a transnational identity. The Xhosa community in Mahalapye offers an interesting example of the creation of spaces of resistance and reaffirmation of own values that integrate with the idea of belonging to the national citizenry without opposing it. The following chapter will take forward the discussion on transnational citizenship, by exploring the nature of the transnational connections established by South African former migrants in Botswana.
Chapter 7: Creating transnational spaces: multiple identities and perceptions of ‘home’

This chapter explores the way South African former immigrants and refugees have established transnational connections that reflect the different aspects of their experience as migrants and as naturalised citizens in Botswana. It argues that, through a transnational dimension, former migrants have created spaces ‘in-between’ where they have elaborated conceptions of identity, family and home that span across the border of South Africa and Botswana (Bhabha, 2004). These spaces in fact ‘provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood’ (Bhabha, 2004: 2), where former immigrants and refugees have constructed multiple identities and ideas of home that reflect the reality of their transnational lives between the two countries.

Their transnational lives have developed mostly within the personal field. Former immigrants and refugees have expressed multiple and overlapping identities that reflect their ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of belonging’ (Wessendorf, 2007: 1090). The economic and political fields will be analysed to a lesser extent, since the connections are less evident. In the discussion of these multiple identities other aspects are brought to the surface, such as the role of gender and the effects of labelling as a powerful mechanism of identity ascription. Furthermore, their conceptualisations of home are connected to the process of identity construction. Within a transnational dimension, home is imagined by immigrants and refugees in multiple locations, whereby spaces are given meanings that reflect cross-border kinship ties and formulate claims of belonging. In addition, this chapter explores how the transnational idea of home also has a longitudinal dimension, with people from the second generation undergoing unique processes of identification with South Africa and Botswana. Languages also play an important role in this process of identification and in the construction of transnational spaces, and it is particularly evident with people from the second generation.

The chapter thus develops in three sections: the first focuses on diverse transnational links and the construction of multiple identities, whereas the third one analyses ideas of home and how they intersect with family ties and sense of belonging. The second section bridges the other two by presenting the life history of
John, the son of a former refugee. His narrative encapsulates the strands discussed throughout the chapter: identity construction, home-making process, kin ties and sense of belonging. Without aiming to generalise all immigrants and refugees’ experiences, this narrative captures the nuances and complexities embedded in the dynamics operating within migrants’ transnational lives.

7.1: Transnational trajectories and multiple identities

Throughout, this thesis has discussed the process through which South African former immigrants and refugees in Botswana have engaged in transnational activities spanning the border, and how these processes must be understood within the broader migration dynamics that historically characterised southern Africa. Portes (1999: 464) has defined transnational activities as ‘those that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants’. Reflecting this definition, the thesis demonstrates how South Africans engage in cross-border activities on a regular basis and through different trajectories and forms. Transnational politics is one of these trajectories. Political dynamics occurring in South Africa are still important for former immigrants and refugees. One interviewee stated: ‘I follow South African politics daily, I follow all the programmes they have.’256 Another interviewee, Mr. J.M., recalled voting in the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994: ‘It was great. It was great to vote for Mandela!’257

The interest towards their home country’s politics is also influenced by the interests of migrant-sending countries (Castles, Miller, 2009: 276). In this regard Ögelman (2003: 170) explored why certain migrant communities have maintained an interest in the politics of their homeland. He differentiates between political refugees and economic migrants, explaining that the former have left their countries due to dissatisfaction with local politics and frustration with the failure of the political systems (Ibidem). In the case of South Africa, this difference between political refugees and economic migrants quickly fades, as the apartheid system heavily

256 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
257 Interview with Mr. J.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
discriminated against all non-white people and excluded them from political participation. All former South African immigrants and refugees, thus, had politically motivated reasons for wanting to leave the country. The opening of the democratic system to non-whites following 1994 thus represented an opportunity for the government of South Africa to reconnect with its former exiles and immigrants now living abroad.

The transition has contributed to a renewal of transnational ties with people of South African origin, by allowing them to vote and to apply for permanent residence (namely identity cards that entitle former citizens to a number of rights). Mr. L.N. explained:

Mr. L.N.: We are allowed to carry a South African ID and do functions like banking, schools, like a local. Because you are a local. They call it permanent residence, so when you cross the border you carry that as well.
E.S.: So do you have a permanent residence in South Africa?
Mr. L.N.: I am applying for one, officially. If I have an ID they don’t want a visa at the border. 258

In addition, the South African government still pays a pension to many of them, for the time they worked in South Africa, as Mr. L.N and Mr. J.M. confirmed during interviews. Political and economic transnational ties, therefore, are enforced by the policies of the South African government towards its former nationals. The paying of the pension is a recognition of their contribution to the country, while residence permits facilitate journeys back home, strengthening their feelings of attachment and identification with their country of origin. This attachment is further enhanced by the fact that former citizens are allowed to vote.

This attachment has resulted in the development of multiple identities, towards both Botswana and South Africa. Vertovec (2001: 573) has argued that transnationalism and identity call for a juxtaposition, as individual or group identities ‘are negotiated within social worlds that span more than one place.’ The connection between identity and transnationalism allows for an understanding of the former as a process that is always in progress, because identities of migrants cut across fixed ideas of belonging (Dwyer, 2000: 475). In fact, Krulfeld and Camino (1994: X,

258 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
Introduction) argue that refugee identity is usually fluid, manipulated and constantly negotiated, affected by the influences of the host country but also by their relations with the country of origin. Madan Sarup (1996: 5-6) referring to Eva Hoffman’s biography *Lost in Translation* (1991), talked about the dynamics reshaping identities in situations of mobility: ‘identity is changed by the journey; our subjectivity is recomposed. In the transformation, every step forward can also be a step back. The migrant is here and there. Exile can be deadening, but it can also be very creative’. Migration is considered a life-long journey, which interacts and shapes the individual’s own identity.

Ehrkamp (2005: 348) has stressed the role of migrants as agents who shape their sense of belonging through multiple attachments. South African former refugees and immigrants forge multiple identities and establish new forms of belonging. This is particularly visible in how mobility and transnational experience have shaped South Africans’ sense of identity, which reflects a simultaneous attachment towards both Botswana and South Africa:

E.S.: So, if I ask you where are you from, what would you reply?
Mr. L.N.: I have to think first every time, which makes me know exactly where I belong.
E.S.: And where do you belong?
Mr. L.N.: I have to do a thinking. Right? Firstly, my mother country is South Africa, right? And my father country is Botswana. Because fathers don’t carry babies….I live a double life, I feel like I’m still on contract here. Like the first time.

By comparing his sense of nationality to his parents, Mr. L.N. distinguishes South Africa as his mother, because he was born there, and therefore it represents the womb. Botswana on the other hand is the father, the country whose passport he holds. As he stated during his interview, the passport was instrumental for him to be able to travel, since before applying for Botswana citizenship he possessed a South African travel document that would not allow him to go beyond the countries bordering South Africa. As Kastoryano (2002: 160) stated, thus, ‘the country of origin becomes a source of identity and the country of residence a source of right’.

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259 For the purpose of this thesis I consider immigrant identity too
260 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
South African former immigrants and refugees have thus forged multiple identities in overlapping layers. Not only do these identities refer to how they identify with Botswana and South Africa, but also how they see themselves and how are they seen by local Batswana in terms of status and labels. Identity in fact, ‘refers to how an individual views himself/herself, and how others view that individual’ (Cornelissen, Horstmeier, 2002: 60). The degree to which South African former immigrants and refugees identify with their home country or the country of migration varies according to their own personal experiences. Most interviewees identify their personal identity (where their roots are) as South African, but their citizenship, as Batswana. Another interviewee stated:

Who I am now is a product of the way that I grew up, the way that I came to Botswana. I think it influences how I do things to the extent that I don’t ever see a thing as an insurmountable problem…I know that I am a Motswana but I know at the same time that my roots are South African and because of that I feel like I can be anywhere.261

In addition, for a few of them there is also an important ethnic identification. One interviewee, for example, highlighted the importance of her being Zulu in determining her identity:

My culture is South African and is Zulu, I’m from Natal, but if you ask me for politically where do I belong, I would say Botswana….On a cultural level, I feel Zulu, South African.262

By enforcing her ethnic identity, she also highlights the importance of her first language, Zulu, by stating that she still prays in Zulu but only speaks a little Setswana (she uses mostly English to communicate).263 In the Xhosa community in Mahalapye, the ethnic identification couples with national identification. Mr. S.M. for instance, explained that he liked living in Mahalapye because many of ‘his people’ (other Xhosa) were living there.264 The two Xhosa wards, however, do not constitute an exclusive Xhosa enclave, since Tswana people also live there and Tswana practices have been adopted and mixed with Xhosa. In addition, other South Africans of non-Xhosa ethnicity live in Mahalapye, such as Mr. Tsoebebe, who is of

261 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2010
262 Interview with Mrs. D.N, former immigrant, Gaborone, 1st December 2010
263 Interview with Mrs. D.N, former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
264 Interview with Mr. S.M. former immigrant, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011
Sotho ethnicity. He has lived in Mahalapye for many decades and during the interview he recalled his interconnections with the Xhosa:

I met other South Africans in Mahalapye and I used to spend time with them. There were lots of people, especially Xhosa…I speak Sesotho, Xhosa (very little) and Setswana. My children speak Setswana only; my brother though married a Xhosa woman, so his kids speak Xhosa.  

Similarly, Mr. J.M, who is of Ndebele and Pedi ethnicity, stated that he liked it when he moved to Mahalapye because he met many other South Africans. National identification and common roots have therefore attracted South African refugees and immigrants to the village of Mahalapye. Vertovec (1999: 450) defined this process the ‘awareness of multilocality’, which stimulates people who share same roots to connect with each other.

In researching the construction of transnational identities among South Africans in Botswana, two distinct situations emerge. One concerns three refugees, whose life histories are second-hand, recounted by their children, former refugees themselves. Despite having lived in Botswana for decades, the three refugees maintained a strong sense of identification with South Africa, a heartfelt idea of nationality that enforced the attachment towards their country of origin (Bakewell, 2007: 11). Mr. G.H, for instance, applied for Botswana citizenship, but reverted back to South African citizenship as soon as he could return. Mr. G.X. instead never applied for Botswana citizenship and lived in the country as a refugee, with the hope of being able to go back as soon as the situation improved in South Africa. Finally, Mrs. K.M’s father resettled in the homeland of Bophutatswana before apartheid ended.

The opposite applies to two women, former immigrants, whose sense of identification underwent deep changes, with the result that they now see Botswana as their home country. Mrs. D.N. explained:

265 Interview with Mr. Tsoebebe, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
266 Interview with Mr. J.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
267 Interview with Mr. J.H., son of former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010
268 Interview with Mr. H.X., son of a former refugee, Mahalapye, 23 June 2011. His father died in Botswana in the 1980s, before being able to return to South Africa.
269 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2010
I went to South Africa in 1997, and worked there for seven years. I went there as a Motswana, with a Botswana passport. …It really made me fully identify with the…my Tswana part… It just made me appreciate my being Motswana. And which was good because it made me appreciate the time when I could take back my citizenship and maybe live in Botswana, or live there, and so on. But it made it very clear to me that I don’t want to go to South Africa, that I am actually a Motswana.270

Similarly, Mrs. N.S. claimed:

I’m rooted here now…I’m from Botswana. At the beginning, maybe first couple of years, my natural instinct was to say I’m South African married in Botswana. It was like that, because the identity was still very strong within you. But the longer are you staying in a place, the more you get into it, it feels your identity sort of undergoes a transformation, and then, you know, even your loyalties, you’ve become very clear about who you are at that particular moment. So for me it’s not even an option to even say I’m South African, it feels a bit strange to me when I say that. I know I’m of South African origin, I know who I am, but my first point of call if you had to ask me where I come from, I’m a Motswana.271

Building up on Vertovec’s argument (1999), Ghosh and Wang (2003) have thus discussed transnational identity in terms of a type of consciousness, which is individualistic and determines the extent to which migrants engage in transnational activities. In addition, transnational consciousness is intertwined with the individual’s personal circumstances before migration, perceptions and expectations (Ghosh, Wang, 2003: 278-279). In the cases described above, the three refugees moved to Botswana as political refugees because they feared arrest, but their intention was to return to South Africa as soon as the apartheid system would end. Their perception of Botswana was therefore a transitional solution. The two immigrants, on the other hand, married local Batswana and identify themselves with their husbands’ identities. Their transnational practices, their construction of multiple subjectivities as women, immigrants and South Africans have in time enforced the transformation of their identity.

These two situations are extreme, in the sense that most interviewees had created identities that reflected their transnational practices and reproduced their identification as both Batswana and South Africans. As Glick Schiller et al. (1992: 11) agued, ‘the majority [of migrants] seem to maintain several identities that link

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270 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
271 Interview with Mrs. N.S., former immigrant, Gaborone, 3rd December 2010
them simultaneously to more than one nation’. The case of the three refugees was probably influenced by their experiences of ‘otherness’ and the ‘stigma’ associated with being a ‘refugee’. According to Zetter (1991: 40) the label of refugee, ‘far from clarifying an identity…conveys, instead, an extremely complex set of values, and judgements which are more than just definitional’. Labels are a powerful bureaucratic tool of categorisation and identity ascription: they are used to ‘define human experience and a category of people, but also in terms of the identity and subjectivity of those who bear the label’ (O’Neill, Spybey, 2003: 8). An interesting example comes from Mr. L.N., who underwent a process of label self-ascription: he entered Botswana as an immigrant but he considered himself a refugee:

Doesn’t matter whether they shout or very quiet about it, or you had a party together, you always carry a label. We had Angolan refugees, we had Namibian refugees, Zimbabwean refugees. All mix. So it was easier to communicate with these other people, who hold the same status. So I did not regard myself as superior to them. I felt at home, and identity of being a refugee was more fitting than claiming to be a citizen, either of South Africa or Botswana.272

The question of refugee stigma intertwines with the previous chapter’s discussion of the labels ‘citizens by paper’ and ‘those who jumped the fence’, used by Batswana to define, respectively, foreigners who are naturalised as Batswana and refugees. This ascription entails a politics of belonging, as a way to mark exclusion and inclusion defining insiders and outsiders (Zetter, 2007).

South African migration to Botswana is characterised by a transnational dimension. Both former immigrants and refugees have engaged in cross-border transnational practices in the economic, political and personal fields. They have created spaces where they can reproduce multiple identities that are not territorialised either ‘here’ or ‘there’, but span across the border. This is particularly evident in the personal field, whereby multiple identities interplay with each other and affect the degree to which former migrants identify with the country of origin and the country of residence. This transnational way of identifying oneself within multiple dimensions conceptualises home with identities becoming more deterritorialised (Ghorashi, 2004: 329) and more connected with the idea of movement (Rapport, Dawson, 1998). As Gupta and Ferguson (1992: 10) argue ‘in a world of diaspora,
transnational cultural flows, and mass movement of population... familiar lines between “here” and “there”, center and periphery, colony and metropole become blurred.’ Similarly, Zetter (2007: 180) has highlighted how among refugee communities home is conceptualised as a physical entity but also as a process of belonging. The next sections further explore these transnational trajectories and, more specifically, how identity intersects with home.

7.2: Born with a label: the life history of the son of a refugee in Botswana

This section explores John’s life experience as the son of a refugee. This narrative does not aim at generalising all refugees and immigrants’ life histories collected during the field research. Rather, each individual has his or her own particular story and experience. It is however worthwhile narrating John’s, as it embodies the complexities concerning identity, home and belonging, which can be helpful in understanding common traits.

John H. was born in Gaborone in 1972. His father, G. H., was a Mopedi, South African political refugee. His mother was a Motswana: Mongwato from her paternal side and Bafurutse from Mafeking from her maternal side. His mother was therefore half South African and half Motswana, but because of the laws at that time, she was identified with her father’s identity. She was thus a Motswana.273 Similarly, John is half South African and half Motswana, but because his mother came from Botswana and not his father, he is not considered a Motswana, but a South African and, like his father, a refugee. He naturalised and got Botswana citizenship only in 1995, but until then he had used UNHCR documents as identification papers.274 As it has been already highlighted in chapter 2, an individual’s identity in Botswana stems from his father’s citizenship. Unity Dow successfully challenged this law in the early 1990s in court, allowing children with a foreign father to have Botswana citizenship (Geisler, 1995: 563-564). Thus it is for this reason that John was considered South African, even though he was born in Botswana, and a refugee: he had inherited his

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273 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
274 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010

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father’s identity. This aspect reflects the question of belonging discussed in the previous chapter: the fact that John and his family eventually naturalised to become citizens of Botswana raised issues of autochthony and being ‘true’ Batswana. A feeling that John perceived:

It’s quite different when it’s your mother who is from South Africa, and not your father, because in that case you’re considered a Motswana. But if your father is from South Africa, that’s where the problem is. That’s the fact the reason why they had to naturalise. Batswana say: ‘You’re a Motswana because of papers’, even though you were born here.  

What John argued here confirms the argument of chapter 2, namely that, despite the change in legislation in Botswana, people still identify an individual by his father’s identity. Once again, the way the government understands identity and citizenship often does not reflect daily interactions of people.

John’s father, G.H., was born near Pretoria in 1937. He joined the PAC when he was around 16 years old, while working at the American embassy as a driver. He used this position to smuggle documents out of the embassy for his organisation. He also took part in the burning of passes. As a result, the police were looking for him, so he decided to leave the country in 1965; using lifts from friends and comrades he managed to avoid roadblocks and police, ending up safely in Botswana. He first lived with a South African family in Lobatse, a village near the border, and then he moved to Gaborone with his wife. He worked for different companies, but also for the government in the construction of the Dam. When he arrived in Botswana he was asked by his organisation whether he preferred moving to Zambia or Tanzania, but he chose to remain, in order to be closer to his home country. During the first years of his life as a refugee in Botswana he was still committed to the liberation struggle: he was in fact working underground, helping freedom fighters escape to Zambia through Botswana, but also those who, like him, wanted to settle. He stopped his political activities in the mid-1970s, because his

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275 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
276 John must have confused the dates. His father turned 16 in 1953, but the PAC was founded only in 1959.
277 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010
family was growing and he did not want to cause them any harm. He became a citizen of Botswana in the 1990s, but only for a while: his wife passed away some years later, and he then moved back to South Africa in 2006, where he had his own plot of land, and retrieved his South African citizenship. Despite being happy about returning ‘home’ again, he was disillusioned with the country’s politics, unlike other former immigrants and refugees interviewed, who enthusiastically voted in the first democratic elections in 1994 and still follow South African politics. According to John:

> He did not trust going back there because of the animosity between PAC and ANC…Mandela and Mbeki did not bring the changes he was expecting. He saw this group looking after their only interest instead of the others’.  

These feelings, however, were common among former South African political exiles and freedom fighters. As Steyn and Grant (2007: 376) explain, the negotiated settlement between the white government and black leaders that ended apartheid was seen by many as a betrayal because it had not brought about a complete revolution or a different economic system. This sense of betrayal caused bitterness towards the black leadership, particularly due to the widespread unemployment in the country (*Ibidem*).

John lived and studied in Gaborone until the mid-1980s. After the SADF raid in the capital in 1985, his family feared that the South African government was still looking for G.H., so they left Gaborone, moving to Francistown first and then Selibe-Phikwe. They finally returned to Gaborone after a few years. John and his sister were still at school at the time of the move, so they stayed in the capital until they finished their studies before joining the rest of the family up in the north-east of Botswana. It was during his school years that he came to terms with the fact that his father was a refugee and, consequently, that he and his siblings were also considered refugees. At the beginning of each term, he would go to the school office bringing the letter of the bursary from the UNHCR, and people there would highlight his status:

> E.S.: So you had the label of refugee?

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278 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011. John and his siblings remained ignorant about their father’s clandestine activities, until he died in 2008, when one of his former comrades revealed his underground work at his funeral.

279 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010
John: Yeah, we had that. When we were with other students, they wouldn’t know, but when you go to the office you get embarrassed then…I really hated it, I didn’t like the first terms, because you were going there every beginning of the year, every first terms… At times it’s really put before your face.280

The label of refugee was a marker of John’s identity at school, entrenched by the UNCHR documents, which highlighted how ‘bureaucratic processes transform identities’ (Zetter, 2007: 180). Labels tend to ‘objectify’ people in a three-step process that sees the individual being ‘de-linked’ from his/her story, turned into a standardised ‘case’ and then ‘re-linked’ to the institutions that administer the labelling, such as the issuing of documents (Stepputat, Nyberg Sørensen, 2014: 89). Other children, however, were not aware of John’s status, but the fact that his father was a South African marked his identity in a way that would highlight his ‘difference’ from the others and enforce his sense of exclusion:

…That was the one thing which you never want to reveal, because we knew how they were. I mean, they wouldn’t understand. Because I remember when I was doing Cambridge and in class we were being asked ‘where do you come from’, they would say you’re not a Motswana, and I would say ‘well I’m a Mopedi, my father is from South Africa’, and after they would say ‘so you’re really not a Motswana’. The students were saying that, and I always said ‘No, no, I am, I was born here’. 281

Ager and Strang (2008: 172) argue that schools for refugee children are ‘the most important place of contact with members of local host communities.’ For John, the school had multiple meanings: more than being an occasion for integration, it represented a place that perpetuated practices of stereotyping. On the other hand, it was also a space to claim rights and to reaffirm a sense of belonging despite the label.

John is now a Botswana citizen, but he still feels that he is considered an outsider. In fact, when he introduces himself he will say, especially in rural areas, that he is a Mongwato, recalling his mother’s identity, in order to avoid questions and be accepted straightaway.282 The instrumentality of this claim is highlighted by the fact that John and his siblings do not feel Bangwato, but they identify with their father’s identity, Pedi: ‘Even when we went to Serowe with our mother we never

280 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
281 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
282 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010
really identified with them. We always saw our mother as a Mongwato, but not us.\textsuperscript{283} Claiming a Mongwato identity becomes thus a survival strategy, a way to gain acceptance and therefore to ask for recognition. As Charles Taylor (1992: 25) states in his essay on multiculturalism and recognition:

\begin{quote}
Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.
\end{quote}

Claiming his mother’s identity also shows how John has constructed situational and overlapping identities: he contextualises and negotiates them according to where he is and with whom, ‘evoking…. local, regional, national and transnational identities’ (Ghosh, Wang, 2003: 277). Being the son of a refugee has had a fundamental impact on John’s understanding of his identity and his relation to Botswana and South Africa. When it comes to identity, he admits the strong influence his father had on him and his siblings, especially in relation to South Africa. G.H. was personally and directly involved in the liberation struggle; this involvement led him to go to Botswana as a refugee. He always regarded it as a host country and as a temporary solution until things would improve in South Africa. He also emphasised repeatedly to his children that he wanted to go back to regain what he had lost and prepare the place for them, so that they could find a home if they decided to go there. This attitude has resulted in John developing multiple, transnational identities. He feels he is both Motswana and South African, but the older he grows, the more aware he becomes of his South African identity:

\begin{quote}
So we grew up as Batswana, but are also conscious of the paternal identity; and that’s why I think, as we grew older, right now, I’m more conscious that I’m more South African even though I’m still a Motswana.\textsuperscript{284}
\end{quote}

His identification with South Africa is a reflection of his father’s identity and of the fact that he has become closer to his South African relatives than to those in Botswana. This family affinity revealed to be a fundamental factor in the perception of home and identity. However, he still identifies Botswana as home as well, because it is the place where he was born and raised:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{283} Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
\textsuperscript{284} Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
\end{quote}
When we’re in South Africa we don’t so much identify with them as we identify with Batswana, It’s only now because of the constant relations with our relatives that we’re still at home when we’re with them.\textsuperscript{285}

In constructing his transnational identity he positioned himself in accordance with the context, feeling more South African when he is with his father relatives, and feeling more a Motswana, and more specifically Mongwato, when he is in Botswana (Ghosh, Wang, 2003: 276-277). He lives in a liminal status, where liminality is intended as being caught between old and new surroundings (Camino, 1994: 30). After all, as Rapport and Dawson (1998: 9) stated ‘home is where one best knows oneself’:

I need to find my own equilibrium when I know I can only find it only there…here it’s where I settled, we grew up here. Our becoming who we are is identified by our settlement here. But then when you go to South Africa, I mean we weren’t raised there, but because of our father, you know, we identify with the place, and then we started going there, started interacting with the people, introducing ourselves and their acceptance and everything, you know, it does make us feel more at home.\textsuperscript{286}

John’s experience, therefore, provides an interesting example of the complexities and nuances around the concepts of identity, home and sense of belonging, and the difficulties of understanding and researching them, especially when they concern immigrants and refugees.

John’s life, if compared to other South African refugees, runs in reverse: while many have left their home country to move to Botswana, his plan is to leave Botswana to settle in South Africa, to take his father’s place and to try to understand whom he really wants to be. Wessendorf (2007: 1091) defines ‘root migrants’ those like John who are ‘in search of a place which provides them with a strong sense of identification and belonging’. The discovery of himself therefore may be engendered through the re-discovery of his past. His identity is still undergoing a process of construction and change: ‘the project of getting to know oneself may involve a deeply personal process of reflection and self-awareness’ (Olwig, 1998: 231).

\textsuperscript{285} Interview with Mr. J.H. former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
\textsuperscript{286} Interview with Mr. J.H. former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
John's experience is noteworthy because it shows the dynamics of identity formation for immigrants and refugees within multiple and transnational spaces. In this sense, Vertovec (2004: 977) explains how immigrants, through transnational links, develop ‘a dual orientation and ‘bifocality’ in everyday life’, whereby immigrants adapt to the host country ‘maintaining strong ties of sentiment, if not material exchange, with their places of origin’ (Vertovec, 2004: 977). This is what John’s experience has demonstrated, but also what happened, to different degrees, to other immigrants and refugees who took part into this research. Furthermore, as John’s life has revealed, his experience of transnational mobility does not only concern identity, but also the concepts of home and family, as the next section will explore.

7.3: Home is ‘here’ and ‘there’: conceptualising home in a transnational space

This section focuses on the transnational construction of home among former South African immigrants and refugees in Botswana. The chapter argues that there is no single way to understand the idea of home, as former immigrants and refugees have negotiated it differently, ‘according to individual and collective experiences as well as social, political and economic contexts’ (Jansen, Löfving, 2009: 14). The interviewees have in fact constructed home as a result of their situation before and after migration (Al-Ali, Kosser, 2002: 6). These articulations are framed within a transnational perspective, as they entail a reproduction of home in multiple locations that transcends the border of the home country.

The older understanding of home as territorialised and fixed (Brun, 2001: 17) meant that it was conceived as ‘the stable physical centre of one’s universe – a safe and still place to leave and return to’ (Rapport, Dawson, 1998: 6). This understanding has recently given way to more deterritorialised ideas about place and identity, de-naturalised from the conception of rootedness (Malkki, 1992; Gupta,

287 ‘Home’ has different translations in Setswana: ‘lapa’ is the place where someone lives; ‘motse’ refers to the village where a person is from, to denote the tie with it; ‘ntlo’ is the dwelling house. The expression ‘ko gae’ translates ‘at home’, while, talking about home country, the Setswana expression is ‘lehatshe lame’, which literally means country of mine.
Ferguson, 1992). A transnational perspective brings the debate forward, contributing to alternative conceptions of ‘home’, situated in more than one place: home thus is not only ‘there’, but also ‘here’, where ‘there’ represents South Africa and ‘here’ is Botswana. Botswana represents the place of residence and where former immigrants and refugees have constructed their new life. South Africa is the place where they come from originally, where the memories of their childhood are. But the original home, the one that has been left behind, keeps living in their memories. Home is therefore a construction, and immigrants and refugees use memory to imagine and understand their idea of home. Steyn and Grant (2007: 373) explain that:

While in exile, the image of a society that was still to be born often seemed to mingle with an idealised memory of ‘home’: a memory that was not only personal, but also shared and circulated within the community of people living in exile. This blend of dream and memory was all the more compelling because ‘home’ was barred’.

This reconfiguration of home as in multiple locations with different meanings has been enforced by the transnational links established by former immigrants and refugees. They in fact make regular trips between South Africa and Botswana to visit their relatives and engage in activities in both countries that have contributed to the strengthening of their attachment to both territories.

Former immigrants and refugees articulate their understanding of ‘home’ differently, ‘with different meanings…at different times of their lives’ (Al-Ali, Koser, 2002: 1). John exemplifies this conceptualisation of home as a dynamic and changing concept in the way he refers to Botswana and South Africa:

E.S.: Do you consider Botswana your home?  
John: Well, Botswana has been my home. It’s funny how over the years this is changing because now I’m saying that Botswana has been my home because I find South Africa more as my home.

The consideration of South Africa as home is not always associated with a desire of settling back there. Warner (1994: 170) discusses the issue of returning home for refugees, explaining that, as a refugee’s social network changes and evolves, so does the country of origin. Things have changed and when he/she goes back, he/she will need to readapt. Steyn and Grant (2007: 368) have discussed explicitly the question of South African exiles returning home in the 1990s. They used the example of
professionals who had migrated to the UK over disagreement with apartheid policies, and explained that many migrants decided not to return home after all, and stay where they had settled. This situation is very similar to the experience of former migrants in Botswana. For some interviewees, it is now too late to go back and re-appropriate a past and a life that has now gone. Warner (1994: 171) in fact argues: ‘There is a fundamental nostalgia about return itself, about preserving something that was there in the past or imagined in the past, and that cannot possibly be re-created’. This is reflected in former migrants’ feelings. Mr. T.V. for instance, stated: ‘You mean going back and settle there [in South Africa]? No, I’m getting old now.’ 288 Others had tried to settle back, but it did not work, for either social or economic reasons, coupled with a certain degree of disappointment towards the black ruling elite. Mrs. D.N., recalled when she moved back to Johannesburg for a while:

I worked there from 1997 until 2004, running the National Arts Council. It was messed up. Now I would not go and live in South Africa because I think the integrity of the whole system has been compromised by selfish people. 289

Mr. L.N. explained that he also tried to resettle in South Africa:

I tried in ’95, I tried to establish a chemist, a pharmacy there. It was the centre of the city. I was too early, it didn’t work out because the customers in that area had left…. I lost my money so I decided to come back. 290

Mrs. D.N. and Mr. L.N., thus attempted to resettle back in South Africa, but they had changed, as much as their home country had changed. They therefore decided to go back to Botswana, the country of migration. The fact that they decided not to resettle in South Africa does not diminish their attachment or identification towards it; on the contrary it strengthens the transnational ties that have been established.

It is noteworthy to highlight a difference in the way generations relate to Botswana and South Africa. Most of former immigrants and refugees that have been interviewed are all middle-aged people who have settled in Botswana for decades and, despite the trips back and forth and the transnational ties they have established, they do not really plan to move back to South Africa. For people from the second generation, Botswana is the home country, while South Africa is their parents and

288 Interview with Mr. T.V., Gaborone, former immigrant, 28 July 2011
289 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 1st December 2010
290 Interview with Mr. L.N., former refugee, Gaborone, 17 June 2011
ancestors’ home. By virtue of the facts that they have relatives in both countries and are geographically proximate, connections with South Africa form irrespective of whether they decide to relocate there and to actively engage in transnational activities. After all, as Wessendorf (2007) has argued, there are different modes and intensities of how people from the second generation engage with the transnational. Applying Levitt and Waters’ definition of second generation used for migrants and their children in the United States, second generation includes the offspring of former immigrants and refugees who were born in Botswana and those who arrived in the country as children (Levitt, Waters, 2002: 12).

People from the second generation in Botswana do not reflect one single trend in the identification process with the country where they were born or grown up and their parents’ homeland. The children of the people interviewed express diverse attitudes: some feel a stronger attachment towards Botswana, others towards South Africa. Some can speak their parents’ language, some cannot, but they are all fluent in Setswana. Due to the proximity of the border, though, people from the second generation have constructed a degree of transnationality anyway, since they have all grown up in a transnational environment (Levitt, 2009: 1228).

Attachment to the parents’ homeland depends also to what extent children are fluent in their parents’ language. Language as a means of integration and identification plays a central role in the dynamics of identity construction and home-making process. It also highlights a difference between generations. Not all interviewees (first generation) speak Setswana fluently or even as first language. Mr. A.K., for instance, speaks very little Setswana.291 People from the second generation, however, only in certain cases and to a certain extent are able to speak their parents’ language. But because Setswana and English are official languages in both Botswana and South Africa, people from the second generation can still establish transnational ties with their parents’ homeland.

Botswana and South Africa are interesting cases because of the common language (although South Africa has other ten official languages together with Setswana). Instead it is dialect that draws the line between locals and foreigners.

291 Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 26 May 2011
Mrs. K.M., for instance, focused on the question of the language in describing how she is perceived in South Africa:

E.S.: And how do people perceive you in South Africa?
Mrs. K.M.: Well, they see a Motswana from Botswana, unless I share with them, unless they ask me: “Where were you born?” And I’d tell: “I was born in Spring”.
E.S.: So they perceive you as a foreigner?
Mrs. K.M.: Yes. Because when I speak my Setswana, I speak the dialect here not the dialect there. 292

In her case, therefore, speaking Setswana from Botswana made her ‘a foreigner’ in South Africa, despite being born there. Having lived all her life in Botswana (she arrived as a child refugee) made her identify with the local dialect rather than the one spoken by her relatives in South Africa. John’s father represented the opposite: he could easily change his dialect as soon as he met other South Africans. 293 John himself, however, has more in common with Mrs. K.M: he speaks Setswana with a Botswana dialect, so when he goes to South Africa he is perceived as a Motswana. Being with his family across the border makes him feel at home, and his name carries his South African origin, but the language still creates barriers and makes him feel a foreigner:

When we meet others from our dialect, Setswana dialect, they say ‘you’re from Botswana’. So being there you also feel ‘I still do not as if I belong’. …Because we really haven’t settled there, I think that’s why there’s this sense of not yet belonging, even though we have been accepted, even though they are still looking forward to us coming and take our father’s place there. 294

Mrs. D.N. provides an example of transnational environment in her house, with various languages spoken:

You know, I speak Zulu, my husband speaks Setswana, so most of the time we speak English. Then I asked my kids: “What do you write?” And they said English, because this is the language that they can communicate with both of us. They speak Setswana and I never spoke Zulu to them. Two of them went to school in Swaziland and they learnt some Swazi… My daughter blames me that she doesn’t know Zulu. I know I should have, but then I mean, they write English as their first language, and Setswana as their second language. 295

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292 Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011
293 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
294 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011
295 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
The fact that she refused to teach her mother tongue to her children had important repercussions on the way they now relate to South Africa, to the point that they do not feel comfortable or ‘at home’ when they are there:

Mrs. D.N.: [My children] are Batswana, no question about it.
E.S.: And when they go to South Africa?
Mrs. D.N.: No, they’re foreigners. When they go to Natal they cannot speak Zulu. So they’re Batswana. I’ve got a daughter married in South Africa, she’s a Motswana. The things that matter to her are here. She says she wants to go home, she wants to live in Botswana. She’s married to a South African but she’s definitely a Motswana.296

An opposite case is represented by Mr. T.V., former immigrant of Xhosa ethnicity. His wife was also Xhosa and their children speak their language, although they are more fluent in Setswana. He stated that he feels comfortable living in Botswana because there are still other South Africans like him, but he is afraid that it might be more difficult for his children:

Mr. T.V.: There would be no reminder. There would be no language spoken, familiar language spoken.
E.S.: Do your children feel Batswana?
Mr. T.V.: No. They do speak the language but I know that they don’t feel that way…Two of them are in South Africa, one is here. Those who live in South Africa have South African citizenship now.297

The difference in the way South Africa and Botswana are perceived by people from the second generation depends mainly on two, overlapping aspects: their parents’ background and how they identify and perceive ‘home’. As Levitt (2009: 1239) explains, many children ‘ultimately embrace the norms and institutions of the place where they were raised’. Mrs. D.N. is South African and speaks Zulu, while her husband is a Motswana and speaks Setswana. Their children speak English, the medium language. They do not speak their mother’s language and they consider Botswana more as their home as their mother now identifies more with Botswana. Mr. T.V. on the contrary, married another Xhosa, and taught his children both Xhosa and Setswana. Inasmuch as he feels integrated in Botswana, he still sees himself as

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296 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
297 Interview with Mr. T.V., former immigrant, Gaborone, 28 July 2011

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South African, and he is perceived as such by local South Africans when he goes back.\textsuperscript{298}

People from the second generation therefore reflect their parents’ identification. Being brought up in transnational environments, speaking multiple languages, having family links spanning across the border and making frequent journeys back and forth, they still maintain a transnational dimension in the way they relate to South Africa and Botswana. This background thus helps them socialise ‘into the rules and institutions of the countries where they live, but also into those of the countries from whence their families come’ (Levitt, 2009: 1226). Ultimately, children develop their own set of values and practises, yet how they relate to their parents’ homeland varies. For some, like Mrs. K.M., going back to South Africa reinforces her Motswana identity; for others like Mrs. D.N.’s daughter, being in South Africa has convinced her that it is not the country where she can feel ‘at home’. On the other hand, for some like John, South Africa is part of a long-term project that may become true, as in the case of Mr. T.V.’s children, or it may not (King, Christou, 2008: 10).

Family ties and belonging

The transnational practices of second-generation migrants relate to the concept of kinship. Family ties are in fact fundamental in connecting former immigrants and refugees to their country of origin. Kinship is worthy of being analysed because it ‘is the single most important social institution. The kin group, in many cases, takes care of one livelihood, one’s career, one’s marriage, one’s protection and one’s social identity’ (Eriksen, 1995: 82). In addition, maintaining kinship ties allows immigrants to have social contacts and support for when they return to their home country (Levitt, 2009: 1228). Family ties play an important role in the imagination of home among former immigrants and refugees. Ties link migrants to their past and their countries of origin: as Mrs. D.N. stated, her attachment to South Africa lies in the presence of her relatives: ‘I feel at home [in South Africa], I do feel at home, simply

\textsuperscript{298} Interview with Mr. T.V., former immigrant, Gaborone, 28 July 2011
because I have got family who lives there. I don’t know how I would feel if I didn’t have a family.’

Family ties have an important transnational dimension. Having relatives in South Africa means that former migrants often visit them but they are also visited by their South African families. Their life ‘in-between places’ is strongly manifested in these cross-border trips, which in turn reinforce the transnational dimension of their lives and senses of home. Former immigrants and refugees have developed multiple identities and attachments towards more than one country; at the same time, they have constructed transnational families, in their country of origin (South Africa) and in the country of migration (Botswana). Mrs K.M. explains that she feels at home in Botswana, because she has her husband and her stepsister, but she also feels at home when she returns to South Africa, because all her closest relatives, from her mother’s side and her father’s side, live there. Also Mr. J.M talked about the presence of two families, in Botswana and South Africa, highlighting again the preference for the latter, as it is the place where the closest kin links are:

E.S.: So you still feel an attachment to South Africa?
Mr. J.M: Because of the relatives. Ok, I’ve made relatives in Botswana, but still have more relatives in South Africa.
E.S.: But if you didn’t have relatives in South Africa, would you still feel attached to it?
Mr. J.M.: Yes, yes! Home is home!

Kinship and extended sense of family ties also have an important impact on the construction of one’s identity. Establishing cross-border kin networks contributes to the conceptualisation of home, which is particularly true for people from the second generation, as John’s experience has demonstrated. Kinship ties are therefore a way to negotiate identity and sense of belonging through transnational practices:

I don’t know if I told you, but my mum is also partly South African. Her father is a Mongwato, but her mother is from Mafeking. She was born in Botswana, but then was taken by her mother back to South Africa. She went for primary and then for secondary there. She went back to Botswana when she was already grown. Her mother has 8 children and the first 3 were born in South Africa. With our relatives in Serowe we’re not so close because we were not raised by them. But we were raised especially by those in Mafeking. After independence

299 Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9 June 2011
300 Interview with Mrs. K.M, former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011
301 Interview with Mr. J.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
our father took us to South Africa to introduce us to the family, and they accepted us and we’re becoming even closer. So in terms of family we’re more at home in an extended sense of family in South Africa than here.\footnote{Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 May 2011}

The concept of family in its extended sense develops not only in terms of an individual’s relation with two distinct nuclei of relatives. In certain cases, it develops physically as well, since ‘home might encompass the places where these extended families live’ (Mallett, 2004: 74). This has been noticed in the village of Mahalapye: Mr. Ntshingane lives in the ward Xhosa 2, which, together with Xhosa 1, includes many members of the Xhosa minority in the village. His house is surrounded by those of his relatives, aunts, cousins and nephews. The extended sense of family, therefore, is invoked not only through emotional attachment, but also through physical proximity, which is one of the factors that must be taken into account when considering the formation of a South African community. In Gaborone the community is mostly an informal network among people who share national origins, which has been established during the apartheid era and to resist exclusion from the Tswana majority. In Mahalapye it takes the form of a structured presence, highlighted by the two Xhosa wards, where close family links represent its nucleus.

Discussions about home, homeland and kinship are inevitably linked to issues of belonging and roots. In the previous chapter the politics of belonging was discussed in relation to the way Batswana citizens of Tswana ethnicity have entrenched their dominance over minorities and so-called ‘citizens by paper’. Here the focus was on the way former immigrants and refugees have negotiated their attachment to Botswana and South Africa as a means to legitimise their claims of belonging. The sense of belonging assumes a territorialised aspect, an attachment to the ‘soil’ that enforces the feeling of being ‘home’:

The link with the land, central to the notion of autochthony, gives it a strong, territorializing capacity, outlining – in a more or less symbolic way – a clearly defined ‘home’ (Geschiere, 2009: 29)

Funerals demonstrate this attachment to the soil, since, as Geschiere (2005: 47) has stated, funerals are ‘an ultimate test of who belongs where’. Two interviewees, Mr. J.M. and Mr. H.X., asserted that one of the main reasons for not moving back to
South Africa was the fact that their closest relatives, namely siblings and parents, were buried in Botswana. Mr. H.X. for instance stated:

I take Botswana as my home. I mean, I grew up here, you know, my grandparents are buried here, my father is buried here, my mother is buried here, my younger brother and my younger sister are buried here. The only person who is in South Africa is my elder brother…If I decided to move back I should sell my house, my business and exhume my relatives’ bodies and take them back. 303

For Mr. H.X., thus, return would mean exhuming the remains of his beloved ones, carrying them to South Africa and burying them again. Mr. H.X. and Mr. J.M. tie themselves to Botswana because of the link they have with its soil, a link created and perpetuated by the burial of close family members: ‘the funeral offers an occasion to link “soil” and “body” in all sorts of naturalizing ways’ (Geschiere, 2009: 30). The attachment between human beings and soil is evident through concepts like ‘homeland’ and ‘national soil’, which intimately connect people with their country (Malkki, 1992: 26); in fact, as Malkki (Ibidem) suggests, ‘the territory itself is made more human’. Mr. H.X. has constructed a sense of home and belonging in Botswana because his family is buried there, which is the opposite feeling of other former immigrants and refugees who grew more attachment towards South Africa because of the family who still lives there. A dichotomy therefore emerges, between death versus life, a family that is gone and now is symbolically represented in the memory of those still alive, and a family that exists, and lives across the border. It is a dichotomy that highlights two ways of creating a sense of belonging, through death and through life.

In this regard, John’s father represents an interesting case. At the end of his life he returned to his ‘homeland’, where he died a few years later: he wanted to return because ‘there’ was his home, it was there where he wanted to die and be buried. As Malkki (1992: 27) notes, ‘in death, too, native or national soils are important’. John remembers how his father used to repeat to him and his siblings: ‘I have to go back home. Home is there, this is not home.’304

Mr. J.M. and Mr. H.X., whose parents are buried in Botswana, have tightened their links with it in the name of their relatives. Funerals, therefore, contribute to the

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303 Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23 June 2011
304 Interview with Mr. J.H., former refugee, Gaborone, 22 November 2010
connections between people and land, but also serve to define where one belongs. Geschiere (2009: 56) asserts that ‘a person belongs where he or she will be buried’, and in this way the person can also claim the right of being and feeling an ‘autochthonous’ in the place where his or her ancestors are buried (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 100). As Durham and Klaits (2002: 781), explain, in Botswana burials create spaces to discuss ideas of identity and membership and they always take place at the deceased’s ‘home’. Through the burial of relatives in Botswana, thus, Mr. H.X. and Mr. J.M. have enforced their links to Botswana as ‘home’ and, consequently, have reaffirmed equal rights and claims of belonging in relation to local Tswana born in Botswana, without distinction between ‘citizens by paper’ and citizens by birth. But in the same way as Mr J.M. and Mr. H.X. claimed a sense of belonging in Botswana because of their relatives buried there, John’s father did the same in South Africa, when he decided to return to his ‘home’ a few years before dying. In this way he reinforced his attachment to his home country and the link to its soil, as well as reaffirming his being an ‘autochthonous’ in that land (Geschiere, 2009: 55).

Events such as funerals and burials have entrenched and reinforced the attachment to one country or the other and have created spaces to reaffirm identity and belonging. Home therefore is here and there. As Malkki (1995b: 509) suggests, displacement does not mean a loss in terms of identity or belonging, but transformation. Former immigrants and refugees manage to negotiate and reconstruct a sense of home within the frame of their transnational lives.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how South African former immigrants and refugees have created transnational connections that bridge their country of origin and their country of migration through the construction of multiple identities, home and family ties. It shows how transnationalism is a useful arena to understand migrant dynamics in the southern African region. Identity is considered fluid and shifting, transformational but also situational as it changes according to surrounding circumstances and migrants’ personal experiences. Home should be conceptualised as mobile and located in multiple spaces. However, for some former immigrants and refugees, it
also entails a degree of territorialisation and rootedness. The link between home and ‘soil’ is entrenched through the burial of family members, a link that creates naturalised attachments and sense of belonging towards the territory.

Such a discussion thus demonstrates how understandings of home and place are situational but also personal, imagined differently by individuals according to their experiences. The transnational dimension allows us to capture the different meanings that migrants ascribe to these concepts and the strategies they develop to construct lives in both their country of origin and their country of migration. To a certain extent transnational spaces are ‘inherited’ by people from the second generation but are also adapted according to their own feelings and experiences. Finally, the analysis indicates that identity and home are intertwined concepts and express multiple facets and features. This is particularly evident in the narrative of John’s life, which demonstrated the overlapping strands discussed in the chapter. The different aspects of identity formation, home-making and family ties have all played important roles in the construction of his transnational life.

Overall, transnationalism has proved to be a useful instrument for a better understanding of the migrants’ experiences and the multiple facets that form the concepts of identity and sense of home.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has provided an analysis of migration movements in southern Africa since the late nineteenth century, with a particular focus on the migration experience of South African former immigrants and refugees who have settled in Botswana since the apartheid era. Transnationalism has been used as an analytical framework in order to highlight the political, economic and social connections that have tied Botswana and South Africa. In particular, transnationalism was useful to explore the dynamics underpinning South African former migrants’ lives in-between two places: their country of origin and their country of resettlement. In addition, the analysis is contextualised within two historical frameworks: the centuries-long labour migration processes in southern Africa and the anti-apartheid struggle. In each framework it is possible to identify different kinds of transnational connections and the different ways migrants have engaged with them. In addition, this work presents another important dimension of analysis, which concerns the debates about citizenship construction in post-independence Botswana. This framework has shown the diverse and contrasting ways in which citizenship has been conceptualised in the official discourse, represented by the Botswana government and the dominant Tswana elite, and through former migrants’ understanding and perception of their position as naturalised citizens of Botswana.

The findings of the thesis can be grouped into three main strands. The first strand concerns how the transnational connections established by South African former migrants have contributed to the broader understanding of transnationalism itself. The second strand regards the role of Botswana in the anti-apartheid struggle, highlighting how its contribution as a transit corridor was as important as its role as a host country for refugees. The third strand concerns the complexities around the concept of citizenship in Botswana and the social spaces that migrants have created to resist practices of assimilation and exclusion, which this thesis considers as two sides of the same coin, namely Botswana’s nation-building process and its non-racial policy. The remainder of the chapter discusses these three strands before briefly exploring the possibilities of further future research that have arisen from this study.
Transnationalism and migration studies

This research demonstrated that transnationalism is a very useful tool to understand past as well as contemporary migration movements. It also showed that the movement of immigrants, refugees and freedom fighters from apartheid South Africa is part of the broader migration movements in the region which produced overlapping strands of transnational connections in the personal, economic and political fields. Finally, it provided a longitudinal dimension by exploring how people from the second generation have constructed their transnational ties based on their own set of values and experiences and their parents’ transnational lives.

As seen in chapter 2, a number of scholars have criticised the ‘transnational turn in migration studies’, directing their criticism particularly towards the extent to which transnationalism can be considered as a new or an old approach (Vertovec, 2009: 16). The dilemma can be solved following Smith’s (2003: 725) argument: ‘if transnational life existed in the past but was not seen as such, then the transnational lens does new analytical work by providing a way of seeing what was there that could not be seen before because of the lack of lens to focus on it’. The transnational lens has thus been useful to read and understand the connections that southern African people have constructed in centuries of cross-border migration processes.

As outlined particularly in chapter 3, southern African societies have been shaped by an intricate web of migrant movements in the past centuries, especially labour migrants going to work to the mines and farms in South Africa. The circular structure of this labour migration (Wilson, 2011) has favoured the establishment of cross-border connections and survival strategies that have profoundly transformed southern African societies, with social and economic implications. Strong and intertwining links within the region have therefore existed for a long time, and the transnational approach that this thesis has applied has been useful to highlight and emphasise them. This thesis showed the sense of continuity between the different migration movements in the southern African region since the mid-1800s, which include South African immigrants, refugees and freedom fighters.

Finally, the transnational connections have a ‘generational dimension’, in the sense that the transnational ties established by South African former migrants have had an important impact on their offspring and the way they relate to both Botswana
and South Africa. The findings of this research do not identify a single trend that captures the experiences of all people from the second generation. Rather, they show that a degree of transnationalism exists in the way migrants’ children relate to their parents’ homeland, but they have recreated these links adapting them to their needs and their feelings. As Lee (2011: 296) states, in fact, ‘transnationalism can be experienced in significantly different ways by migrants and their children’. In addition, the findings of this research have shown that the transnational dimension of people from the second generation is also dependent upon the degree of attachment of their parents to their home country. Those who feel closer to South Africa have usually tended to teach their first language to their children and involve them more with their South African families, whereas those former migrants who have developed a stronger attachment towards Botswana have transmitted this feeling to their offspring. The thesis, thus, has showed that people from the second generation have a degree of transnational engagement that depends on their own set of values and practices, and their parents’ experiences and attachment to their home country.

**Botswana’s role in the anti-apartheid struggle**

The bulk of the literature on the South African liberation struggle that concerned Botswana had mostly a historical or political approach which focused on its role in hosting and helping refugees, and the geopolitical consequences for the country due to the presence of politicised refugees and freedom fighters (see Southall, 1984; Polhemus, 1985; Dale, 1995; Parsons, 2008; Mgadla, 2008). This research, however, takes a different approach to the question of refugees and Botswana’s role in the liberation struggle, an approach that takes into account the transnational dimension of these migration movements and puts at the centre of focus the narratives of the migrants’ experiences. This study deals with personal, complex and overlapping motivations that pushed former migrants to either stay or move. The analysis, therefore, focuses on the social dimension of Botswana’s role in the struggle against apartheid.

This thesis, and especially chapter 4, sees Botswana’s transit role also from a historical and political perspective, but mostly from a social point of view. It explores how migrants have used the corridor and the survival strategies in order to
understand ‘the significance of the places in-between origin and destination’ (Collyer, 2007: 668). The findings of the research show not only the historical and political value of transit, but also its social value as a space that has assumed multiple meanings for migrants when they considered their survival mechanisms. The attention has shifted from the country of destination to ‘the spatiality of the journey itself’ (Ibidem). Transit has thus become a space for alternatives and choices, where life-changing decisions are made, where future intentions are reconfigured.

As Düvell (2006: 10) argued being in transit ‘is a stage of changing choice-making, of adaptation to given environments and of responses to the opportunity structures found in the countries, in which migrants stay for some time’. Transit migration has opened spaces of reflection for incoming migrants. Many of them often had no clear ideas about their final destination: their transit in Botswana therefore became a time to evaluate all the alternatives, to get connected through existing networks with local social capital, and to get funds to finance their journey to the final destination (Düvell, 2006: 9).

Most of the people who fled apartheid and arrived in Botswana decided not to settle in the country for a number of reasons: some wanted to continue to study and wanted to further their education in countries in other parts of Africa, like Ghana, Zambia or Tanzania. Others, the more militant ones, wanted to receive guerrilla training and join the ANC and PAC’s armed wings. The training camps were in Tanzania (later Angola) and overseas, the Soviet Union and other communist countries. Others, particularly the most prominent ones, did not want to stay because they were afraid of infiltrations from the South African Special Branch into Botswana’s territory and of being kidnapped. For those who decided to settle, like economic immigrants and some refugees, Botswana became a host country and a place to establish a web of networks of solidarity to the anti-apartheid struggle. Immigrants and refugees in fact established a network that involved helping incoming refugees and collecting funds from other South African exiles elsewhere in order to support refugee-oriented activities (see chapter 5). The organisation of Medu Art Ensemble, and in particular the 1982 Culture and Resistance Symposium in Gaborone, constituted the most important and prominent examples of actions of
solidarity with the struggle. The anti-apartheid struggle thus assumed a transnational dimension (Thörn, 2009).

The findings of the thesis show that this transnational dimension of solidarity in Botswana followed two overlapping strands: one involved the aforementioned community of immigrants and refugees in Botswana, and the other concerned Batswana citizens directly engaged with the struggle. The three biographies that are discussed in chapter 5 outline the pan-Africanist feeling that induced citizens of neighbouring territories to join the struggle, but also an important consequence of labour migration to South Africa, namely the politicisation of migrants. Black foreigners in South Africa suffered from apartheid policies as much as the locals, therefore they felt the struggle as if it were their own. Labour migration constituted a pool from which trade unions, the ANC and other liberation movements could draw up new members. The militancy of foreign migrants encouraged the growth of the transnational dimension of the struggle: foreign workers, when they returned to their home country, continued the struggle, which also became a struggle for independence for their country of origin. In this sense, the findings of this research have highlighted how the involvement of Batswana citizens with the South African liberation struggle turned into a deep commitment to end colonial rule in Botswana, and paved the way for political mobilisation and for the shaping of the country’s politics after independence.

Finally, another important finding in this field lies in the way Botswana has used and manipulated its need for security. Threats from South Africa and Rhodesia were real, as incursions, raids and kidnappings occurred a number of times across the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Because of the need to protect its borders and population, Botswana formulated refugee policies that limited refugees’ freedom and their chances of integration. I defined it as ‘social security’ because not only was Botswana protecting its borders from its neighbours’ threats, but it was also protecting its population from competition from refugees in search of employment and safeguarding the Tswana predominance in the country by reducing refugees’ possibilities of naturalisation, which could potentially alter the balance of power between ethnic groups through a high number of naturalisations of refugees from neighbouring countries (Makhema, 2009: 16).
To sum up, the thesis shows two different roles that Botswana assumed in the anti-apartheid struggle: a transit passage for refugees and freedom fighters and a host country for other refugees and immigrants. These roles were fluid; they overlapped and often converged, as in many cases the time a refugee spent in Botswana in ‘transit’ turned into settlement. In addition, these roles entailed features that highlight the contribution of this research to the literature on the South African liberation struggle, such as its transnational dimension and the Botswana government’s need for ‘social security’.

Citizenship and resistance

The last set of findings concerns South African former migrants’ understanding of citizenship and how they have created spaces to resist instances of assimilation and exclusion from the Tswana ethnic citizens of Botswana. The thesis has analysed the nation-building process in Botswana focusing on the non-racial policy that is at its basis. This policy aimed at excluding ethnicity in discourses of citizenship, in order to create a unified nation-state where all citizens would be Batswana, regardless of their actual ethnic belonging. In actuality, this politics ended up being an ethnic one. This is because this politics privileges the Tswana ethnic citizens, by entrenching and enforcing their dominance over minority groups.

The findings suggest that this non-racial politics discriminates against minority groups as well as naturalised citizens, such as South African former migrants. This discrimination is perceived not only through the sections of the Constitution that do not recognise other tribes apart from the eight Tswana ones. For former South African migrants, discrimination is also felt through practices and interactions with Batswana of Tswana ethnicity. Statements that remark the fact that someone was born in South Africa, jokes about ‘when are you going back home’, and labels such as ‘citizens by paper’, in time have caused insecurity and feelings of ‘not quite belonging’. Claims of autochthony and belonging from the Tswana ethnic citizens have thus had an impact on the understanding of citizenship for naturalised citizens, who, like minority groups, feel this discrimination as part of a hierarchy of citizens in the country (Nyamnjoh, 2004, 2006).
The non-racial policy is considered assimilative for the way that it has homogenised the different cultures of the country within a process of ‘Tswanification’ (Werbner, 2002: 676). In addition, it also has an element of exclusiveness for the way it has enforced the sense of autochthony of the Tswana ethnic citizens that has negatively affected naturalised citizens and minorities alike. Assimilation and exclusion have thus become two sides of the same coin, the non-racial policy, which promotes assimilation but which also ends up excluding. But former South African migrants have developed means to resist both assimilation and feelings of exclusion.

Defence of culture and language has been an important means of resistance for former migrants, and this is particularly visible with the Xhosa community of Mahalapye. Teaching Xhosa to the children (since minority languages are not taught at school) and organising gatherings with other Xhosa people in the country are ways to preserve and perpetuate the culture. Defending cultural values has had a double meaning: a way to resist assimilation (see interview with Mrs. Mentysi in chapter 6) but also a way to resist exclusion. An interviewee, Mrs. N.S., admitted that she had culture shock when she moved to Botswana and only after some time did she realise how certain values and practices were different from what she used to know: ‘Once I got here, I had to adjust to it, but it took me some pain. But once you accept it, it’s not anything offensive’. Getting assimilated has thus become a way for some former migrants to resist risks of feeling excluded. For others, on the other hand, enforcing the sense of community with other South Africans has become a way to resist sentiments of exclusion.

The sense of community that former immigrants and refugees established as a network of solidarity to help each other and support the anti-apartheid struggle, in the post-apartheid era has assumed the purpose of resisting exclusion. But again, this sense of community has fluid boundaries; it does not oppose the ‘imagined community’ of Botswana (Anderson, 2006). It is part and parcel of Botswana citizenry, because South African former immigrants and refugees do not oppose their civic identity with their ethnic identity. Inasmuch as they have a heartfelt identity that ties them to South Africa, they also have a handheld identity that links them to

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305 Interview with Mrs. N.S., former immigrant, Gaborone, 3rd December 2010
Botswana (Bakewell, 2007). Creating and enforcing transnational identities that entrench the connections between the country of residence and the country of origin is the way the South African community has envisaged in order to cope with their multiple and conflicting identities.

Overall, the study’s findings (as seen particularly in chapters 6 and 7) highlight the complexities inherent to the construction of identities. Ethnic, civic and national identities intertwine and overlap among South African former migrants as well as Batswana citizens. Questions of belonging and autochthony have emphasised how these identities can be conflicting: former South African migrants have therefore envisaged different ways to resist discriminatory practices and to reaffirm their identity and their claims of belonging to the Botswana citizenry as much as Tswana ethnic citizens do.

Transnationalism provides the lens to understand the different features of the migration experience of South Africans in Botswana, while also providing the common ground on which to connect the findings of this research. Transnationalism, thus, offers an approach to read and interpret the historical process of construction of cross-border links within the different migration movements that have shaped South Africa and Botswana’s relations. It also adds to the study of the South African liberation struggle with a dimension that emphasises the role and contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle of other countries like Botswana. In addition, it offers an approach to understand migrants’ creation of multiple identities and multiple attachments as a way for them to resist forms of exclusion and to claim belonging. Finally, the use of the transnational approach has provided the tools to read migration processes from a bottom-up perspective that emphasises the everyday practices and strategies that migrants implement, putting their lived experiences, rather than the state-centred view, at the heart of the study.

Transnationalism can therefore be a useful analytical tool to further explore different matters that have emerged during the research and the writing up and that here, due to constraints linked to time and thesis structure, have not been considered or investigated in depth. These matters cut across academic fields and reflect the interdisciplinary aspect of the thesis. The following suggestions thus mostly
contribute to the fields of refugee and migration studies, sociology, geography and history of southern Africa.

One potential topic of interest for further research concerns South African former refugees and immigrants who had settled in Botswana during the apartheid years, but eventually decided to return to South Africa after 1994. This project could focus on understanding the diverse reasons that pushed some migrants to stay in Botswana and others to return, and possibly exploring the extent to which those who have returned to South Africa have retained connections and networks spanning across both South Africa and Botswana. Basically, it would be a study of whether a web of transnational connections between the two countries still exists for returnees, to be compared with the transnational links discussed in this thesis. More broadly, such a project would contribute to the field of migration studies by exploring the social, economic and political factors behind migrants’ decision-making process in the context of post-apartheid southern Africa.

Another potential topic could concern other refugee and immigrant movements to Botswana which took place during the same period as the South African migration analysed here. Such a study would highlight a number of differences and similarities, as other migrants from neighbouring countries such as Namibia and Zimbabwe were also engaging in the liberation struggles in their own countries at the same time as South Africans. Moreover, a study such as this could be structured around a historical timeframe similar to the one adopted in this study. It would stretch from the anti-colonial struggle to the contemporary period, in order to highlight how transnational connections have developed and changed with time and the ensuing implications for citizenship and identity. This project would contribute to the literature on the liberation struggles in southern Africa through a comparative analysis that would focus on migrants’ narratives, whose experiences crossed and intertwined during their life in exile in Botswana.

The way South African former migrants, now naturalised citizens in Botswana, establish cross-border connections and understand citizenship has its own unique traits. These traits have been explored throughout the thesis, contributing to a better understanding of the processes behind the historical links that have tied the countries
in southern Africa together for centuries. In this way, this thesis has highlighted the importance of the various migration movements in shaping the societies in the region. In addition, the use of the transnational lens to read Botswana’s history and society, as a country and as a community of people, offers an interesting perspective of the complex nuances around the concept of citizenship and of the construction of fluid, overlapping identities. In this sense, this research illustrates the different dynamics and complexities that have characterised the experience of immigrants and refugees in Botswana within the background of the South African liberation struggle and Botswana’s construction of nationhood. The migration processes between the two countries have thus provided (and they still do provide) a fundamental contribution to the political, social and economic development of both Botswana and South Africa and to the relations between them.
Interviews

Interview with Mr. M. Dingake, former ANC and Robben Island prisoner, 11 May 2010

Interview with Mrs. J. Mphinyane, counsellor for Botswana Council for Refugees, 17 May 2010

Interview with Mrs. J. Anderson, counsellor for Botswana Council for Refugees, 24 May 2010

Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 25 May 2010

Interview with Mr. A.K., former immigrant, Gaborone, 26 May 2011

Interview with Mr. John H., former refugee’s son, Gaborone, 22 November 2010

Interview with Mr. John H., former refugee’s son, Gaborone, 20 May 2011

Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 1st December 2010

Interview with Mrs. D.N., former immigrant, Gaborone, 9, June 2011

Interview with Mrs. N.S., former immigrant, Gaborone, 3rd December 2010

Interview with Mr. E.R., former immigrant, Gaborone, 5 December 2010

Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, member of a Xhosa community, Mahalapye, 15 June 2011

Interview with Mr. J. Ntshingane, member of a Xhosa community, Mahalapye, 21st June 2011

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Interview with Mrs. K.M., former refugee, Gaborone, 20 June 2011

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Interview with Mr. S.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 19 July 2011

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Interview with Mrs. S. Boko, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 22 June 2011
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Interview with Mr. Tsoebebe, former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
Informal conversation with a member of the Xhosa community and of the Ntshingane family, Mahalapye, 25 June 2011
Interview with Mr. H.X., former refugee, Mahalapye, 23 June 2011
Interview with Mr. J.M., former immigrant, Mahalapye, 24 June 2011
Interview with Mr. D.A., former immigrant, Mochudi, 16 July 2011
Interview with Mr. R.M., former immigrant, Gaborone, 22 July 2011
Interview with Mr. T.V., former immigrant, Gaborone, 28 July 2011
Interview with Mr. P. Van Rensburg, former refugee, Gaborone 3rd August 2011

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BNA OP 27/17 ‘Refugee Advisory Committee, Gaborone’ June 1976-June 1977
BNA OP 27/70 ‘Dukwe’ October 1980-September 1981
BNA OP 27/78 ‘Refugee Settlement and Education in Botswana’ January 1979-January 1983
BNA OP 33/1 ‘Immigration into BP – Refugees’ June 1960-August 1960
BNA OP 33/4 ‘Immigration of Africans to B.P.’ March 1958-October 1959
BNA OP 33/5 ‘Immigration to B.P. Refugees’ May 1960-June 1960
BNA OP 33/6 ‘Immigration into B.P. Refugees’ September 1961-April 1962
BNA OP 33/12 ‘Immigration: Refugees, Wolpe, Goldreich & Moosa Moolla, August 1963-September 1963
BNA OP33/13 ‘Immigration to B.P.‘, October 1959-April 1965
BNA OP 33/20 ‘Immigration to B.P.’ May 1963-September 1963
BNA OP 33/21 ‘Immigration into B.P.: Refugees’ April 1962-November 1962
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Appendices

Extracts from the 1966 Botswana Constitution
Chapter V, Part III: Articles 77-79

PART III

The House of Chiefs (ss 77-85)

77. Composition of House of Chiefs

(1) There shall be a House of Chiefs for Botswana.

(2) The House of Chiefs shall consist of—

(a) eight ex-officio Members;

(b) four Elected Members; and

(c) three Specially Elected Members.

78. Ex-officio Members of the House of Chiefs

The ex-officio Members of the House of Chiefs shall be such persons as are for the time being performing the functions of the office of Chief in respect of the Bakgatla, Bakwena, Bamalete, Bamangwato, Bangwaketse, Barolong, Batawana and Batlokwa Tribes, respectively.

79. Elected and Specially Elected Members of House of Chiefs

(1) The Elected Members of the House of Chiefs shall be elected from among their own number by the persons for the time being performing the functions of the office of Sub-Chief in the Chobe, North East, Ghanzi and Kgalagadi districts, respectively.

(2) The Specially Elected Members of the House of Chiefs shall be elected by the ex-officio and Elected Members of the House of Chiefs in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution from among persons who are not and have not been within the preceding five years actively engaged in politics.

(3) A person shall be deemed to be or to have been actively engaged in politics for the purposes of subsection (2) of this section in any circumstances in which he would be deemed to be or to have been so engaged for the purposes of section 64(4)(b) of this Constitution.
(4) Subject to the provisions of subsections (5) and (6) of this section a person shall be qualified to be elected as a Specially Elected Member of the House of Chiefs if, and shall not be qualified to be so elected unless, he—

(a) is a citizen of Botswana;

(b) has attained the age of 21 years;

(c) is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read English well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the House; and

(d) is qualified for registration as a voter for the purposes of the election of the Elected Members of the National Assembly and is so registered.

(5) No person shall be qualified to be elected as a Specially Elected Member of the House of Chiefs who—

(a) is, by virtue of his own act, under any acknowledgement of allegiance, obedience or adherence to a foreign power or state;

(b) has been declared insolvent or adjudged or otherwise declared bankrupt under any law in force in any part of the Commonwealth and has not been discharged, or has made a composition with his creditors and has not paid his debts in full;

(c) is certified insane or otherwise adjudged or declared to be of unsound mind under any law for the time being in force in Botswana;

(d) subject to such exceptions as may be prescribed by Parliament, holds any public office, or is acting in any public office by virtue of a contract of service expressed to continue for a period exceeding six months;

(e) is under sentence of death imposed on him by a court in any part of the Commonwealth, or is under a sentence of imprisonment (by whatever name called) exceeding six months imposed on him by such a court or substituted by competent authority for some other sentence imposed on him by such a court;

(f) holds, or is acting in, any office the functions of which involve any responsibility for, or in connection with, the conduct of any elections to the National Assembly or the compilation or revision of any electoral register for the purposes of such elections; or

(g) is disqualified for election to the National Assembly by virtue of provision made in pursuance of section 62(2) of this Constitution.

(6) For the purposes of this section two or more terms of imprisonment that are required to be served consecutively shall be regarded as a single term of imprisonment for the aggregate period of those terms, and no account shall be taken
of a sentence of imprisonment imposed as an alternative to or in default of the payment of a fine.

The 1967 Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act

Part I - PRELIMINARY

1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act.

2. Interpretation

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

"Committee" means a Refugee Advisory Committee established under section 3;

"Convention" means the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of the 28th July, 1951, as amended from time to time by any international agreement; but does not include any provisions thereof not binding under public international law upon the Republic;

"immigrant" means any person in Botswana other than a citizen of Botswana;

"political refugee" has the meaning assigned thereto in the Schedule;

"recognized refugee" means an immigrant whom the Minister has declared in terms of section 8 (1) that he recognizes as a political refugee;

"removed from Botswana" does not include deportation in terms of section 24 of the Immigration Act.

(2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (1), and unless the context otherwise required, any word or expression defined in the Immigration Act shall bear the same meaning in this Act as in the Immigration Act.

3. Establishment of Refugee Advisory Committees

(1) The Minister may, by notice published in the Gazette, establish one or more Refugee Advisory Committees to carry out the functions conferred on such Committees by or under this Act.

(2) A Committee shall consist of a chairman and not less than two, nor more than four, other members.
Part II - REFUGEES

4. Inquiry by Committee

(1) Unless the Minister otherwise directs, a Committee shall hold an inquiry into the case of any immigrant who on presenting himself to an immigration officer in terms of section 6 of the Immigration Act claims to be a political refugee.

(2) A Committee shall also hold an inquiry into the case of any other immigrant who in the opinion of the Minister is in Botswana in such circumstances as indicate may be a political refugee.

(3) After holding an inquiry in terms of this section a Committee shall report thereon to the Minister.

5. Powers and procedure of Committee

(1) For the purpose of conducting an inquiry in terms of section 4, a Committee shall have power:

(a) by notice under the hand of its secretary or chairman, to summon before it any person in respect of whom the inquiry is to be held;

(b) by notice under the hand of its secretary or chairman, to summon before it any person who may be able to give information which will assist the Committee, or call upon him to submit such information in writing;

(c) to examine any person appearing before it on oath or otherwise;

(d) to call upon any person to furnish the Committee with such information as it considers will assist it in the exercise of its functions whether in the form of a statutory declaration, in writing, orally or otherwise and to produce to the Committee any documents which are in his possession or under his control and which the Committee considers may be relevant to the inquiry.

(2) The proceedings of a Committee shall be in private and shall be conducted in such manner as the Committee may determine:

Provided that the immigrant who is the subject of the inquiry shall be notified thereof and be given the opportunity of appearing before the Committee and of making representations concerning his case to it.

(3) Any person who -

(a) refuses or fails without sufficient reason to appear before a Committee at the time and place, specified in a notice given under subsection (1) (a) or (b);
(b) gives false evidence or information to a Committee or who attempts to mislead the Committee; (c) fails to comply with a notice given under subsection 1 (d), shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of P500 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

6. Restriction on removal of immigrants who may be a refugee

Where an immigrant who is liable to be removed from Botswana under the provisions of the Immigration Act is summoned to appear before a Committee under section 5 (1) (a)

(a) he shall not be so removed pending a determination by the Minister in accordance with section 8; and

(b) pending such determination he may be detained by an immigration officer for a period not exceeding 28 days; if he is so detained the provisions of section 15 (2) and (3) of the Immigration Act shall apply in relation to him as if he were being detained under subsection (1) of that section.

7. Right of detained immigrants to leave Botswana

Notwithstanding section 6 (b), any person detained in pursuance of that section shall, unless liable to detention under some other lawful authority, be allowed to depart from Botswana for the purpose of entering some other country if he satisfies an immigration officer that it is lawful for him to enter such other country without his possessing a right of re-entry to Botswana and that he possesses the means and in fact intends to enter that country.

8. Recognition of immigrant as political refugee

(1) When the Minister receives the report of an inquiry held under section 4 he may -

(a) subject to paragraph (b), if he is of the opinion that the person who has been the subject of the inquiry is a political refugee, declare that he recognizes such person as a political refugee;

(b) if he is of the opinion that the person who has been the subject of the inquiry is not a political refugee or if he considers that there is no or insufficient reason to treat him as a political refugee, declare that he does not recognize such person as a political refugee; or

(c) direct the Committee to reopen the inquiry or to make further report in the matter.

(2) Where, under subsection (1), the Minister declares that he does not recognize a person as a political refugee such person shall, if liable to be removed from Botswana under the Immigration Act, be so removed and shall, whether so liable or not, be subject in all respects to the provisions of that Act.
(3) Save where this Act otherwise provides, a person who is recognized as a political refugee shall be subject to the provisions of the Immigration Act in all respects as if the declaration of recognition had not been made.

9. Restriction on removal and control of refugee

(1) Subject to section 10, a recognized refugee shall not be removed from Botswana under the provisions of the Immigration Act except to a country approved by the Minister, being a country in which, in the opinion of the Minister, the life or freedom of the refugee will not be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall prevent the removal, under the provisions of any law, of a recognized refugee to any country whatsoever where, in the opinion of the Minister, such removal is desirable on the grounds of national security or of public order or where the recognized refugee has been convicted by a final judgment of any court of a serious crime which, in the opinion of the Minister, indicates that the recognized refugee constitutes a danger to the community.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a recognized refugee who is liable to be removed from Botswana under the Immigration Act may be detained by an immigration officer pending such removal, and if he is so detained the provisions of section 15 (2) and (3) of the Immigration Act shall apply in relation to him as if he were being detained under subsection (1) of that section:

Provided that where in the opinion of the Minister delay is likely to occur before such removal may be effected the Minister may, in his sole and absolute discretion, direct that the refugee shall not be detained under this subsection but shall while he remains in Botswana be subject to all or any of the following conditions:

(i) that the refugee shall reside at a place or within an area specified by the Minister;

(ii) that the refugee shall not depart from such place or area or only depart therefrom subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Minister;

(iii) that the refugee shall give recognizances for his good behaviour in such form and subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Minister;

(iv) that the refugee shall report to the police or such other authority as may be specified by the Minister in such manner as he may determine;

(v) that the refugee shall not take an active part in the politics of Botswana or of any other country in Africa or not take part in such activities, being activities of a political nature, as may be specified by the Minister;

(vi) such ancillary or additional conditions as may appear to the Minister to be necessary or desirable in the circumstances of the case.
(3) The Minister may at any time withdraw or modify a direction under the proviso to subsection (2).

(4) Any recognized refugee who having been released from detention in terms of the proviso to subsection (2) fails to comply with any condition of such release shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of P500 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

10. Departure of refugee from Botswana

(1) A recognized refugee who is not detained under section 9 (2) or other lawful authority may leave Botswana at any time.

(2) A recognized refugee shall on his departure from Botswana cease to be a recognized refugee.

(3) Notwithstanding section 9 (1) any recognized refugee who is detained under section 9 (2) shall, unless he is liable to detention under some other lawful authority, be allowed to depart from Botswana for the purpose of entering some country other than a country approved by the Minister in terms of section 9 (1) if he certifies in writing that he wishes to enter that other country and satisfies an immigration officer that it is lawful for him to enter that country without his possessing a right of re-entry to Botswana and that he possesses the means to do so.

11. Review of case of recognized refugee

(1) Not more than 6 months after the recognition of a refugee under section 8, and thereafter at intervals of not more than 6 months, the case of that refugee shall be reviewed by a Committee, who shall advise the Minister:

(a) whether to exercise any of his powers under this Act or the Immigration Act in relation to that refugee;

(b) as to the moral and economic welfare of that refugee; and what steps should be taken to secure the same.

(2) On receiving the report of a review held under subsection (1) the Minister may:

(a) if he considers that there is no or insufficient reason to continue treating the refugee as a political refugee declare that he no longer recognizes him as a political refugee;

(b) direct the Committee to reopen the review or to make further report in the matter;

(c) take such alternative or additional steps open to him under this Act or otherwise in relation to the refugee as may appear to him most proper.

(3) Section 5 shall have effect for the purposes of a review under subsection (1) as they have for the purposes of an inquiry under section 4.
12. Recognizances

Where under the proviso to section 9 (2) a recognized refugee is required to give recognizances and such recognizances include the entering into of a bond for an amount of money to be forfeited if the conditions of the bond are broken, the Chief Immigration Officer may, upon breach of any condition of the bond, make application to a court of competent jurisdiction which may give judgment against the refugee or his sureties in accordance with the conditions of the bond.

13. Residence of refugee not ordinary residence

For the purposes of any other written law, other than a taxation law, any period during which an immigrant has resided in Botswana as a recognized refugee shall not, unless a Minister in writing otherwise directs, be regarded as a period during which he has been ordinarily resident in Botswana.

14. Employment of refugees

(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (2), sections 3 to 6 of the Employment of Visitors Act, 1968, shall apply to refugees as they apply to visitors and any regulations made under the provisions of section 7 of that Act shall, unless the context otherwise requires, apply to refugees as they apply to visitors.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection (1) the Minister may, in his discretion, instruct that a work permit issued to a refugee shall be renewed for such period as he may deem fit notwithstanding that any such renewal will have the effect of extending the validity of such permit for more than 12 months.

15. Regulations

The Minister may make regulations:

(a) providing for the custody of the property of any political refugee who is detained;

(b) prescribing the form of any notice which may be given under this Act;

(c) prescribing the allowances payable to members of a Committee and the fees payable to persons giving evidence before it;

(d) generally for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

16. Prosecutions of political refugees under Immigration Act to require consent of the Attorney-General

No prosecution for a contravention of the Immigration Act shall be instituted or continued against:
(a) an immigrant who is summoned to appear before a Committee under section 5(1) (a), pending the decision of the Minister under section 8 (1); or

(b) a recognized refugee,

without the written consent of the Attorney-General, and in giving or withholding such consent the Attorney-General shall have regard to the provisions of the Convention.

**SCHEDULE - Definition of the term "Political Refugee"**

1. Subject to this Schedule, "political refugee" means a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

2. In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term "the country of his nationality" shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

**The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**

*Adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950*

*Entry into force: 22 April 1954, in accordance with article 43*

Preamble

The High Contracting Parties,

Considering that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly have affirmed the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination,
Considering that the United Nations has, on various occasions, manifested its profound concern for refugees and endeavoured to assure refugees the widest possible exercise of these fundamental rights and freedoms,

Considering that it is desirable to revise and consolidate previous international agreements relating to the status of refugees and to extend the scope of and the protection accorded by such instruments by means of a new agreement,

Considering that the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries, and that a satisfactory solution of a problem of which the United Nations has recognized the international scope and nature cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation,

Expressing the wish that all States, recognizing the social and humanitarian nature of the problem of refugees, will do everything within their power to prevent this problem from becoming a cause of tension between States,

Noting that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is charged with the task of supervising international conventions providing for the protection of refugees, and recognizing that the effective co-ordination of measures taken to deal with this problem will depend upon the co-operation of States with the High Commissioner,

Have agreed as follows:

Chapter I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. - Definition of the term "refugee"

A. For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who:

(1) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization;

Decisions of non-eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of paragraph 2 of this section;

(2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his
former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term "the country of his nationality" shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

B. (1) For the purposes of this Convention, the words "events occurring before 1 January 1951" in article 1, section A, shall be understood to mean either (a) "events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951"; or (b) "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951"; and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purpose of its obligations under this Convention.

(2) Any Contracting State which has adopted alternative (a) may at any time extend its obligations by adopting alternative (b) by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

C. This Convention shall cease to apply to any person falling under the terms of section A if:

(1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; or

(2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily reacquired it; or

(3) He has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality; or

(4) He has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution; or

(5) He can no longer, because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; provided that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under section A (1) of this article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to avail himself of the protection of the country of nationality;

(6) Being a person who has no nationality he is, because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, able to return to the country of his former habitual residence;
Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under section A (1) of this article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

D. This Convention shall not apply to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection or assistance.

When such protection or assistance has ceased for any reason, without the position of such persons being definitely settled in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, these persons shall ipso facto be entitled to the benefits of this Convention.

E. This Convention shall not apply to a person who is recognized by the competent authorities of the country in which he has taken residence as having the rights and obligations which are attached to the possession of the nationality of that country.

F. The provisions of this Convention shall not apply to any person with respect to whom there are serious reasons for considering that:

( a ) He has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in the international instruments drawn up to make provision in respect of such crimes;

( b ) He has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee;

( c ) He has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 2. - General obligations

Every refugee has duties to the country in which he finds himself, which require in particular that he conform to its laws and regulations as well as to measures taken for the maintenance of public order.

Article 3. - Non-discrimination

The Contracting States shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin.

Article 4. - Religion

The Contracting States shall accord to refugees within their territories treatment at least as favourable as that accorded to their nationals with respect to freedom to practise their religion and freedom as regards the religious education of their children.
Article 5. - Rights granted apart from this Convention

Nothing in this Convention shall be deemed to impair any rights and benefits granted by a Contracting State to refugees apart from this Convention.

Article 6. - The term "in the same circumstances"

For the purposes of this Convention, the term "in the same circumstances" implies that any requirements (including requirements as to length and conditions of sojourn or residence) which the particular individual would have to fulfil for the enjoyment of the right in question, if he were not a refugee, must be fulfilled by him, with the exception of requirements which by their nature a refugee is incapable of fulfilling.

Article 7. - Exemption from reciprocity

1. Except where this Convention contains more favourable provisions, a Contracting State shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to aliens generally.

2. After a period of three years' residence, all refugees shall enjoy exemption from legislative reciprocity in the territory of the Contracting States.

3. Each Contracting State shall continue to accord to refugees the rights and benefits to which they were already entitled, in the absence of reciprocity, at the date of entry into force of this Convention for that State.

4. The Contracting States shall consider favourably the possibility of according to refugees, in the absence of reciprocity, rights and benefits beyond those to which they are entitled according to paragraphs 2 and 3, and to extending exemption from reciprocity to refugees who do not fulfil the conditions provided for in paragraphs 2 and 3.

5. The provisions of paragraphs 2 and 3 apply both to the rights and benefits referred to in articles 13, 18, 19, 21 and 22 of this Convention and to rights and benefits for which this Convention does not provide.

Article 8. - Exemption from exceptional measures

With regard to exceptional measures which may be taken against the person, property or interests of nationals of a foreign State, the Contracting States shall not apply such measures to a refugee who is formally a national of the said State solely on account of such nationality. Contracting States which, under their legislation, are prevented from applying the general principle expressed in this article, shall, in appropriate cases, grant exemptions in favour of such refugees.

Article 9. - Provisional measures

Nothing in this Convention shall prevent a Contracting State, in time of war or other grave and exceptional circumstances, from taking provisionally measures which it
considers to be essential to the national security in the case of a particular person, pending a determination by the Contracting State that that person is in fact a refugee and that the continuance of such measures is necessary in his case in the interests of national security.

**Article 10. - Continuity of residence**

1. Where a refugee has been forcibly displaced during the Second World War and removed to the territory of a Contracting State, and is resident there, the period of such enforced sojourn shall be considered to have been lawful residence within that territory.

2. Where a refugee has been forcibly displaced during the Second World War from the territory of a Contracting State and has, prior to the date of entry into force of this Convention, returned there for the purpose of taking up residence, the period of residence before and after such enforced displacement shall be regarded as one uninterrupted period for any purposes for which uninterrupted residence is required.

**Article 11. - Refugee seamen**

In the case of refugees regularly serving as crew members on board a ship flying the flag of a Contracting State, that State shall give sympathetic consideration to their establishment on its territory and the issue of travel documents to them or their temporary admission to its territory particularly with a view to facilitating their establishment in another country.

**Chapter II**

**JURIDICAL STATUS**

**Article 12. - Personal status**

1. The personal status of a refugee shall be governed by the law of the country of his domicile or, if he has no domicile, by the law of the country of his residence.

2. Rights previously acquired by a refugee and dependent on personal status, more particularly rights attaching to marriage, shall be respected by a Contracting State, subject to compliance, if this be necessary, with the formalities required by the law of that State, provided that the right in question is one which would have been recognized by the law of that State had he not become a refugee.

**Article 13. - Movable and immovable property**

The Contracting States shall accord to a refugee treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, as regards the acquisition of movable and immovable property and other rights pertaining thereto, and to leases and other contracts relating to movable and immovable property.
Article 14. - Artistic rights and industrial property

In respect of the protection of industrial property, such as inventions, designs or models, trade marks, trade names, and of rights in literary, artistic and scientific works, a refugee shall be accorded in the country in which he has his habitual residence the same protection as is accorded to nationals of that country. In the territory of any other Contracting States, he shall be accorded the same protection as is accorded in that territory to nationals of the country in which he has his habitual residence.

Article 15. - Right of association

As regards non-political and non-profit-making associations and trade unions the Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country, in the same circumstances.

Article 16. - Access to courts

1. A refugee shall have free access to the courts of law on the territory of all Contracting States.

2. A refugee shall enjoy in the Contracting State in which he has his habitual residence the same treatment as a national in matters pertaining to access to the courts, including legal assistance and exemption from cautio judicatum solvi.

3. A refugee shall be accorded in the matters referred to in paragraph 2 in countries other than that in which he has his habitual residence the treatment granted to a national of the country of his habitual residence.

Chapter III

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

Article 17. - Wage-earning employment

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment.

2. In any case, restrictive measures imposed on aliens or the employment of aliens for the protection of the national labour market shall not be applied to a refugee who was already exempt from them at the date of entry into force of this Convention for the Contracting State concerned, or who fulfils one of the following conditions:

   (a) He has completed three years' residence in the country;
( b ) He has a spouse possessing the nationality of the country of residence. A refugee may not invoke the benefit of this provision if he has abandoned his spouse;

( c ) He has one or more children possessing the nationality of the country of residence.

3. The Contracting States shall give sympathetic consideration to assimilating the rights of all refugees with regard to wage-earning employment to those of nationals, and in particular of those refugees who have entered their territory pursuant to programmes of labour recruitment or under immigration schemes.

*Article 18. - Self-employment*

The Contracting States shall accord to a refugee lawfully in their territory treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage on his own account in agriculture, industry, handicrafts and commerce and to establish commercial and industrial companies.

*Article 19. - Liberal professions*

1. Each Contracting State shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory who hold diplomas recognized by the competent authorities of that State, and who are desirous of practising a liberal profession, treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances.

2. The Contracting States shall use their best endeavours consistently with their laws and constitutions to secure the settlement of such refugees in the territories, other than the metropolitan territory, for whose international relations they are responsible.

*Chapter IV*

**WELFARE**

*Article 20. - Rationing*

Where a rationing system exists, which applies to the population at large and regulates the general distribution of products in short supply, refugees shall be accorded the same treatment as nationals.

*Article 21. - Housing*

As regards housing, the Contracting States, in so far as the matter is regulated by laws or regulations or is subject to the control of public authorities, shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances.
Article 22. - Public education

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.

2. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.

Article 23. - Public relief

The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment with respect to public relief and assistance as is accorded to their nationals.

Article 24. - Labour legislation and social security

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment as is accorded to nationals in respect of the following matters;

   (a) In so far as such matters are governed by laws or regulations or are subject to the control of administrative authorities: remuneration, including family allowances where these form part of remuneration, hours of work, overtime arrangements, holidays with pay, restrictions on work, minimum age of employment, apprenticeship and training, women's work and the work of young persons, and the enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining;

   (b) Social security (legal provisions in respect of employment injury, occupational diseases, maternity, sickness, disability, old age, death, unemployment, family responsibilities and any other contingency which, according to national laws or regulations, is covered by a social security scheme), subject to the following limitations:

      (i) There may be appropriate arrangements for the maintenance of acquired rights and rights in course of acquisition;

      (ii) National laws or regulations of the country of residence may prescribe special arrangements concerning benefits or portions of benefits which are payable wholly out of public funds, and concerning allowances paid to persons who do not fulfil the contribution conditions prescribed for the award of a normal pension.

2. The right to compensation for the death of a refugee resulting from employment injury or from occupational disease shall not be affected by the fact that the residence of the beneficiary is outside the territory of the Contracting State.
3. The Contracting States shall extend to refugees the benefits of agreements concluded between them, or which may be concluded between them in the future, concerning the maintenance of acquired rights and rights in the process of acquisition in regard to social security, subject only to the conditions which apply to nationals of the States signatory to the agreements in question.

4. The Contracting States will give sympathetic consideration to extending to refugees so far as possible the benefits of similar agreements which may at any time be in force between such Contracting States and non CONTRACTING States.

Chapter V

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

Article 25. - Administrative assistance

1. When the exercise of a right by a refugee would normally require the assistance of authorities of a foreign country to whom he cannot have recourse, the Contracting States in whose territory he is residing shall arrange that such assistance be afforded to him by their own authorities or by an international authority.

2. The authority or authorities mentioned in paragraph 1 shall deliver or cause to be delivered under their supervision to refugees such documents or certifications as would normally be delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities.

3. Documents or certifications so delivered shall stand in the stead of the official instruments delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities, and shall be given credence in the absence of proof to the contrary.

4. Subject to such exceptional treatment as may be granted to indigent persons, fees may be charged for the services mentioned herein, but such fees shall be moderate and commensurate with those charged to nationals for similar services.

5. The provisions of this article shall be without prejudice to articles 27 and 28.

Article 26. - Freedom of movement

Each Contracting State shall accord to refugees lawfully in its territory the right to choose their place of residence and to move freely within its territory subject to any regulations applicable to aliens generally in the same circumstances.

Article 27. - Identity papers

The Contracting States shall issue identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not possess a valid travel document.

Article 28. - Travel documents
1. The Contracting States shall issue to refugees lawfully staying in their territory travel documents for the purpose of travel outside their territory, unless compelling reasons of national security or public order otherwise require, and the provisions of the Schedule to this Convention shall apply with respect to such documents. The Contracting States may issue such a travel document to any other refugee in their territory; they shall in particular give sympathetic consideration to the issue of such a travel document to refugees in their territory who are unable to obtain a travel document from the country of their lawful residence.

2. Travel documents issued to refugees under previous international agreements by Parties thereto shall be recognized and treated by the Contracting States in the same way as if they had been issued pursuant to this article.

**Article 29. - Fiscal charges**

1. The Contracting States shall not impose upon refugees duties, charges or taxes, of any description whatsoever, other or higher than those which are or may be levied on their nationals in similar situations.

2. Nothing in the above paragraph shall prevent the application to refugees of the laws and regulations concerning charges in respect of the issue to aliens of administrative documents including identity papers.

**Article 30. - Transfer of assets**

1. A Contracting State shall, in conformity with its laws and regulations, permit refugees to transfer assets which they have brought into its territory, to another country where they have been admitted for the purposes of resettlement.

2. A Contracting State shall give sympathetic consideration to the application of refugees for permission to transfer assets wherever they may be and which are necessary for their resettlement in another country to which they have been admitted.

**Article 31. - Refugees unlawfully in the country of refuge**

1. The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

2. The Contracting States shall not apply to the movements of such refugees restrictions other than those which are necessary and such restrictions shall only be applied until their status in the country is regularized or they obtain admission into another country. The Contracting States shall allow such refugees a reasonable period and all the necessary facilities to obtain admission into another country.

**Article 32. - Expulsion**
1. The Contracting States shall not expel a refugee lawfully in their territory save on grounds of national security or public order.

2. The expulsion of such a refugee shall be only in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with due process of law. Except where compelling reasons of national security otherwise require, the refugee shall be allowed to submit evidence to clear himself, and to appeal to and be represented for the purpose before competent authority or a person or persons specially designated by the competent authority.

3. The Contracting States shall allow such a refugee a reasonable period within which to seek legal admission into another country. The Contracting States reserve the right to apply during that period such internal measures as they may deem necessary.

**Article 33. - Prohibition of expulsion or return ("refoulement")**

1. No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

2. The benefit of the present provision may not, however, be claimed by a refugee whom there are reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgement of a particularly serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country.

**Article 34. - Naturalization**

The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings.

**Chapter VI**

**EXECUTORY AND TRANSITORY PROVISIONS**

**Article 35. - Co-operation of the national authorities with the United Nations**

1. The Contracting States undertake to co-operate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or any other agency of the United Nations which may succeed it, in the exercise of its functions, and shall in particular facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of this Convention.

2. In order to enable the Office of the High Commissioner or any other agency of the United Nations which may succeed it, to make reports to the competent organs of the United Nations, the Contracting States undertake to provide them in the appropriate form with information and statistical data requested concerning:
(a) The condition of refugees,

(b) The implementation of this Convention, and

(c) Laws, regulations and decrees which are, or may hereafter be, in force relating to refugees.

**Article 36. - Information on national legislation**

The Contracting States shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the laws and regulations which they may adopt to ensure the application of this Convention.

**Article 37. - Relation to previous conventions**

Without prejudice to article 28, paragraph 2, of this Convention, this Convention replaces, as between Parties to it, the Arrangements of 5 July 1922, 31 May 1924, 12 May 1926, 30 June 1928 and 30 July 1935, the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 and the Agreement of 15 October 1946.

**Chapter VII**

**FINAL CLAUSES**

**Article 38. - Settlement of disputes**

Any dispute between Parties to this Convention relating to its interpretation or application, which cannot be settled by other means, shall be referred to the International Court of Justice at the request of any one of the parties to the dispute.

**Article 39. - Signature, ratification and accession**

1. This Convention shall be opened for signature at Geneva on 28 July 1951 and shall thereafter be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It shall be open for signature at the European Office of the United Nations from 28 July to 31 August 1951 and shall be re-opened for signature at the Headquarters of the United Nations from 17 September 1951 to 31 December 1952.

2. This Convention shall be open for signature on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations, and also on behalf of any other State invited to attend the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons or to which an invitation to sign will have been addressed by the General Assembly. It shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. This Convention shall be open from 28 July 1951 for accession by the States referred to in paragraph 2 of this article. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**Article 40. - Territorial application clause**

1. Any State may, at the time of signature, ratification or accession, declare that this Convention shall extend to all or any of the territories for the international relations of which it is responsible. Such a declaration shall take effect when the Convention enters into force for the State concerned.

2. At any time thereafter any such extension shall be made by notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and shall take effect as from the ninetieth day after the day of receipt by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of this notification, or as from the date of entry into force of the Convention for the State concerned, whichever is the later.

3. With respect to those territories to which this Convention is not extended at the time of signature, ratification or accession, each State concerned shall consider the possibility of taking the necessary steps in order to extend the application of this Convention to such territories, subject, where necessary for constitutional reasons, to the consent of the Governments of such territories.

**Article 41. - Federal clause**

In the case of a Federal or non-unitary State, the following provisions shall apply:

( a ) With respect to those articles of this Convention that come within the legislative jurisdiction of the federal legislative authority, the obligations of the Federal Government shall to this extent be the same as those of parties which are not Federal States;

( b ) With respect to those articles of this Convention that come within the legislative jurisdiction of constituent States, provinces or cantons which are not, under the constitutional system of the Federation, bound to take legislative action, the Federal Government shall bring such articles with a favourable recommendation to the notice of the appropriate authorities of States, provinces or cantons at the earliest possible moment;

( c ) A Federal State Party to this Convention shall, at the request of any other Contracting State transmitted through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, supply a statement of the law and practice of the Federation and its constituent units in regard to any particular provision of the Convention showing the extent to which effect has been given to that provision by legislative or other action.

**Article 42. - Reservations**
1. At the time of signature, ratification or accession, any State may make reservations to articles of the Convention other than to articles 1, 3, 4, 16 (1), 33, 36-46 inclusive.

2. Any State making a reservation in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may at any time withdraw the reservation by a communication to that effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 43. - Entry into force

1. This Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day following the day of deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the ninetieth day following the date of deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 44. - Denunciation

1. Any Contracting State may denounce this Convention at any time by a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

2. Such denunciation shall take effect for the Contracting State concerned one year from the date upon which it is received by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. Any State which has made a declaration or notification under article 40 may, at any time thereafter, by a notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, declare that the Convention shall cease to extend to such territory one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

Article 45. - Revision

1. Any Contracting State may request revision of this Convention at any time by a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

2. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall recommend the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

Article 46. - Notifications by the Secretary-General of the United Nations

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all Members of the United Nations and non-member States referred to in article 39:

( a ) Of declarations and notifications in accordance with section B of article 1;

( b ) Of signatures, ratifications and accessions in accordance with article 39;
(c) Of declarations and notifications in accordance with article 40;

(d) Of reservations and withdrawals in accordance with article 42;

(e) Of the date on which this Convention will come into force in accordance with article 43;

(f) Of denunciations and notifications in accordance with article 44;

(g) Of requests for revision in accordance with article 45.

In faith whereof the undersigned, duly authorized, have signed this Convention on behalf of their respective Governments.

Done at Geneva, this twenty-eighth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-one, in a single copy, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic and which shall remain deposited in the archives of the United Nations, and certified true copies of which shall be delivered to all Members of the United Nations and to the non-member States referred to in article 39.